Women's Leadership in Resident Theaters

Final Report

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Wellesley College

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Commissioned by Carey Perloff, Artistic Director,
and Ellen Richard, Former Executive Director,
American Conservatory Theater, San Francisco

A.C.T. AMERICAN
CONSERVATORY
THEATER

Wellesley
Centers for
Women

Clara and Opanyi, may you grow up
in a more equitable and inclusive world.
Thank you for your naps.
Your loving babaanne.
S.E.

For Kaat, a future leader
who will build bridges and shatter ceilings.
I.C.

Foreword

The relative paucity of women at the leadership level of major American theaters is an issue that has troubled me from the moment I became the Artistic Director of the Classic Stage Company in 1987. As I looked around to find colleagues with whom I could share what I was experiencing, who might understand the complexities of being a female leader and, in my case, a mother of a young child, in a very male industry, I was hard-pressed to find a group of peers. The decisions about what would be performed on our stages and who would get to participate in the work were being made almost entirely by men. That had an impact upon the number of female playwrights whose stories were being told and the number of female creative teams who were chosen to tell the stories that did get told. While diverse leadership does not always mean diverse programming or diverse audiences, it certainly helps! So even then, I began to try to understand the obstacles to female leadership in the theater.

Sadly enough, by the time A.C.T. Executive Director Ellen Richard and I launched the Women's Leadership Project in 2013, the dial had hardly moved. The representation of women Artistic and Executive Directors amongst League of Resident Theaters (LORT) members is still roughly twenty-five percent, and for people of color, it is far less. All these years later, the image of a (white) male director leading the charge is still so ingrained in our collective thinking that women are rarely making it to the top spot, despite the huge number of qualified women lower down the ranks. This phenomenon is particularly puzzling in an industry that strives for representation and in which roughly three-quarters of all ticket buyers are women. While major strides have been made in recent years to include more plays by women (and with female protagonists) in theatrical seasons and to diversify staffs and creative teams, the issue of who is leading most of our major institutions remains stubbornly difficult to address.

But address it we must! It's time to examine in a rigorous way the challenges of achieving more diverse leadership in our field. So in 2013, the American Conservatory Theater began a part-nership with the Wellesley Centers for Women to study gender disparity amongst leaders in the American theater. We wanted to undertake a thorough, well-researched study with serious and respected researchers, a study that would not be merely anecdotal but give us a true analysis of what was going on, so that action steps could be developed that were tied to real data. It has been a fascinating and enlightening process, involving extensive interviews, surveys, case studies, national convenings and information gathering. The result is a detailed overview of our field today, exposing the obstacles and opportunities for women to advance in the leadership ranks. Our deepest thanks go to Sumru Erkut and Ineke Ceder who shaped and conducted the study, to the Toulmin Foundation that made the lead gift to permit the research to move forward, to the many artists, administrators and trustees who gave their time and energy to complete the research, and to the many individuals who supported the study financially. A special thank you to Erin Washington, Associate Producer at A.C.T., who not only helped conceptualize the study but dis-seminated its findings brilliantly at several conferences and gatherings, to P. Carl and Howlround for disseminating the conversations, and to Shafer Mazow, Bethany Herron and Rose Oser who relentlessly helped frame the discussion, write the grants, raise the funds and articulate the vision. This work is a significant milestone in the journey towards gender equity in the American theater, and we are incredibly grateful for all the wisdom and energy that has gone into it.

What became clear as the study unfolded was not that there were too few women on a pathway to leadership, but that there is a very clearly observed glass ceiling preventing women from advancing. Boards of non-profit theaters in America are primarily comprised of engaged citizens whose expertise lies outside the theater field; for the most part they tend to hire leaders who look like those they know in the for-profit world. And that image of leadership is still overwhelmingly male. For a board to *trust* that a female candidate has what it takes to manage a major theater will thus require education, intervention, training and intentional change moving forward. This is particularly true because the core competencies required to be an Artistic or Executive Director are not clearly understood by the field as a whole. The truism that men are hired on their potential and women on their resumes is particularly true in the non-profit theater, in which women are rarely interviewed unless they have already held a similar position and are considered risky bets even if they can demonstrate the necessary competencies and appetites.

The good news is that *familiarity* seems to work in women's favor: once a woman has been an associate artistic director or resident director, for example, and has gotten to be known by the board and staff, her chances of being considered for an Artistic Director role increase considerably. There is much that we can do as a field to prepare women to be ready for those opportunities when they arise, just as there is much we can do to help educate boards about the true skills needed to be an Artistic or Executive Director (skills that are not always so obvious!) and how to measure a candidate's potential more effectively.

The study also exposes the huge gap in mentorship opportunities when it comes to female leadership. This is an area that I hope will be addressed in specific ways over the next few years: the gains are considerable when candidates have someone they can turn to who is "like them" and can help navigate choices and understand obstacles. The lack of formal mentorship opportunities in the American theater is particularly acute for women and people of color (although TCG has developed some excellent programs for young leaders of color that are proving highly successful), and leads to a great deal of self-censoring when considering whether to apply for jobs. Along these lines, I should add that this study is more gender-binary than we would have wished, and that the situation for gender fluid and trans artists as well as for artists of color is even more challenging than for women.

The area of work-life balance is a particularly fraught one when it comes to women's leadership. Leadership posts permit women to have families and to work in a stable, relatively well-compensated environment in which they are in charge of their own destiny, so these positions are highly desirable. And yet for many women, the lack of support for child-care and the impossibility of committing to endless nights and weekends of work without support for family issues becomes so daunting and often defeating that they stop before pursuing even leadership roles. The need for child-care is a taboo subject; most of the respondents to our surveys from working directors said they rarely bring up the issue of work-life balance when they get a directing job out of town because they fear that asking for an "accommodation" for their child (such as an extra plane ticket or bigger apartment) will mean they won't get the job. We heard story after story of "secret pregnancies" and of unsupportive work environments. Clearly, work-life issues are crucial for everyone in the theater, but for women the issues of caregiving are particularly acute and woefully ignored.

It is our hope that the Women's Leadership Project will inspire productive and forward-looking conversation across the country and across industries, not only in theater but in the performing arts in general, as we wrestle with how to crack the glass ceiling and develop trust in candidates who may not look like the leaders of the past but have a great deal to offer the field. LORT and TCG have been developing numerous strategies to move this conversation forward, and this is only the beginning. A significant part of this report is the listing of action items and recommendations that the field might consider. Equally significant is the data that shows how and where the pathways to leadership are blocked or interrupted, providing "evidence" for what we have all experienced but rarely quantified. We hope that the study encourages people around the country to take up different aspects of this study and develop plans to address key issues. Our field will be immensely enriched by an invigorated and more inclusive leadership.

Thank you for taking the time to read this seminal study. Let's keep the energy of this work moving forward!

Carey Perloff

Acknowledgements

We were invited to become the research partner of the American Conservatory Theater (A.C.T.) by Carey Perloff, its Artistic Director, and Ellen Richard, A.C.T.'s former Executive Director. We are grateful to them for their vision and support. Shafer Mazow, a Wellesley alumna, recommended us to them. Thank you, Shafer, for making the connection. Alex Sanger, former member of the Wellesley Centers for Women's Council of Advisors, recommended us to the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation, which generously supported the research. Without this support the research would not have become a reality. Thank you, Alex. We also thank the Valentine Foundation, Wellesley Centers for Women, and individual donors for additional financial support.

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Above all, we thank the theater professionals who gave us time for interviews, sent their resumes, and completed surveys, and members of theater boards of trustees and search firms who agreed to be interviewed.

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Introduction to the study

1.1 Women's Leadership Project: An introduction

In 2013, the leaders of the American Conservatory Theater (A.C.T.) in San Francisco decided to launch a study of gender equity in leadership in the theaters that are registered members of the League of Resident Theatres (LORT). Carey Perloff, A.C.T.'s artistic director, and Ellen Richard, its former executive director, wanted to know why there weren't more theaters with women[1] at the helm and what can be done to increase women's representation in theater leadership, which had hovered around 25% for years. The gender and racial background of the leadership at the time is presented below.

2013–14 LORT Artistic Directors

54 white men

5 men of color

14 white women

1 woman of color

2013–14 LORT Executive Directors

46 white men

0 men of color

28 white women

0 woman of color
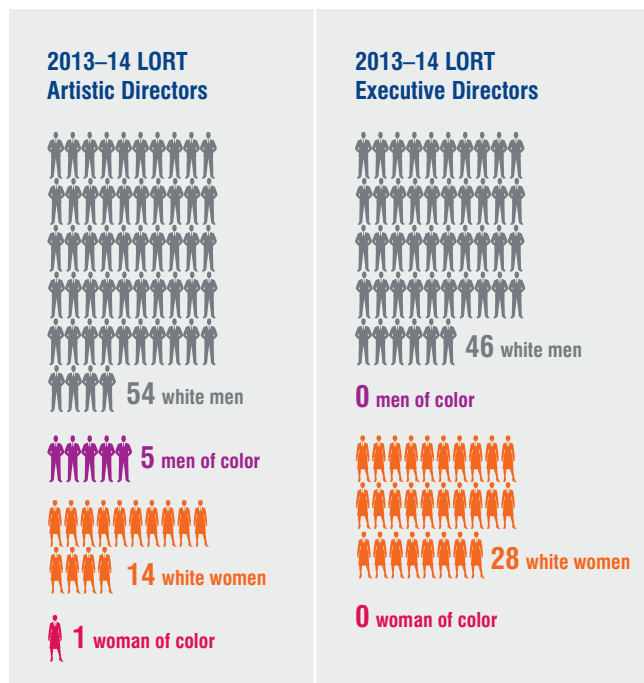
Figure 1.1 Gender and race breakdown of LORT leadership in 2013-14[2]

As can be seen in Figure 1.1, on the artistic side, the stark contrast in the number of LORT theaters that are headed by women and those headed by men is only surpassed by the virtual absence of women of color. On the managerial side, the relatively higher numbers of women serving as executive directors may seem like there has been progress toward gender parity. However, as we show later in Chapter 8, there are more women in positions just below top leadership on the managerial side than there are men, making women's status as executive directors an example of the existence of a "glass ceiling." A glass ceiling is a metaphor for the barriers facing women (and minorities) stuck at middle management where they can see the top but cannot get through.[3]

Overall, the total absence of leaders of color, female or male, on the managerial side is of particular concern.

In our interviews with artistic and executive directors, we found a variety of opinions on whether there is a need for greater gender equity in theater leadership. Some people mentioned the few, very illustrious female leaders who have left a mark on the theater world as well as the few

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1 While acknowledging that gender expression can take many forms that do not conform to the binary, we are dealing with gender in its more traditional binary formulation of male and female. Our focus on the scarcity of women in theater leadership is not about ignoring the scarcity of transgender individuals. Rather it is to highlight underrepresentation of a large demographic group.
2 Definitions of Artistic Director, Executive director, gender, and race used in compiling these data are provided at the end of this chapter.
3 The words "glass ceiling" were introduced by Carol Hymowitz and Timothy Schellhardt as the title of the lead article in the March 24, 1986 Wall Street Journal's special report on "The Corporate Woman."

women who are current top stars, basically highlighting the token successes. Many also brought up favorable comparisons with the past, when women's representation was much worse. Still others pointed to the dearth of minorities in theater leadership to emphasize that *that* is where the real need for diversity lies.

> **Male artistic director:** ... if we're talking female representation in leadership positions in these institutions, there's several women running major institutions.

> **Female associate artistic director:** ... certainly in terms of the male-female thing, we've made great strides. I remember when it was the old boys network and that was it, so on that front we've made great strides...

> **Male executive director:** I think the gender diversity is not nearly as bad as the racial diversity.

These three lines of reasoning we heard in the interviews — tokenism, it's not as bad as it used to be, and others have it worse — obscure the very real glass ceiling.

Our study has sought to learn about the experiences of both women and minorities as they seek leadership positions, in a manner that does not ignore the situation of women of color. While the impetus for this research has been to account for the scarcity of women in theater leadership, we address both gender and race concerns to the extent that our data have allowed us.

1.2 Why a research project?

A.C.T. partnered with the Wellesley Centers for Women (WCW) for a research study that would go beyond counting the number of women leaders, which describes and documents women's scarcity in leadership. Our charge was to examine the *reasons* for the lack of gender equity and make *recommendations* to achieve greater diversity in leadership of regional theaters. As the independent research partner, we adopted the research strategy to (1) better understand the career paths of those in current leadership in order to make recommendations for aspiring future leaders in the pathway, and (2) examine the search process to make recommendations to hiring committees.

There has been no prior systematic research on who gets to serve in leadership positions, how people prepare themselves for an artistic or executive leadership position, or how they are selected either from the perspectives of the candidates or those who make the selection. This work includes viewpoints collected from multiple stakeholders within and outside the LORT community — current and past leaders, people in the pathway to leadership, and people who choose the leaders. Our analyses explored whether there is a glass ceiling preventing qualified women from reaching top leadership positions, which would require a change in hiring practices, or whether there is a pathway issue, requiring actions to strengthen the group of potential candidates.

In focusing on why there are so few women heading LORT theaters and what can be done about it, our major thrust is to investigate if there are barriers that can be removed so that anyone (men, women, people of color, people from majority backgrounds) with the right combination of skills and interest has an equal chance to rise to leadership. In essence our goal is to level the playing field. Indeed, it is our hope that everyone will benefit from the information we have gathered for developing their careers.

1.2.1 Background

a. What is a LORT theater?

The 74 U.S. theaters registered with LORT (League of Resident Theatres) in the 2013-2014 season make up the universe of theaters that are the primary focus of this investigation. LORT is the largest professional theater association of its kind in the United States, with member theaters located in every major market in the US, including 29 states and the District of Columbia. LORT administers the primary national not-for-profit collective bargaining agreements with Actors' Equity Association, the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, and United Scenic Artists. It also deals directly with personnel and management issues involving theater staff, artists, and craftspeople. Theatre Communications Group (TCG) classifies its members by budget size.[4] LORT theaters tend to have budgets above $2,000,000, equivalent to budget sizes 3, 4, 5, and 6 according to TCG's classification. The number of member theaters changes over time, depending on which theaters elect LORT's contractual/ administrative model. **While the research is an examination of leadership composition in theaters that are members of LORT, it is not an examination of LORT as a service organization.** Rather the focus is on individual theaters; reference to "LORT theaters" is shorthand for theaters that had registered to abide by LORT's contractual agreements in collective bargaining.

b. Leadership structure of LORT theaters

The study's focus is on *positional* leadership because our aim is to understand who gets selected to lead a theater and why. Of course, there are many other ways in which people can be "leaders" without being placed at the top of a pyramid, which is the structure predominant in LORT theaters. We want to explicitly acknowledge here that we do not provide any insights on what leadership looks like beyond the positional approach to leadership that we took in this reported work.

Of the 74 theaters in our sample, 53 had a dual leadership model with an artistic director (AD) and an executive/managerial director (ED) both reporting to the theater's Board of Trustees.[5] In the remaining 21 theaters, the artistic and operational responsibilities were combined in one person, whom we refer to as the AD/ED, where the top managerial director reports to the AD/ED. Table 1.1 represents an overview of gender in the sample's leadership roles.

Table 1.1 Leadership and gender overview in single-leader and dual-leader LORT theaters

Single leader n = 21	Dual leadership n = 53	
AD/ED	Artistic Director	Executive/ Managerial Director
4 female (19%)	11 female (21%)	19 female (36%)
17 male (81%)	42 male (79%)	34 male (64%)

For this report, we grouped the AD/EDs with the ADs because all but two of the AD/ED leaders came up the ranks on the artistic side of the theater. The two who advanced to leadership through the managerial side also demonstrate a deep understanding and commitment to the artistic mission of their theater. For that reason, in our analyses we included information on the

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4   TCG-defined budget groups: Budget group 1: $499,999 or less; Budget group 2: $500,000-$999,999; Budget group 3: $1 Million-$2,999,999; Budget group 4: $3 Million-$4,999,999; Budget group 5; $5 Million-$9,999,999; Budget group 6: $10 Million and more.
5   In university-based theaters, leaders report to the academic dean, not directly to a Board of Trustees. There are 12 university-based theaters in our sample.

career preparation of AD/ED leaders with those obtained from ADs. Henceforth we refer to AD and ED career paths.

Because understanding who is in the pathway to leadership and what can be done to strengthen diversity in this group is key to the goals of the study, in addition to the leaders, we also systematically examined the career development of people immediately below AD and ED positions. We refer to these key staff — who constitute the top of the pathway to leadership — as being next-in-line (referred to as "NIL" when we note that we are quoting people we interviewed as employees of LORT theaters in these roles).

c. Why focus on LORT theaters?

The study of leadership in LORT theaters is pertinent to the larger question of gender equity in theater in several ways. Gender parity in leadership positions pertains to equity in employment. More importantly, people at the top of a theater's organizational structure make decisions about the theater's vision and purpose, how that vision is translated into planning a season: which playwrights' plays will be produced, who will direct them, and who will be hired to help bring the production to its intended audience. In the next chapter we review evidence of a gender imbalance in all areas of theater employment. It has been strongly argued that if top leadership is gender balanced then more women playwrights may see their plays produced, more women may be asked to direct plays, more women may be employed in production, and more women may advance in the ranks of the managerial/operational side of the theater. Consequently, women will no longer be an undervalued and less legitimate part of theater. Indeed, recent work by McGovern (2016) showed that in LORT member-theaters, if the theater has a male artistic director, 26% of directors hired are women, while with a female artistic director, 45% of directors hired are women. As some of the largest not-for-profit theaters in the United States, LORT member-theaters set models for other nonprofit theaters.

Apart from how LORT member-theaters can influence the future of the theater field by way of trend-setting, as researchers we needed a defined universe in which to study theater leadership. Including all U.S. theaters in our research would have been impractical and extremely costly. Studying 74 theaters that share a bargaining agreement, who are "peers" in a large universe, who represent the major geographic regions of the country, and who share having a larger budget made this study more practical. That being said, we acknowledge that each member theater has full independence and its unique regional niche. Moreover, LORT as a service organization has a limited and strictly advisory role in matters of leadership selection.

d. Data sources

We collected information from a variety of sources and in a variety of forms between 2013 and 2016. Each source informed the research findings and illuminated more details that were brought forth by other data sources, supplementing and complementing each other (see Appendix A for details on the study's research methods). We designed a multifaceted information gathering strategy that included interviews with a variety of stakeholders: existing LORT ADs and EDs, members of Boards of Trustees of LORT theaters who had been involved in the leader selection process, search firm professionals who manage searches for top leadership positions, and people in the pathway to leadership. Because top leaders have been recruited from both inside LORT theaters and outside the LORT group, our research into the status of the pathway involved surveys

of people both inside and outside of LORT. We conducted two confidential online surveys. The one pertaining to the artistic side of the theater was conducted with stage director members of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society [our justification for considering stage directors as constituting part of the LORT leadership path was that among artistic directors in LORT theaters a large majority (88%) have a background in directing]. The other survey pertaining to the management/operations side of the theater was one of people in the top managerial position and those in positions immediately below the top in theaters that are members of Theatre Communications Group with budgets above $1,000,000. Full reports of the findings of the Stage Directors' Survey and Operational Managers' Survey can be found in Appendices D and E, respectively.

Information from interviews and surveys was augmented by information from industry sources, mainly TCG and LORT archival websites, theater websites, and resumes and bio-sketches of LORT theater leaders and those in positions just below top leadership. Figure 1.2 represents an overview of all sources of data that informed the findings.

Figure 1.2 Sources of information in the study's design

Sources of Information

inside and outside LORT

Survey with executives/managers:
What is valued in an executive's career path that leads to an ED position?

N=333

Survey with stage directors:
What is valued in a director's career path that leads to an AD position?

N=998

Conversations with field experts including members of theater boards of Trustees and professionals in search firms

N=30

inside LORT

Interviews with ADs, EDs, and NILs of randomly selected theaters in 3 budget groups

What is the career path to leadership?

How did you prepare?

N=97

Resumes/bios, online information

What is the job description?

N=300

OUR FINDINGS

1.2.2 Definitions

Artistic Director (AD): Person identified on the masthead of a theater as the head of the artistic side. Includes people who hold single leadership positions overseeing both the artistic and operational side of theaters, which is the leadership model in 21 of the LORT member-theaters.

Executive Director (ED): Person identified on the masthead of a theater as holding the top position of the operational/administrative/managerial side. In this report the ED designation also includes people who hold the top operational leadership position but report to the AD/ED in theaters with the single leadership model. Their positional title can be general manager, chief operating officer, director of finance, etc.

Next-in line (NIL): Refers to professionals identified on the masthead of a theater as holding positions immediately below the AD and ED in a LORT member-theater. On the artistic side these include associate artistic directors, literary managers, or (associate) producers. On the operational side they include general managers, or directors of finance, development, and marketing.

Gender: Coded as female and male. To arrive at a gender designation we combined first name, photos, and use of pronoun by the person and about the person for LORT theater leaders and professionals next-in-line to leadership. For survey participants, gender identification was based on answers to the gender question: female, male, other (no one checked "other"). While acknowledging that gender expression can take many forms, we worked with gender in its binary formulation of female/male, to highlight underrepresentation of a large demographic group.

Race: Coded as white and non-white (referred to as "people of color" in the report). References to racial/ethnic identity by the person and about the person in combination with photos and last name were used for assigning the race/ethnicity designation of leaders in LORT theaters and people in the pathway to leadership. When this combination did not yield a designation, we noted the person's race as "undetermined." Racial identification for survey participants was based on their answers to a direct question.

Qualified candidate aspiring for leadership: "Qualified" is used to indicate a cadre of candidates whose qualifications are manifested in their occupational titles, length of employment in the theater field, experience having founded a theater company, and educational accomplishments. Designation of "aspiring" is based on expressing a wish to pursue a top leadership position and/or having applied for one.

Budget level: We follow TCG classifications of theater budgets for our sample: level 3 ($1.5M-$3M), level 4 ($3M-$5M), level 5 ($5M-$10M), level 6 (+$10M).

1.2.3 Caveats

In this study we treated gender as if it were reducible to a binary — female and male. The current public awareness and debates on transgender rights has made it more widely known that gender identity and gender expression can take many forms. Our decision to focus on the binary of women and men was to make it possible to do statistical analyses on the data we collected, which require large numbers. We also acknowledge that there is no such thing as a prototypical "woman" or "person of color." In addition to gender identity and expression, people encompass diversity along race, ethnicity, physical ability, sexual orientation, and class lines, among other social categories, which can create overlapping and intersecting systems of discrimination or (dis)advantage. Again, because we needed to work with large enough numbers for statistical analyses, we were only able to take into consideration race/ethnicity as a category that intersects with gender, and that only in a binary form of "white compared to people of color." Moreover, we were able to examine the intersection of gender and race only for some of the analyses because there were no people of color among executive directors of theaters that are members of LORT. We, therefore, encourage readers to keep in mind that the reference to "women" and "people of color" can obscure differences in the experiences of individuals.

A source of inequity in theater work is unequal compensation across gender and race. We were not able to include compensation in our analyses because these data have not been uniformly publicly available. Future studies should include equity in compensation as an important focus.

1.2.4 Roadmap of the report

Having introduced the scope and rationale for the study, its design, definitions, and sources of information in **Chapter 1,** in **Chapter 2,** we review research documenting the scarcity of women in different aspects of the theater world and discuss the implications of that scarcity in numbers of women for theater and for women's employment. **Chapter 3** presents the job descriptions of the artistic and executive director positions in LORT member-theaters, which reflect shared beliefs on what the successful execution of the leadership positions entails. **Chapter 4** is a discussion of the search and selection processes employed by members of the Boards of Trustees of theaters to select theater leaders and how decisions at each step along the way can contribute to women's lower likelihood of being selected to a leadership position. **Chapter 5** focuses on artistic and executive directors' skills for different paths to leadership as reported by people in these positions and those in positions leading up to leadership. In **Chapter 6** the focus is on promotions and appointments that reveal patterns in theaters' institutional decision making rather than focusing on how individuals behave, which is the focus of the following chapter. In **Chapter 7** we present leaders' reports of how they prepared for their position through formal and informal education, mentoring, and on-the-ground experience and their recommendations on how best to prepare for leadership. **Chapter 8** reports on factors influencing the readiness and preparation of people in next-in-line positions on the pathway to leadership. The focus of **Chapter 9** is on what we learned about barriers to becoming a leader including difficulty in managing family responsibilities while working at a theater. **Chapter 10** describes what we learned in the course of this study regarding strategies for change. It also reviews actions the field has already undertaken, and how these models for change can be expanded.

The concluding **Chapter 11** presents recommendations for action separately for members of boards of trustees who are the ones doing the hiring of leaders, for theater professionals aspiring to a leadership position on the artistic side, and for those aspiring for leadership on the operational side of theaters. Finally, the **appendices** include more detailed information on methods, backgrounds of people in our sample and the skills they report needing for leadership, more extensive descriptions of the results of our surveys, a listing of the theaters in our sample, and the literature we have reviewed. We also included a short overview of various action initiatives, and notes on two conferences where we presented our findings and where attendees shared their insights and advice.

What has been documented to date?

Theater, dance, and music enhance how we view ourselves and our place in the world by giving voice and shape to diverse experiences, feelings, actions, and thoughts. The arts, therefore, not only promote a fuller understanding of humanity but also inspire alternative views and ways to exist in this world. Yet, a society's capacity to generate artistic innovation and expression depends on the soundness of its arts infrastructure — its ability to identify, nurture, champion, and employ artists who bring different experiences. When the talents of diverse female artists are left out of the performing arts, society's vision is inevitably narrowed. The focus of this research addresses a weakness within the U.S. arts ecosystem: the scarcity of women in the performing arts leadership, specifically in one field, the theater.

2.1 The numbers

There have been many efforts in recent years to collect data on the gender of those working in theater. These efforts have largely focused on playwrights, but the numbers have also included designers, directors, and management. Some reports have included a focus on race in addition to gender. The US is not unique; the United Kingdom, Australia, and Canada have also conducted counts. No matter what they count, all of the studies show that women are seriously underrepresented.

One of the earliest efforts to document the status of women in the theater was conducted by the New York State Council on the Arts (Jonas & Bennett, 2002). This three-year research initiative collected historical, anecdotal, and statistical information on women in the field, and brought the under-representation of women to the attention of the theater community. The researchers found that, in the early 2000s, fewer than 20% of plays produced in the US were written by women.

This low number was confirmed in a 2009 report examining discrimination in playwright selection in the US (Sands, 2009a and 2009b). Sands set out to analyze why, if approximately 30% of scripts are written by women, only about half that number reach production. She reports that 12.6% of theater announcements in the 2008-2009 Broadway season were for plays written by women; in the nonprofit theater world, 17.8% were written by women (2009, p. 1). Her analyses showed that plays on Broadway written by women have significantly higher weekly revenue (18% higher) but remain in production during the same average number of weeks as plays written by men, which leads her to conclude that "… Broadway discriminate[s] against female playwrights both in the decision of which scripts to select for production and in the decision of how long to keep shows in production" (p. 102). In other words, Broadway's preference for plays written by men over those written by women seems to trump the profit motive. To delve further into play selection, Sands carried out an "audit" study, which we elaborate on later in this chapter.

Since 2010 there has been a flurry of more recent counts. For example, a count of male and female actors, playwrights, and directors in the San Francisco/Bay Area theatrical productions from 2011-2014 revealed 27% of the playwrights and 42% of the directors of the 500 shows counted were women (Weak, 2015). The numbers also showed that majority-male casts were more

common, women wrote roles for women at higher rates, women had fewer jobs than men in leadership positions, women were less represented at the highest paying jobs, and women's employment levels in theaters have not improved between 2011 and 2014.

Similar findings have been documented around the US: A study of off-Broadway productions from 2010-2014 by the League of Professional Theatre Women in New York found that those productions listed 30% women playwrights and 33% women directors (Steketee & Binus, 2014, 2015). The Los Angeles Female Playwrights Initiative determined that of the almost 4,800 productions in the Los Angeles Stage Alliance's database between 2002 and 2010, only 20% were written or co-written by women. A report by the Chicago Storefront Summit indicated that only 18.8% of 1,113 plays produced in Chicago in 2009 were written by a woman or a group of women. *American Theatre*'s unofficial count of the 2014–15 season plays in Theatre Communications Group member theaters found that about 24% of the plays produced there were written by women and only 2 plays on the top 10 most-produced list for the season (Evans, 2014, 2015; Tran, 2015). Suilebhan, a Washington-based playwright, began collecting racial and gender data on playwrights whose work was being produced starting with the 2012-13 DC theater season. His findings showed a slow uptick in work produced by a female playwright (from 21% in 2012-13, to 26%, 29%, and 37% in the following seasons), but showing more stagnation for plays by people of color (starting at 14% in 2012-13, increasing slowly to 15%, 18%, and 20% by 2015-16; Suilebhan, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016). Suilebhan also counted directors and showed that, despite slow progress being made in including plays written by women, plays directed by women are at a standstill around 31-34%, and even worse for plays with directors of color, at 13-17%. These numbers were also confirmed by Goetschius' 2013 examination of the DC area theaters.

In response to the lack of an annual, national count of women in theater in the US, the Lilly Awards, in partnership with the Dramatists Guild, has undertaken an ongoing study that asks the question, "Who is being produced in American theaters?" Their effort is known as "the Count" (http://www.thelillyawards.org/initiatives/the-count/). The initial Count looked at data from the 2011/2012 – 2013/2014 seasons. They found women playwrights made up just over 22% of productions during this time period. The study also analyzes race, nationality, genre, and whether the productions were new works or revivals (Byrd, 2015). Female playwrights comprised 29% of "new play" offerings, but just 13% of "revivals," which reflects even more extreme scarcity of women playwrights among works considered "classics" or more recent works worthy of being "revived." Cities varied, with Chicago at the high end of the range at 36% and New York in last place at 25%. And from 2011 to 2014, only 12% of productions were by writers of color.

McGovern (2015), a theater designer, has reported on who is hired to design in LORT theaters by gender. She found, on average across scenic, costume, lighting, and sound designers, the majority (71.8%) were male (across 5 seasons, 09-10 to 13-14). Breaking down the numbers by type, she found females are underrepresented in all groups, except costume design, where they are the majority (69%). McGovern notes that race information was unavailable, though anecdotal reports suggest that there are very few minorities behind the scenes. She updated her numbers in 2016, adding the 2014-15 season and reporting totals for three seasons this time. Comparing the same positions over those three seasons (2012-13 to 2014-15), the portion of designers populated by men stands at 73%, a slight increase over the previous report. Her updated count also included directors on stages of LORT member-theaters, which highlights that if the theater has a male artistic director, 26% of directors hired are female, while at a LORT theater with a female artistic

director, 45% of directors hired are female, information especially relevant to the present study (McGovern, 2016), which we mentioned in Chapter 1. McGovern's finding provides preliminary support for the expectation that more women in charge at theaters as artistic directors will create more opportunities for female directors at their theaters.

StageSource Gender Parity Task Force (2014, 2016) released an analysis of productions in the greater Boston area. They found men outnumber women at least 2 to 1 in the fields of director, playwright, scenic design, lighting design, sound design, projection design, violence design, and music direction, but women outnumber men in 4 areas: stage management, costume design, props, and dramaturgy. Leadership in management is close to parity (53% female), though men tend to work in larger theaters, which presumably means they are paid more. Artistic directors, in contrast, are 66% male, 34% female.

The numbers abroad aren't much better. For example, Equity in Theatre recently released a study of women in Canadian theater showing that the rough 70/30 division of men and women in the roles of artistic director, director, and playwright has remained unchanged over the past 30 years (MacArthur, 2015). Tonic Theatre's "Advance" project in the UK focused on women being able to rise to the top in theaters; they similarly showed that "when it comes to what audiences see and hear on stage, it remains overwhelmingly written, directed, designed and performed by men" [Tonic Theatre (2014), http://www.tonictheatre-advance.co.uk/about/].

While the numerous studies converge on the general scarcity of women among playwrights, actors in leading roles, directors, designers, technical staff, and leadership, it is difficult to come up with a precise count. As Shamas (2013, 2014) points out, one must decide which plays to include or not, what to do about musicals that are often co-authored, which theaters to include or not, etc. Yet regardless of differences in methodology, the numbers in these studies all reach the same conclusion.

In Appendix G, we have placed an overview of the literature we have reviewed, and in Appendix H we summarize the advocacy work of many of the organizations and people who have published "counts" detailing the scarcity of women indifferent aspects of theater.

2.2 More than just numbers

The convergence of various counts on the scarcity of women in theater has at least two interrelated ramifications. (1) Gender bias in employment has resulted in fewer women having visibility in theater arts. (2) The scarcity of women intensifies the view that women are an anomaly, or an afterthought, undervalued, and less legitimate. The first issue of employment bias is what the research we report here addresses. The second issue of the relationship between women having less legitimacy and their scarcity in the industry was examined in an ingenious experiment conducted by Emily Sands. It is our hope that by addressing the employment bias issue, our study can help erase the notion that women do not have a legitimate place in theater.

To date, Emily Sands' 2009 Princeton honors thesis is the only experimental study to explore the reasons for the underrepresentation of women playwrights' work among scripts that reach production. She used an approach called an "audit" study. Audit studies are field experiments introduced to economics by Bohm (1972; see also List, 2007) where people working in a given field (in this case, artistic directors or literary managers who serve as gatekeepers in selecting plays) are

presented with identical stimuli (here, fragments of four plays) that vary only in the variable of interest (here, the gender of the playwright). For her audit study, Sands had four play fragments prepared by successful female playwrights whose names were replaced by fictitious ones. Each of the 252 theaters Sands contacted, received the four fragments with the playwright's name on the submissions varying between a male and female fake name, and the lead characters varying in being female or male. Eighty-two theaters, or 33% of the sample, responded with a review of each of the four fragments, giving Sands a relatively robust number of observations for statistical analyses. Her results clearly document gender discrimination in play selection in two ways: (1) Both male and female respondents perceived plays purportedly written by women to be of lower overall quality and to have lower economic prospects than identical scripts bearing a male name as the playwright. (2) When the respondents' own gender was introduced into the analyses, Sands found that men and women did not differ in their ratings of female written plays' quality. However, on questions that asked them to anticipate others' reactions (e.g., audiences, critics, judges for awards, the crew), female respondents rated purportedly female written plays harsher. This was particularly true for female written plays with female lead characters.

The convergence of various counts on the scarcity of women in theater has at least two interrelated ramifications. (1) Gender bias in employment has resulted in fewer women having visibility in theater arts. (2) The scarcity of women intensifies the view that women are an anomaly, or an afterthought, undervalued, and less legitimate.

The playwright Julia Jordan, who was instrumental in launching Sands' thesis, interpreted the findings about female respondents' relative pessimism in her keynote address at the 2013 Dramatists Guild National Conference as "prophetic bias." She says, "It is not that the women in Emily's study believed women to be lesser writers any more than did men. They appeared to think that the bias of *others* would cause scripts by women to have less value for their theaters." Jordan wonders if this is "a terrible self-fulfilling prophecy? Or is it simply that women in theater are honestly reporting what they see and know to be true? (Or some combination of the two?)."

Building on Jordan's analysis, the theoretical interpretation we bring to understanding Sands' results draws on time honored explanations of self-fulfilling prophesy (Merton, 1968) and pluralistic ignorance (Katz & Allport, 1931). Robert Merton, a social theorist, popularized the notion of a "self-fulfilling prophesy" as the prediction of an event which can play a role in making it come true (1968). The finding that both men and women rate purportedly female-written plays to be of lower quality can operate as a self-fulfilling prophesy on women playwrights in discouraging them from producing more plays. In fact, 30% of registered scripts are written by women (Sands, 2009) whereas there has been general gender parity in programs which train playwrights (Wilner & Jordan, 2009). Sands names this type of discrimination "taste-based," using Becker's (1971) terms, where people prefer male-written plays over female-written plays, discouraging women playwrights. Discrimination like this is widely shared in a culture that undervalues work believed to be done by women.

In addition to being a self-fulfilling prophecy, it is likely that Sands' female respondents' allocating lower value to women playwrights' work is an example of what social psychologists Katz and Allport (1931) identified long ago as pluralistic ignorance (see also Prentice & Miller, 1993). Pluralistic ignorance defines a situation where people may privately reject a norm (i.e., "I don't

think that women's work is worth less"), but assume incorrectly that most others accept it (i.e., "Others think that women's work is worth less"). Past theory and research suggests that educating people about pluralistic ignorance can reduce conformity to norms that are wrongly assumed to be widely shared (Schroeder & Prentice, 1998). In other words, it is possible to reduce this bias by informing people of its existence.

We think that a third explanation may be operating alongside self-fulfilling prophesy and pluralistic ignorance, namely the *reality* of women's underrepresentation in the world of theater. Women respondents in Sands' audit study may have been projecting onto female playwrights what they personally see and know to be true about the treatment of women in the theater world in general: i.e., "we already don't see these women represented, the public will think they don't belong." Indeed, one example of women's underrepresentation is that women's entry into leadership in theater has largely stalled, while training programs of directors and theater managers who may be poised to take up the leadership have been showing gender parity for several decades now.

2.3 Can greater diversity in leadership bring greater diversity in programming?

If programming set by ADs who are overwhelmingly white and male ends up being also mostly white- and male-focused as was shown to be the case in study after study we reviewed under the heading *The numbers,* would introducing more diversity at the leadership level bring more diversity to the offerings? In other words, would having more women and people of color in leadership lead to more diverse programming? Sands' research, suggests a more complicated picture than just numbers making a difference.

But the dial *can* move. Porsche McGovern (2016) has conducted research on LORT artistic director decisions regarding which directors they hire at their theaters. Her work is cross-sectional, meaning that no causation can be inferred: from McGovern's data we cannot formulate an answer about whether hiring more women in leadership positions will indeed cause a change in who works and gets produced in theaters. Rather, her data present a three-year snapshot in time. That snapshot in time, however, is optimistic: the female artistic directors at LORT theaters invited 45% female directors compared to their male colleagues who invited 26% female directors (over 3 seasons). Overall, however, male directors still get to direct more shows at LORT theaters (69% vs. 31% for women).

What then can be done to increase diversity on the stage if bringing in more diverse leaders is not necessarily going to lead to diverse choices? Consciously choosing to break with the male default by making an effort to balance out what is on the stage is one effective way to break the cycle; it does not necessarily take a female AD to make that choice, although her involvement in the artistic choice-setting of U.S. theater is an important step in making the field more equitable as a place of employment and legitimizing women's place in the world of theater. Will having more women and people of color become ADs change the narrative that women's plays are not of high quality? We think the change in numbers is not enough but it is a good beginning. It will help by giving clear signals that women and people of color have a legitimate and well-earned place in theater as playwrights, as leaders, directors, producers, and designers.

In the last two decades, women have not held more than about 25% of artistic or executive director positions in theater members of the League of Resident Theatres (LORT) in any one year. At the 74 U.S. theaters registered with LORT in 2013-14 when we started gathering data for this study, 127 people held top leadership positions (artistic, executive/managing directors). Only 34 of those were women. It is likely that all three explanations are relevant and that different decision makers in the theater field (those choosing plays, electing leaders, selecting directors and actors, and so forth) may be influenced by any one or more of them.

We conclude that the low numbers of women in almost all aspects of theater not only deprives society of the artistic vision and representation of half of human kind, it creates a chilly climate for current and future generations of women who want to work in theater. We undertook this research with the wish to increase the number, and hence visibility and legitimacy, of women in theater.

Job descriptions for artistic directors and executive directors

As the focus of the research is on gender equity in leadership positions, we begin the presentation of the findings with a chapter on job descriptions for theater leaders. The job descriptions are necessary to clearly define the skills and experiences that are perceived as critical before one can be considered leadership material. We arrived at the elements of the job descriptions for an AD and ED through specific questions asked of current leaders through interviews. Their answers were augmented with an examination of resumes and interviews with search firm professionals and Trustees who had served on search committees. Most of the elements in Tables 3.1 and 3.2 below were represented in job descriptions posted for AD and ED openings, validating our lists of key job-related tasks for these positions.

Job descriptions are an important starting point for understanding the current composition of leadership and criteria used for leadership selection, and they have implications for leadership preparation. They represent a set of shared beliefs of what the successful execution of the position entails. Making them explicit is important for a discussion of whether each element of the job description is indeed necessary (should or should not be included in the criteria employed in the selection process). Indeed, what a leader is expected to do on the job is germane to challenging the lack of diversity in leadership because in a few interviews we heard the comment, often in reference to regarding people of color but also women, that they are not ready for leadership for lack of proper preparation.

We provide job descriptions for ADs and EDs separately, as their primary responsibilities differ, particularly in theaters with a dual-leadership model. (In theaters with a single leadership model, the AD/ED oversees all functions but the execution of the operational/managerial functions is usually delegated to the person who performs most if not all of the ED responsibilities.) Individual theaters can divide the AD and ED responsibilities slightly differently, depending on the combination of the talents of the existing leadership, and factors associated with its regional location and history.

3.1 Artistic director's job

Key elements of this AD job description come together in this depiction from an AD:

> First you have curatorial skills. You have to have the ability to find interesting writers and artists and projects and imagine how they would fit together … throughout the course of the season and how your audience might connect to them. You also have the responsibility for envisioning the future of the organization, the shape of the organization. And what the impact of that may be on a community. And the resources that may be required to accomplish it. So you're doing that big broad visioning and the organization is really dependent on you being able to articulate that. … You have a primary role in terms of inspiring the team, both the staff and the Board in terms of how

their particular role or a particular function is going to fit into securing the overall vision. ...You have to have a sense of how the resources line up with what you have to accomplish. That means you have to have the ability to kind of read a balance sheet and understand how a budget puts together and ... what the budget means in terms of the choices that you're gonna be making, in terms of the artistry, and in terms of the workload and the staff throughout the course of the year. And ... a huge role is connecting with the community and inspiring leadership in the community to support the organization.

Table 3.1 Artistic director job description

Artistic Planning	• Set mission/vision for theater • Plan and produce season • Develop relationships with playwrights, directors, actors • Oversee casting/directing/designing • Oversee general manager (joint with ED) • Oversee production department, line producer • Oversee new works department, education department, touring company if available • Read plays, attend plays, forge relationships with those involved in other plays • Hire artistic support staff • Be a story teller • Bring box office appeal
Community Development	• Serve as the public face of the theater • Entertain/interest/challenge audiences • Be spokesperson for theater, toward the community, the press, and donors • Focus on (new, diverse) audience development • Be involved in community collaborations • Foster relationships with state and local government, business, foundations (joint with ED)
Fiscal Cooperation	• Work in partnership with ED, especially on budgeting the vision • Oversee MFA program, if available (joint with ED) • Be involved in fundraising • Engage with and report to Board

Articulating the theater's artistic vision through programing, being its artistic voice in a variety of settings when relating to a variety of audiences, and doing these activities as a reflection of the theater's mission and within the limitations of its resources are the essence of the artistic director's job. In the 2013-14 season women occupied no more than 21% of the artistic director positions in LORT member-theaters. There were six artistic directors of color heading a LORT member-theater, less than 10%. Only one of these ADs of color was a woman. These numbers have not changed for many years.

It is instructive to connect the job description we gleaned from resumes and interviews with what we learned from data in the Stage Directors' Survey (see Appendix D for an in-depth presentation of survey findings). We asked surveyed directors who had applied for but not succeeded in getting an AD position which factors they thought were responsible for the failure of their application. Knowing what the others in the field identify as the stumbling blocks to leadership may help those

using the above job description as a guiding tool in their career path. The top two reasons, lack of fundraising experience and lack of experience in producing, represent skills that directors do not necessarily acquire while executing their main craft, namely directing. Both are skills one acquires while working closely with other departments in the theater, more particularly the development office and the board of trustees for fundraising and a combination of many departments for producing.

The next three top reasons for failing to attain an artistic director spot refer to lack of personal and professional connections, which one gains by building a reputation, getting written up by the press, or by traveling widely and directing at many theaters where one can connect with people with influence.

The tension between acquiring the two critical skills of fundraising and producing on the one hand and building the necessary relationships on the other is immediately apparent when one envisions how a freelance director would go about acquiring fundraising skills without being housed in a theater and having access to its Board and its donors. Similarly, associate artistic directors employed by a theater may have difficulty getting written up in the press or building connections with others in various theaters because they may not regularly get invited to direct elsewhere or may not get time away from their home base. These findings have implications for early or mid-career directors or producers who may aspire to leadership in how to attain all the necessary elements of the job description in order to feel prepared as a viable candidate. Later in this report we will describe these barriers further and offer some recommendations. To close off this section, we simply want to point out that the path to artistic directorship may not be one that linearly progresses along one pre-set career path.

3.2 Executive director's job

Similar to what we did for the job description for ADs, we arrived at the job description for an ED through specific questions asked of current EDs in interviews, augmented with an examination of EDs' resumes, and interviews with search firm professionals and Trustees who have served on search committees.

In this report we include under the ED acronym the top executive/ managerial leaders in the 53 LORT theaters that have a dual leadership model in which the AD and ED both report to the theater's Board of Trustees,[6] and the top managerial director who reports to the AD/ED in the remaining 21 theaters which have a single leadership model. That is, in either model, the top managerial leader is what we refer to as the ED. (In mastheads of LORT member-theaters, the top executive/ managerial positions have been named managing director, general manager, and more rarely chief operating officer, and director of finance.)

An ED's job is to translate the AD's artistic vision into the theater's operation within the theater's fiscal reality. EDs are responsible for the day-to-day and future operations of a theater within budgetary constraints. They are responsible for allocating funds as well as raising funds with oversight from the Board of Trustees who carry the ultimate fiduciary responsibility of a theater's financial health. Therefore, Board relations is a major part of an ED's role.

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6   In university-based theaters, leaders report to the academic dean, not directly to a Board of Trustees. There are 12 university-based theaters among the 74 LORT member-theaters.

Table 3.2 Executive director job description

Board Relations	• Communicate with Board (report to Board) • Manage Board
Collaboration with the AD	• Collaborate with (or serve) AD to translate artistic vision into viable reality • Articulate value of the theater to the community • Produce shows • Work with artists • Foster relationships with state and local government, business, foundations
Business/ Operational Responsibilities	• Oversee organizational leadership/management • Oversee development/fundraising • Oversee strategic planning • Oversee marketing/communications • Oversee the box office • Oversee financial budgeting/fiscal health/forecasting/audit • Oversee labor negotiations/contracts • Oversee HR • Oversee facilities/IT/safety • Oversee general manager (joint with AD) • Oversee MFA program, if available (joint with AD) • Hire business support staff

Women have fared better in being appointed to the top position on the operational side of a LORT member-theater than in becoming its top artistic leader. In the 2013-14 season, women constituted 38% of the highest executive/managerial leaders of their theater. On the other hand, there are no EDs of color in LORT member-theaters, female or male.

Women's current representation on the operational side is an improvement over historical levels and particularly when compared to the scarcity of female leaders on the artistic side. One can argue that women holding 38% of the ED positions in theaters that are members of LORT is an indicator of a trend toward achieving greater gender parity in a short time. While acknowledging this possibility, two additional facts make us reluctant to say this group of theaters is on its way to achieving gender parity on the managerial side. First, women are overrepresented in almost all managerial levels below top leadership on the operational side (see Figure 8.1, at the start of the Chapter 8) which makes 38% female EDs an example of a glass ceiling. Second, as can be seen in Figure 3.1, there is a pattern in women holding ED positions: When analyzing where women were employed along budget lines of LORT member-theaters (as defined by TCG), we noticed that women are underrepresented as executive directors in the largest theaters. They represent 17% in theaters with budgets over $10 million vs. close to 50% in those with budgets under $10 million. While it is possible to argue that this pattern may be due to women not applying to become EDs of the largest theaters, other findings suggest that search committees of the largest theaters are less likely to hire women to run their theaters' operations because they are less likely to trust women to be able to handle large budget. We discuss the issue of "trust" in leader selection in the next chapter entitled *Search and selection process.*

Figure 3.1 Percent of female executive directors per budget level of LORT member-theaters

Female and male EDs per budget level

Level	Women
Level 3 (1.5M–3M)	45% Women
Level 4 (3M–5M)	50% Women
Level 5 (5M–10M)	47% Women
Level 6 (10M+)	17% Women

Legend: Women, Men
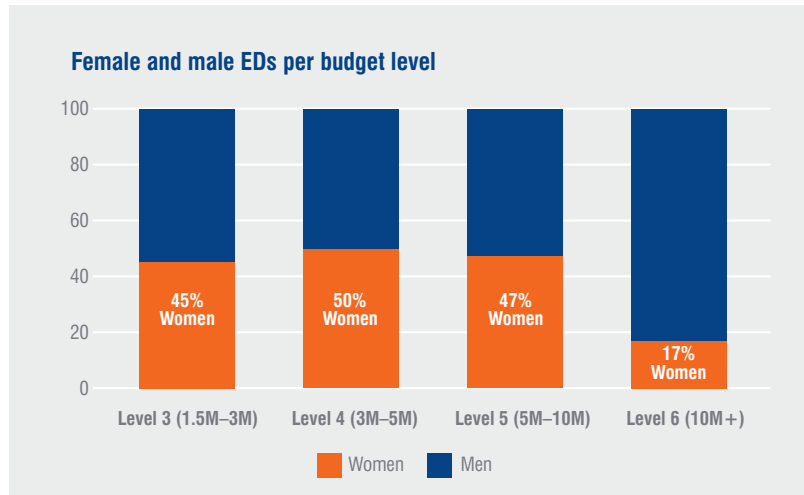
As we did for the artistic director position, we also investigated which elements of the job description were stumbling blocks for those who aspired to take an executive leadership position. We asked several questions on the Operational Managers' Survey to learn about this. Here is what we found: the top four skills both male and female aspiring executive leaders indicated as the hardest to acquire were Board relations, leadership, fundraising, and strategic planning (see Appendix E for more detailed information and for details on gender differences). Further, among those who had applied but not succeeded in attaining a leadership spot, lack of fundraising experience was perceived as the number one reason for this failure.

It seems that for an aspiring executive leader Board relations and fundraising, which are closely related, should be prominent training areas. Fundamentals of fundraising skills can be taught and learned, and sharpened with experience. Relating to a Board, however, is an elusive skill that is harder to acquire. Therefore it is worthwhile for aspiring candidates to reach out to Board members of any nonprofit or for-profit organization and build relationships with them, to learn to understand how trustees approach their influential positions.

Search and selection process

Typically, when a vacancy for an AD or ED position occurs, the search and selection process for a replacement includes the formation of a Board search committee, hiring of a search firm, development and posting of a job description, recruitment of a slate of candidates, vetting of the candidates, selecting interviewees, and a hiring decision. There are opportunities to make productive and not-so-productive decisions at each step with respect to the goal of diversifying top leadership. In this section of the report we discuss what we heard from LORT member-theater ADs, EDs, people next-in-line to those positions, search firm professionals, Trustees who have served on search committees, and people outside of LORT we consulted. Some topics, particularly recruitment and the decision to hire, drew the most comments. We developed recommendations on what can be done to improve diversity in hiring for each step of the search and selection process.

4.1 The vacancy

Even though a vacancy signifies the launch of a search process, it is better understood as the event that provides the context of the search — did a beloved AD depart leaving people consciously or unconsciously wishing to replicate her? Or was an ED's contract not renewed because the Board decided they needed someone who gets along better with their somewhat tempestuous but brilliant AD, and look for a candidate who is completely different from the departing ED?

We heard from search professionals and Board members who served on searches that, "each search is unique." This view stems in part from each theater considering itself to be unique, perhaps as a point of pride; but the varying circumstances leading to the creation of a vacancy also contribute to the sentiment that each search is unique. If something is unique, not much can be offered by way of guidelines on how to manage it. However, we heard from a few interviewees that removing the vacancy from its immediate context and applying a number of agreed upon guidelines can result in a more equitable outcome.

> **Female AD:** Analyze where you are. Be honest about where you are as an organization and where you haven't met your goals in whatever capacity, and why you matter or don't matter to your community, and what you hope will come out of this [search].

This recommendation to move away from the idiosyncrasies of the person who used to hold the job in favor of examining where the theater is with respect to meeting its mission when there is a vacancy is an example of a guideline for initiating a search.

4.2 Formation of a Board search committee

It has become standard recommendation to include members of underrepresented groups on search committees, a positive step toward inclusion of a variety of voices. Yet, the formation of a Board search committee is a process that can be influenced by the internal politics of the Board. As the comment from a NIL-ED suggests, Board dynamics or internal politics can disrupt the

intended impact of a diverse search committee: "There may be diverse voices at the table but the two white male leaders have the power." This comment reflects that power dynamics among Trustees play a role in the selection process. It appears that it is not enough to have diverse representation at the table, all voices need to be amplified and heard to be able to have an impact on the outcome. Research by Karpowitz and his colleagues (2012) suggests that decision making rules can make a difference in diverse voices being spoken and heard. Their experiments showed that in groups which adhere to a <u>unanimous</u> decision making rule, women are not disadvantaged in voice or authority when they are a numerical minority in the group. The researchers report that compared to groups which operate based on "majority rule," unanimity substantially boosts the participation of women.

> If trustees are charged with addressing the field's gender imbalance, work as equals with a variety of diverse decision makers, and are held accountable for each decision, diversity is more likely to result.

How can trustees, both men and women, who form the search committee be champions of diversification? Recent research by Dobbin and Kalev (2016) points to three elements: First, engaging those who make the hiring decisions in solving the problem promotes a personal investment. If trustees are charged with finding the solution to a problem through positive engagement (e.g. "help us balance the leadership gender representation in our field," "help us mentor the next diverse generation"), research has shown they are more likely to own the problem and advocate for a solution. Secondly, having direct contact with those who are different as a peer or in an *equal* position, helps those making hiring decisions see any other "different" candidate as more worthy of consideration. Exposure to diverse people increases the likelihood that diversity becomes part of the norm. And last, by establishing accountability for and transparency in decision making, decisions that may be based on "tastes" (positive or negative biases about one or more groups) can be replaced by decisions that are based on more equitable processes.

These research findings have relevance to search committee formation and selection processes. If trustees are charged with addressing the field's gender imbalance, work as equals with a variety of diverse decision makers, and are held accountable for each decision, diversity is more likely to result.

4.3 Hiring a search firm

A theater typically hires a search firm if its Board decides not to promote from within (for more on promotions from within, see Chapter 6). A female ED at a LORT-theater affiliated with a university had strong views on the need for posting searches externally if a theater is serious about not replicating its existing gender and racial composition. "We have instituted an iron-clad policy that all, all jobs—and this has always been true of faculty, but now it's true of staff positions—will be posted externally." Having the open position be visible to the widest possible audience ensures that recruitment does not just rely on word of mouth to "the usual suspects."

Leadership positions at theaters with budgets the size of those at LORT theaters are usually handled by a select few search firms. These firms are therefore an important partner in leadership selection procedures. A female AD informed us that she insisted on asking search firms to include the firm's diversity statement and their record of placing diverse candidates in leadership positions in their bid to win the contract for a search. She added, "It's important to know where the firm is on this and gives a strong indication that we take diversity seriously." Informed by the current lack

of gender and racial diversity in leadership, a Board search team may even need to question the absence of groups on a proposed slate of candidates: Where are the women? Where are the racial minorities? Did enough diversity make it onto the slate or should the process start over? Should the search firm reach deeper and further so that the theater's mission can be more fully executed? Even when relatively unknown candidates are put forward, this acquaints Board member with new, possible candidates for future considerations. Clearly, even the early steps of the process require conscious monitoring if diversity is to remain a central part of hiring.

4.4 Developing a job description

If theaters do analyze their current state with respect to their mission and their value in the community at that very moment in time, as was suggested (see quote above "Analyze where you are...") by one AD, they are likely to come up with a list of competencies that they want the ideal candidate for the next leadership spot to hold. This list will become part of the job description. The job description needs to be closely examined for any unintended gender- or race-based biases. For example, most theaters include in their mission that they want to present a multitude of voices. How is the theater doing that? Is that "multitude" diverse enough; are the voices on stage (through the selection of actors, plays, playwrights, directors) representing this diversity adequately? Has the community recently shifted toward a different racial balance that the theater has not addressed? How can a new leader respond to this shift and further the mission in future programming? The list of candidate characteristics resulting from the theater's self-analysis can serve as the starting point for more objective evaluation of candidates for the vacant position. Each industry has to evolve with the times and shifting culture, and theaters, as cultural institutions, are at the helm of that shift and need to fill leadership spots accordingly. Consequently, job descriptions will evolve over time, such that what may have been used several years prior for the departing leader, may no longer be valid for a future leader.

4.5 Recruiting a slate of candidates

In recruiting a slate of candidates for any particular search, search firm professionals told us that in their line of work, they are continually on the lookout for talent, so they feel they already have a good idea of the state of the field when they are hired to do a search: "We do a lot of work up front. Lots of phone calls to find out who is ready to move." One search firm professional elaborated on the process of developing a slate:

> We always call people of various communities and various political persuasions and various parts of the country for ideas. And we keep trying to add to the list of who we call — and we know if we're getting new ideas then we're doing the right thing, and when we don't see new names coming up, we know we haven't done enough. We'll also recruit individuals that we know or know of as well as go after people that have been recommended to us, as well as review the applicants and if someone interests us enough, going through that process of interviewing. So all of that goes into who we might eventually recommend.... And we'll tend, in the artistic searches, we'll tend to [send] maybe eight to twelve candidates for review [to] the committee.

When we asked current and past ADs among SDC director-members who took our survey about the circumstances of their becoming an AD, having been contacted by a search firm was checked

by fewer people than any of the other options (in descending order: I am the founder; I was contacted by the AD or ED of the theater; I was contacted by a Board member of the theater). The same results held when this question was asked of past and current EDs. The low incidence of acknowledging search firms' role may be a cohort effect: many of these leaders had been in their position for a long time. Also, it is possible that search firms were not as actively involved in leadership selection 20-30 years ago. Among those who have never been an AD (never-ADs) who more recently applied to be AD, there were more frequent reports of having been contacted by a search firm and asked to apply. This was particularly true of candidates of color. Indeed, in interviews with female professionals of color who hold next-in-line positions on the artistic side, we heard comments that search firms either sought them out or were responsive to them when approached. Here's a comment from a female of color NIL-AD about helpful advice she sought and received from a search firm professional.

> I said [to search firm professional] 'What do I need to do to be ready?' ... He said, 'You know, the most challenging and the most potentially fulfilling relationships for an Artistic Director are the relationship with the Executive Director and the relationship with the Board.' So he said, 'Every opportunity you can, watch [AD] and [ED] and how they interact. And if you can be a fly on the wall in their meetings, do so.' So I mentioned that to both of them in my six-month review, because they know what my ambitions are, you know? And they said, 'Yeah,' when they find opportunities for me to be there, they'll be sure to let me know.

Similarly, more frequent acknowledgment of the role played by search firms was observed in interviews on the managerial side with both female and male never-EDs who had made an application to become an ED. However, the ED survey did not have enough respondents of color to be able to address if search firms are more active in recent executive searches involving candidates of color.

Even while it appears that search firms are recently more active in recruiting women and people of color, when we evaluate the outcome specifically for LORT-affiliated theater placements, search firms' reach may not be quite fool-proof yet. Indeed, a female creative producer of color with substantial for-profit and nonprofit theater producing credits and ambitions to become an AD, reported that she had never been approached by a search firm. Echoing the need for search firms to do more, here are the words of a female ED regarding search firms' failure to change the face of executive leadership by recruiting more women and, particularly, women of color:

> [Search firms] aren't having much success in changing the face of executive leadership. And ... they say it's a pipeline problem, which I think is just an excuse for laziness. I mean, I'm sorry but I mean (laughs)... I do think it's an excuse. ... You will see that they say it's a pipeline problem because we don't have experienced higher level women of color in high level positions that have been out in the field long enough for Boards to think they might be competitive. But those same Boards are going out and plucking men—white men—from other industries, and putting them into executive leadership roles. ... We have seen Boards hire managing directors or executive directors coming out of allied industries, not coming out of theater. But you don't see ...women of color being hired from allied industries.

This ED clearly wants to see search firms present more diversity in the slates they offer Board search committees. Boards can also *demand* more diverse slates. A female AD told us that her

Board search committee once asked the search firm to start over and present a slate more diverse than what they first submitted.

4.5.1 The Rooney Rule

Theaters' insistence on a diverse slate brings us to the topic of the Rooney Rule. In 2003 Dan Rooney, the chairman of the Pittsburgh Steelers, pointing to the stark underrepresentation of black head coaches (6%) while 70% of players were black, persuaded the NFL to create the rule that was eventually named for him. Today the Rooney Rule most often refers to the requirement that candidates from underrepresented backgrounds be among the few candidates who will be interviewed. Lily Janiak (2013) wrote about the Rooney Rule in connection with theater leadership not looking like the rest of theater employees. She reports that "The Rooney Rule mandates that, when interviewing for general manager (where diversity statistics are similarly dismal) or head coach positions, teams must interview—just talk to, not necessarily hire—an applicant of color." She goes on to write that

...the proposals that have come out of the conversations about hiring in TCG, LORT, and elsewhere [are] to create a version of the Rooney Rule for the theater world. In contrast to a sweeping strategic plan, such a rule has obvious appeal. It's easy to understand; it imposes no direct monetary costs; it requires swift and meaningful action; and it worked in another industry (at least initially).

Janiak notes that despite this appeal, the idea has generated controversy in the theater world. Top among the controversies is who should be included in the scope of the Rooney Rule. Some ADs and EDs have argued that women should be included because, as a group, women are underrepresented in leadership in spite of there being a majority of female employees at levels below the top. Others, mainly spokespeople at LORT and TCG, have argued that the industry can only deal with one diversity problem at a time and the current focus is on racial diversity. Still others have wanted the scope of Rooney-Rule-inspired searches to be informed by the underrepresentation in leadership along the lines of class, sexuality, and disability.

> It behooves search committees to discuss the Rooney Rule and, even if they decide not to adopt a version of it, at least be aware of its intention and institute alternatives to their recruitment process to achieve its goal.

We also heard about the Rooney Rule in interviews when we asked about what can be done to diversify theater leadership.

> **Male NIL-AD:** We started a diversity and inclusion task force among the staff and having representation from every department at every level, there's junior and senior level of the people on board, just to get this conversation out there in the open and have a safe space to talk about what can be potentially volatile conversation and just make sure that there's buy-in from the ground up, so that's one thing. Then there are the practical steps. We're wrestling with, if we're going to adopt a version of the Rooney Rule. We're talking about formalizing partnerships with the HBCUs [Historically Black Colleges and Universities] in our community and that would be a recruitment tool and putting some effort in on that front.

> **Male ED:** … we have had to do some things here, again with kind of a long view, … if we can diversify entry-level and middle-tiered positions, we think that will ultimately

result in diversifying the senior leadership here or elsewhere. So we've adopted our own Rooney Rule so that for every position that's open we make sure we're interviewing a person of color that isn't an applicant at all. And I think it's had a difference.

Male NIL-AD: [about the Rooney Rule] nothing like that exists for race or gender in the American theater or the Symphony world or the other worlds in the arts. It's largely...these are... a white male dominated fields. That even extends to playwrights; I mean this has been a big year for women saying "what the fuck's going on here? We're not getting produced!" So to be very basic about this, those women are going to have to convince the world that we're missing out on something by not seeing female playwrights.

Female NIL-AD: ... when they were talking about the Rooney Rule ... there was a white woman who stood up and said, 'You know, if we're going to have a Rooney Rule, then there needs to be a woman that's a finalist for every position as well.... Because there are no women in the LORT theater.' ... But the point of the conversation,... when you say that there is a finalist that is a person of color, that includes women. ... *we* represent, you know, many genders, many sexual orientations—we are the multitude. ... I think when you diversify your artistic leadership, that what ends up happening is that the art that's on stage becomes equally diverse. ... It means that there is an openness to understanding and seeing people that doesn't currently exist. [Also,] minorities in management positions—it suddenly opens the door to create opportunities for other leaders of color.

It is clear that the Rooney Rule represents one viable strategy for diversifying top leadership in the theater world. It behooves search committees to discuss the Rooney Rule and, even if they decide not to adopt a version of it, at least be aware of its intention and institute alternatives to their recruitment process to achieve its goal.

4.6 Vetting and selecting

Once a (final) slate has been submitted, candidates are vetted to reduce the number to a few (usually three) who will be invited to be interviewed. A female ED reminded us of the importance to ask the same set of questions of each candidate, and to ensure that those asking the questions ask them in a neutral way, without feeding information or without presuming a certain person to answer a certain way.

...in the interview process, we develop with that group a list of questions and ... we build a list of core competencies ... that we're going to rate the applicants on a scale of

> The present scarcity of women and people of color in leadership makes the challenge of diversifying leadership harder. We heard in interviews that, hidden behind a gender- and race-neutral job description, is an expectation grounded in a stereotype of who is already there in the job: the current group of LORT theater leaders is primarily white and male, which comes to represent, largely without people being aware of it, what a theater leader needs to look like.

> one to five .... And we also have a set list of interview questions. We ask the same questions of every applicant. ... I also spend quite a bit of time with the [search committee] team reminding them that a question is not a statement. A question is a question. ... it's appalling to me ... how much inside information you can feed [a candidate] if you're not disciplined about the way you go at it.

This process of vetting and also making a decision on whom to hire has traditionally incorporated soliciting opinions from well trusted theater people, whose endorsements can carry a lot of weight. While it is important to find out about a potential hire's reputation and standing in the field, we heard several comments that such an approach can work *against* diversifying leadership. This is because who is well known and respected by other well-known and respected people tends to be a relatively small circle, not too different from the notion of an "old boys' network." A female Trustee who had served on search committees explained it this way: "People favor whom they like. They like whom they know. Personal connections are key."

A female ED commenting on the scarcity of women in both AD and ED positions suggested that familiarity with who is already in the role translates into a decision on who is more suitable for the role.

> I think that most of the people who are doing hiring for top management positions are still men. And so you simply put a female and a male candidate in the room and the one looks more familiar than the other though both are suitable. And one sounds more familiar to them and the other one doesn't.

A female AD observed that women and people of color tend to get overlooked as viable candidates for leadership because they don't look like who is already in these positions.

> I do think there are still some real blind spots, speed bumps, pick your metaphor of choice when it comes to women and people of color in our field where the current leadership — and I put it frankly as much on Boards of directors as I put it on extant top-level leadership and organization staff leadership in organizations — we tend to... it's hard to imagine something you've not yet seen, right? And ... that goes both ways. If you're sitting at the top of an organization and you look across the field and everybody across the field who's also sitting at the top of those organizations looks like you, then without any kind of malicious and willful intent that's in your brain that tells you what leadership looks like and so you scan the field just below and you look for that. And I think Boards of directors come from corporate worlds where C-level positions have the same profoundly... white, male leadership models ...

In other words, the present scarcity of women and people of color in leadership makes the challenge of diversifying leadership harder. We heard in interviews that, hidden behind a gender- and race-neutral job description, is an expectation grounded in a stereotype of who is already there in the job: the current group of LORT theater leaders is primarily white and male, which comes to represent, largely without people being aware of it, what a theater leader needs to look like. Stereotyping women as "not leadership material" is an example of prejudice. Iris Bohnet, in her 2016 book, *What works: Gender equality by design*, describes an additional tendency to generalize from group averages as an example of "statistical discrimination" which is not based on prejudice but can have the same effect of keeping otherwise talented individuals out. Judging individuals

based on membership in a group can perpetuate long-held prejudices. Nobel laureate Daniel Kahneman, in his 2011 book, *Thinking, fast and slow*, elaborates on the common human tendency to process information quickly, making judgments using shortcuts to arrive

at decisions. This type of thinking contrasts with the slower, deliberate, and conscious evaluation of relevant evidence. Expecting an AD or ED to be a particular type is a strong and subtle bias of the "fast thinking" variety when evaluating a slate of candidates. People we interviewed told us that the expectation of who looks like a stereotypical leader can steer selection committees toward unintentionally focusing on those they had already envisioned they could trust to do the job. Here is a male Trustee who had served on several leadership searches talking about his observations of the hiring process.

> Men tend to hire men because they grew up with men. Decision makers [on the Board] have a business background. It's a vestige of [whom] you are comfortable with. You'd want the best person in charge [of the theater]. Men are more comfortable with men... There are men who are more comfortable with other men in management.

A woman who did not become the AD of a theater she co-founded explained, "very often a man will get [the leadership role]... people are often times more comfortable with a man helming it... they were much more comfortable with a man."

A few other comments we heard appeared to provide an explanation of why Boards are influenced by trusting people they are familiar with. More than a few interviewees suggested that hiring decisions always involve risk of the unknown, and decision makers tend to go with what they know. People who "look like them" are seen as a less risky choice. A female AD acknowledged that serious attempts to consider diverse candidates will force Boards out of their comfort zone, but *not* moving beyond the comfort zone risks perpetuating the present composition of the leadership.

> It's a question of how rigorous are you looking and how much are you holding yourself accountable to make sure that before you make a decision that that's what your candidate pool looks like. And it may make you look differently than you're accustomed to looking. It's sort of what I was saying earlier, if all you – if I have a position opening up and all I look at is who's currently around me, then it will be ever thus.

A male AD spoke to Boards' bias being stoked by their wish to minimize risks.

> Nobody knows, you cannot be sure of anybody's success in one of these jobs. And this gets to the point of unconscious bias. These Boards are under tremendous pressure. You don't want to make a mistake, you can't be wrong in making that hiring choice, but there is no way to be sure that you're right. ... you know that you can't be sure, so in the end you are taking a risk, and people will take risks on people who seem most like them. And when those Boards are made up of all white, mostly male groups, it is no accident that they are taking the risk on all white, mostly male candidates.

Echoing the female AD's comments above about being rigorous about diversity and moving Boards out of their comfort zone, a male AD of color describes how lack of familiarity, fear of the unknown, narrows one's comfort zone when Board members are trying to make a responsible choice:

I think what holds it back also is Boards are afraid of the unknown.... I think that people's comfort zones are not as broad as the diversity we're suggesting. ... Boards tend to feel they're doing their fiscal responsibly thing by choosing somebody who seems a more comfortable fit. So as they are casting the role of Artistic Director or casting the role of Managing Director, they don't see a person of color or a woman in those positions as much as we're describing maybe ought to be there.

He goes on to speculate on what may be behind the Board's fear of the unknown.

They're afraid that programming will shift so radically that it will distance the long-time subscriber that may or may not be as interested in more diverse programming, or funders—which I think is even the bigger issue—going, 'Well, you know, this funder might not be comfortable. Because people give money to people and I know this person and they don't have a lot of people of color in their circle of friends or among their donors or in their business and they may not be comfortable giving money any-more at the level they've been giving it to this woman or to this person of color that we're going to now have be the leader of our organization.' I think there's fear about whether it will work or not. And it's safer [to hire a white man].

A search firm professional we interviewed confirmed how Trustees communicate the hope to hire someone who has no risk attached: "They all want people who have done the job in another LORT theater. We know that.... [laughing]."

Similarly, another search firm professional adds:

We'll have had enough conversation with them [the Board search committee] to know how open they are to break through some of the glass ceilings that still exist as opposed to about not being so willing. But if we think it's going to be just — if we actually think it's not real, we've pulled out of some searches when we concluded they really didn't mean it, especially because when we wonder, we say, "Look, no one's telling you to hire someone's who's not qualified. The issue is what degree of qualifi-cation you're insisting on. And if you insist in some cases on someone who's done this at a theater of your size for five or more years, then you are cutting out a universe of people who have the functional and life experiences that probably mean they could do this job." But we have to have that conversation sometimes.

Ultimately, if a search committee hires the ED or AD from another LORT theater, that person is more likely to be a white man, because that is who are in the majority in these positions.

4.6.1 Scale

Scale comes into the conversation when there is need to trust a leader from a relatively small theater to lead a larger theater. The size of a theater is reflected in its budget — less than a million, $1-2 million and on up the budget categories along which TCG categorizes its member theaters. It can also reflect how many stages a theater operates, the size of its main stage, the presence of other components such as educational programs, etc.

On the artistic side, the key elements for selecting a candidate revolve around seeing this person bring a compelling artistic vision for the theater, the ability to generate excitement among the-ater goers and donors by effective programming and public speaking, an ability to relate to the

press, bring in new audiences, and fulfill a wide public presence. Fundraising for a large theater may appear daunting in terms of the sheer numbers of dollars that need to be solicited. However, what is expected of the artistic director is a willingness to meet with and charm potential donors to whom Trustees make the introductions, and convince them of the relevance of the theater in the donor's life and portfolio, if appropriate. Despite the relationships that the artistic director needs to forge with deep-pocket donors, it is the responsibility of the development office, which reports to the ED, to establish the connections with potential donors and ultimately bring in the donations. If the Trustees feel comfortable that they will be able to take a new AD around to meet and greet prominent community members of means, the size of the artistic director candidate's previous theater is not likely to be a big concern.

However, we heard that Trustees serving on the Board of a hiring company express concern over whether they can trust the candidate from a small theater to meet the challenges of running a larger theater. This male AD expressed an awareness of Trustees' concern.

> [...] biggest thing to have to grapple with as you get bigger is the numbers of different, not just people, but the numbers of different issues that you have to [deal with] every-thing just gets quantified.... And the problem is that it's not a question of artistic skills, it's a question of management.

Further acknowledging Trustees' concern, an artistic leader described how she would recommend search committees evaluating a candidate with experience predominately at a smaller theater to give them credit for what they were able to accomplish on a small budget with few support staff:

> ...what people aren't looking at in those transitions [going from a small to a larger theater] is the idea that when you're doing it at the scale of a million dollars, the quan-tity of it that you are doing yourself or parsed among very few people, the depth with which you have to attack any of these tasks, is huge. Whereas if you go into a bigger organization ... you have an entire team of people who are tasked with helping you.... So it's a little bit how do you get from that kind of renegade status to a really institu-tionalized status? And I'm not sure which is harder. I'm not sure scale is everything in that. But I think there is not necessarily a great sense of value placed on, 'Wow, you know, so-and-so ran a [smaller] organization and they did it with only four people or six people. They must have the wherewithal, given all of the support and the structure that's already in place at imaginary [larger] company, to take this on.'

In response to how someone from a smaller-scale institution would show or clarify in an interview that their experience can be translated to a larger scale one, she adds:

> ... at that point would it be reassuring to the leaders of the [larger] company to hear from board members [at the smaller institution]: 'Absolutely, you know, person X has grown this company from here to here and, you know, we as board members have increased our contributions in light of this person's vision from here to here.' Or to talk to foundation leaders who have been able to say, 'Based on this person's leader-ship, we as a foundation increased our giving from X to Y in recognition of our confi-dence in them.' You know, how do you encourage the people then who are doing those searches to dig a little bit more deeply or to challenge their own preconceptions? Because otherwise it's the same handful of people who are going to get passed from

job to job to job, and that's ultimately I don't think going to be of any great service to the American theater, women or not women, you know?

Notwithstanding these considerations, there are illustrious examples of Boards of larger LORT theaters hiring female or male ADs from smaller budget theaters. Therefore, there is precedence on the artistic side of not making the issue of scale a deal-breaker in hiring.

On the administrative/operational side of the theater, scale appears to be much more important. Trustees, many of whom have business backgrounds, want to see a candidate who has credible experience of operating a large organization, something Trustees know about from personal experience. A quotation from a search firm professional we have already mentioned earlier highlighted this wish:

> They all want people who have done the job in another LORT theater. We know that.... They all say "oh, what we really want to do is we want to hire a [male LORT ED name], we want to hire a [male LORT ED name]. We want to hire a [female LORT ED name].' I go, 'Yeah, I know you do.' [laughing]

This remark not only highlights the risks a Board foresees associated with hiring someone new, but also the desire of search committees to hire someone who has worked at the LORT level, preferably within the same budget group, most likely to avoid adjustment time for a new leader taking on a larger theater.

Specifically for ED leadership preparation the image of "leapfrog[ging] to other organizations" was used by one male ED, suggesting that getting high-level managerial experience in a smaller theater can be a good training ground for another, possibly lower, position in a larger theater. Another female ED describes this:

> Actually working in smaller companies for some period of time can be very useful. ... But what I find is that there's a point at which if you really want to hone your skills, you cannot stay in a small company. And that may mean taking a step back in terms of career. Working in a larger company in a less prestigious position.

We examined the paths of the LORT EDs hired at the largest-budget theaters (23 level-6 budget theaters; see Table 4.1). We found that these theaters' Boards had been much more likely to trust and hire a man, even from a smaller theater, to run their larger budget organization than they had been to hire a woman. Eight of the 18 male EDs in the budget-level-6 theaters came from smaller budget organizations, while 2 of the 6 women EDs at these theaters did. In other words, 35% of the Boards of these larger theaters had trusted a man to be able to run a larger organization than he had before (8 out of 23), and only 9% (2 out of 23) of these theaters' Boards had trusted a woman to be able to do so. Currently, more women are placed at the top of theaters with budgets under $10Million (see Chapter 3, *Executive director's job*). It appears that scale is more of a concern when considering hiring a female ED.

These theaters' Boards had been much more likely to trust and hire a man, even from a smaller theater, to run their larger budget organization than they had been to hire a woman.

Table 4.1 Budget transition for EDs at the largest budget theaters in LORT

Budget 6 theaters only	Male EDs			Female EDs		
Budget size of previous place of employment	Smaller	Same	Larger	Smaller	Same	Larger
	8	10	0	2	1	2

This trend is not present among artistic directors where there are women in artistic leadership roles at large budget theaters, some of whom have come from other large-budget organizations and some others who were promoted into those roles from smaller venues.

A professional from a search firm further addressed how scale influences hiring decisions, when discussing how a theater can accommodate a new leader whose experience may not be quite at the level of the theater that is hiring.

> ... if you've never had more than three people report to you and all of a sudden you have five senior managers, each of whom have five to ten people in their departments, it's a very big change. And what we've said to our clients is, 'If you believe this person has the capacity, then you could certainly put the right people around him or her, and you could certainly in your own way help them succeed.'

Indeed, Boards of large theaters have been known to support a new hire from a smaller company by paying for coaching. The same search firm professional quoted above, mentioned that there are also current initiatives in which "money [is] being given to have associates to the managing directors, fellowships to the managing directors ... take a year or two rotation and [these candidates] are therefore more ready to deal with scale" as a concrete and effective way to help ambitious managers get the required experience on their resumes across various budget sizes in order to be taken more seriously at a higher budget level theater.

4.6.2 Biases and "objectivity"

a. Subjective decisions or quantitative assessments?

Because so much of the decision making process is subjective — highly influenced by personal preferences, tastes, and biases — there have been efforts to inject a more quantitative approach into the search process in an effort to make it more "objective." On the face of it, there is something appealing about judging all candidates on the same criteria each of which lends itself to a score and then to compare candidates on their total scores. It suggests rationality and openness, hence promising to be unbiased. When quantifiable "objective" criteria are made widely known, it helps make searches more transparent.

Quantitative assessments can be less biased than qualitative judgments but only if the criteria used in the quantitative assessment are less biased. Well-meaning people are not always aware of the biases they bring to developing the assessment tools. The comments from a female ED elaborate on an example of a biased matrix designed to arrive at a numerical score for evaluating candidates for a theater management training program.

> [He] has a matrix system by which he evaluates applicants. And it's a system of scoring, and for him scoring includes added points if you went to a particular college that … a higher-ranked college than another one. And as you can imagine, it plays out to make it harder for first generation college graduates of color even just to make it into the interview round.

A female AD who participated in an ED search[7] made similar remarks about the use of biased quantitative measurement.

> … I think [tests] may be holding back women from the top jobs: the psychometrics testing given to potential candidates. This happened in our ED search. And the candidates … were measured against a "baseline." When I asked who exactly counted as "normal" on the baseline, it was candidates who had been successfully hired to similar positions, i.e., mostly men. The test asked candidates to self-report specific behavior as to decisiveness, decision-making, collaboration etc., and it felt to me there was incredible [masculine] bias in the way the answers were judged.

While quantitative assessments for judging candidates can be a step forward in the service of transparency and consistency (all candidates being judged on the same criteria), they need to be gender, race, and class neutral. Recognizing and eliminating biased criteria from so-called "objective" quantitative assessments is a field onto itself in psychology and also in organizational behavior.[8] What search committees and search firms need to be aware of is that just because an assessment is quantitative does not mean it will give unbiased results. In Chapter 10, among the recommendations we gleaned from the field for promoting diversity in leadership, is a section on becoming aware of one's biases.

b. Is it possible to develop metrics that can promote diversity?

Developing a metric for judging each candidate on the same quantifiable criteria and being transparent about it can be positive steps toward leveling the playing field. A female AD spoke of the need for "clearer metrics about what is required of the AD and ED jobs" for opening the jobs to people who have been underrepresented in leadership.

Metrics that are gender- and race-neutral are likely to be a benefit to all candidates. They can be arrived at if those devising and testing the metrics include the voices of all groups who will both use and be subjected to them. However, when we asked about this idea in interviews, using a metric to evaluate candidates was not well received by Trustees who have served on search committees or by search firms: they contended that each search is unique. While, indeed, each theater and each vacancy may be unique, the job descriptions for ADs and EDs we arrived at through our analyses presented in Chapter 3 strongly suggest that there are common competencies a leader

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7   We heard about tests being used only in reference to ED searches.

8   The value of a quantitative assessment tool is judged against its validity and reliability for use in the populations for whom it is intended. Validity refers to whether an assessment is truly measuring what it is intended to measure. There are a number of ways of judging if an assessment is valid. Among the different tests of validity, "construct validity" is considered to be a key test because it goes to the heart of validity by focusing on how well an assessment measures up to its claims (Cronbach & Meehl, 1955; Kane, 2006). The claim is rooted in a theory of how something works, and that something can be the ability to manage a theater. The next step is to develop what social scientists refer to as operational definitions, in our example, those of the ability to manage a theater. Operational definitions are measureable elements of what we want to assess. In Chapter 3 we provided elements of the job description of an ED. These can serve as the first step for developing a valid assessment of the ability to manage a theater. The next steps involve coming up with ways of quantitatively measuring each of those elements with one or more items or questions. When the items are developed, the assessment is administered to relevant groups of people to see if the outcome is robust or consistent, that is, the results do not shift based on factors unrelated to the construct, such as who is administering the assessment, the day or the time of day it is being administered, etc. For example, a reliable assessment will give the same results if it's administered to the same people two weeks apart, which is called test-retest reliability. Or if an item on an assessment involves pooling different people's judgments on a candidate's public speaking ability, when those making the judgment agree on what they are observing, this is called inter-rater reliability. Next come the steps in examining if the assessment is biased in favor of or against different groups, in other words, is it gender, race, class, or culture neutral?

must possess that transcend the uniqueness of a given theater. These common functions can be the starting point for conversations around metrics that new leaders could be measured against. Most importantly, any metrics employed would ensure that the questions asked during a selection interview are the same for each candidate, which is an important, but not often adhered to, criterion for unbiased selection.

Skills for different paths to leadership

In Chapter 3 we presented the job descriptions for ADs and EDs which summarize what is required of leaders in these positions. Chapter 4 described the processes Boards and search firms engage in when there is a leadership vacancy to fill the position with a person who will accomplish what the job requires. In this chapter we report on career paths of leaders: What we learned from ADs and EDs in interviews and through analyses of their resumes about how they prepared for the different elements of the job description for ADs and EDs. Our focus included what about their background made them a desirable candidate. We augmented the views expressed by current leaders with the views of interviewees who hold positions immediately below top leadership and with findings from the Stage Directors' and Operational Managers' Surveys. We examine implications of the different elements of the job description and preparation for the leadership role in regards to the persisting scarcity of women and people of color among leaders in LORT theaters.

5.1 Career path to become an AD

5.1.1 Artistic directors' background and implications of a background in directing

ADs in LORT member-theaters predominantly have backgrounds in directing. In this study's universe of 74 LORT theaters, 88% of ADs had a background in directing, either exclusively or in combination with other artistic endeavors, and only 12% did not (see Appendix B for overview of specific backgrounds). ADs' contracts spell out if and how often they direct at their home theater, and also whether they may travel to direct elsewhere upon invitation of theaters around the country or globe. Directing, then, is a prominent background for becoming an AD.

Directors aspiring to the AD role told us that in order to become viable candidates for leadership, they need to establish connections with other artists that can result in invitations to develop and showcase their expertise at theaters around the country. These invitations may be the outcome of relationships that directors have built throughout their early careers or during internships and/or graduate school. This artistic leadership preparation process of honing one's skill by directing widely often requires traveling around the country. Thus, it is hard to combine with family responsibilities, putting many women, and some men, at a disadvantage. We go into greater detail on family responsibilities as a perceived and real barrier to women's rise to leadership in Chapter 9, under *Family responsibilities.*

In the Stage Directors' survey we found an important gender difference in how invitations to practice one's craft can affect the path to leadership (for more details on this survey, see Appendix D).

- Among survey takers who had current or past AD experience, more men reported having directed at many different theaters than women, and the men selected this exposure and experience advantage as being instrumental in attaining their leadership position (54% of white men and 62% of men of color versus 38% of white women and 40% of women of color).

- Women survey takers who had applied for but were not hired as an AD attributed this to the fact that they lacked experience getting to direct at many different theaters (reported by 25% of women applicants but only 14% of male applicants) and also that they lacked an effective network of other artists who could speak to their strengths (39% vs 27% among male candidates).

Furthermore, in interviews we found a race disadvantage for directors of color because they were asked to direct mostly plays by minority playwrights. A male AD of color chimes in:

> ....[there is a] perception that most people of color can only work within their cultural realm. ... white artists on the whole are given a much larger slice of the benefits of the doubt, and people of color are given less ... we are very good at using black narrators for black work, but not so good [at asking] black directors for the classics.

Among survey takers who had current or past AD experience, more men reported having directed at many different theaters than women, and the men selected this exposure and experience advantage as being instrumental in attaining their leadership position

Directors of color voiced that a critical challenge to overcome in their progression to leadership was the opportunity to demonstrate that they can direct a variety of plays, not just those written by playwrights of color.

a. Directors who are not interested in becoming ADs

Not all directors aspire to become an artistic director. In fact, a sizeable number of directors who took our survey — a third of the 136 directors who had never applied to an AD position — told us they were simply not interested. The main reasons these directors had not applied was that they were happy in their current position (33%) and did not want to do any fundraising (29%). Some voices in our interviews confirmed that people who do not aspire to the leadership often see the position as one in which they would have to sacrifice art for management.

> **Female NIL-AD:** I think of myself more of wanting to have a creative, artistic lifestyle, and my impression from what other artistic directors do, a lot of it is about business, it's being a producer, in a sense, and that there's so much financial pressure on artistic directors.

b. Non-directing ADs?

If some directors see the AD position in LORT theaters as detrimental to their directing, could the position potentially be filled by those who do not have a directing background? Is the tradition of hiring directors as artistic leaders a limitation on diversity? Is having a background in directing a necessity for leadership, or are there alternatives, and could those alternatives bring more opportunity for leadership for women and people of color? We interviewed 21 people who were employed on the artistic side of the theater (as associate directors, associate artists, [creative] producers, dramaturges, or program/education directors) and who were ambitious for the artistic director spot. Of the 21, 14 did not have a directing background, which shows that the ambition for the AD spot is certainly not limited to people with directing backgrounds.

One young male producer of color who aspires to become an AD told us: "I think there has been a strong feeling from a lot of Boards that an Artistic Director should be a director. I'm coming from the school of an Artistic Director should be an artist and also an administrator." A few leadership voices also pointed to a challenge for director-candidates for leadership that being a strong artist may not be enough:

> **Male ED:** ... the leadership of arts institutions has become much, much more complex than it used to be. Partly that is because the institutions themselves have become larger and more complex, but I think largely it is because the environment that we operate in has become so much more challenging than it was, you know, 20 or 30 years ago. And I think that that makes it difficult to find good people to fill these positions, and it also increases perhaps the amount that's at stake in every search.

> **Male AD:** ... there's a lot more organizations that are looking towards more of a producer type of person who doesn't actually make art but who supports it, as a viable, if not preferred, alternative, because the amount of time it takes to make art and then run one of these institutions in the position is very challenging.

In 2013-2014, 13 white women, 3 women of color, 14 white men, and 3 men of color were working in a producing role who were not at the top of their organizational chart in LORT theaters (as associate producers, associate artistic producers, line producers). These non-leader positions show greater balance in gender (although not in terms of race) than the leadership-level group. The experience gained through producing, bridging artistic and financial aspects of decision making, could indeed be a viable alternative to having a director in leadership, and represents one group of professionals that is less frequently tapped for the position. In the words of an AD who is a producer, the AD role "is about developing a set of practices about how you deal with artists. I think it's about simultaneously balancing ... the artistic and the administrative needs of your company." She also adds: "it used to perhaps feel that you couldn't be an artistic director if you were not also a director of plays, and I don't think that's the case anymore at all." Another producer similarly told us, "There are more people who are not self-identifying as directors. They're self-identifying as creative people, creative entrepreneurs, creative producers even. And so, therefore, that quote unquote director title feels a bit old-school."

5.1.2 The artistic directors' fundraising responsibilities

The relationship between an executive director and an artistic director is primarily at the intersection of budgeting the artistic vision of the AD within the reality of fiscal possibilities for the theater. While the fiscal possibilities of a theater depend on ticket sales and fundraising — both being key elements of an ED's job description — EDs need the AD to "draw in" audiences and engage with donors.

A quote from a male AD illustrates eloquently his attitude toward fundraising:

> ... and everybody said to me, "Well, what are you going to do about all the fundraising responsibilities?" and "You're going to be spending all your time..." And I said ... that if I got the job, it was a privilege to be able to be designated as a speaker, as a citizen. I'm a citizen that's been given a pulpit to talk about art. To talk about the place of art in our lives and about the possibilities that art provides to everyone to reimagine the whole

world. And I think that's an essential and vital and maybe the most important function of our consciousness. And I feel like that's the only way I can get energy to do some of the more onerous tasks. When you really don't want to talk to so-and-so, you really don't have enough energy left in the tank to give that other speech, you really don't want to — but you have to. You have to keep remembering that it's a privilege, you've been given a privilege. And you also have to have the courage of your convictions.

An artistic director's role in fundraising is most easily understood as being the spokesperson to relay the vision of the organization to a wide set of audiences, particularly to potential donors, and with an eye to Board development. Relationship building and "story telling" are the main skills called for in this regard. Although ADs do become involved in the "ask," their primary role in meeting with potential donors is to translate their passion for the theater's mission into something meaningful for a potential donor and to maintain a relationship with those people so that they remain actively involved and interested in what the theater brings to their lives. ADs have the development office, which reports to the ED, to prepare background material and Board members to make introductions to donors. In essence then, ADs' fundraising activities are primarily meeting with people, talking with them about why it is important to be involved in the theater, and building deep personal relationships with them; additionally they also need to meet with the press and community leaders. These activities boil down to connecting with people and public speaking. One female AD described it this way:

> ... you bring them to the theater and then you have to really be able to speak with passion and clarity about the organization and why you think [supporting the theater has] a value. Then you have to really follow it up and ... have the strength of your convictions. And obviously the Development department does a lot of this. And then when it comes time, you have to be willing to ask.

However, in our survey we found that for people who *aspire to become* ADs, fundraising appears to be a daunting challenge even though people who are or have been ADs do *not* report that fundraising was an important skill that got them hired to be an AD. Here are the conflicting results of the survey of stage directors:

- Fundraising ability/experience was assigned a fairly low score among credentials for having been *hired as AD* (18th out of 39 choices) among both male and female present and past ADs.

  ### BUT

- Women director survey takers *who were not hired* into an artistic director job they had applied for attributed this failure to a lack of fundraising experience in slightly larger numbers (53%) than men (41%) in similar circumstances. Among all those who applied but did not get an AD position (male and female), not having enough fundraising experience was the top reason they reported for not getting the AD position they applied for.

- Fundraising was the top reason for not *wanting* an AD job among white men and women who had never been an AD. Approximately one third of the white respondents checked "I don't like fundraising" as one of the reasons they did not apply for an AD job. However, only 18% of both men and women of color who had not applied for an AD job said they did not like fundraising, compared to 33% among white men and women.

Obviously, there is a mix of beliefs about fundraising. The contradiction between a professional with AD experience giving low importance to fundraising and a person who has *never* been in that position rating it highly, is likely rooted in new applicants' not having a clear sense about what the fundraising role is for an AD. They likely overestimate how proficient one should be in fundraising before taking a top leadership job. Additionally, it may be that candidates get the wrong impression during the search process if they are asked about their fundraising experience more emphatically than about their willingness and comfort with meeting with donors and their skill in relationship building. Indeed, one highly ambitious NIL-AD producer even mentioned: "the way that I'm going to be more competitive is if I do have a portfolio of donors." Having one's own portfolio does allow an aspiring leader to build deep relationships with a targeted group of people, and to track successes in fundraising, follow up with development experts on how to change strategies for higher yield, and potentially present success stories during a leadership interview. Being able to indicate how portfolio growth aligns with one's initiatives is a powerful way of demonstrating skill in fundraising. Both staff and visiting artists should be involved in speaking with Board members and with donors, and possibly even be present when Board members are recruited and when solicitations are made in order to build up experience in fundraising activities.

However, having a portfolio of donors is probably not necessary. An experienced AD calls fundraising "a skill you can learn" because it is about relationship building and talking with a variety of audiences. By publicly addressing the mission of the theater one can build relationships with a potential donor base. Indeed, surveyed leaders of theaters with a budget over $1 million selected public speaking skills as the number one reason ADs in those larger theaters had attained their leadership position. In other words, being able to publicly speak passionately about a theater's mission is one of the highest rated skills of leaders in larger theaters, surpassing the fundraising skill focus of those in lower budget theaters.

These findings lead us to recommend that one of the tasks of a mentor is to support public speaking and relationship building among next-in-line professionals who have the ambition to be in the AD position, and take them along on fundraising visits to showcase how it is done. Similarly, ambitious artists should pursue these same skills of talking with potential donors, seeking and applying development experts' advice. Additionally, we recommend that search committees place a higher value on public speaking skills and relationship building skills when they interview candidates for an artistic director vacancy instead of demanding extensive experience in fundraising.

5.1.3. Reaching out to new and different audiences

To survive and thrive theaters need to attract audiences; they constantly need to reach beyond the traditional (and aging) subscribers. Attracting new and diverse audiences has become an aspirational goal of almost all theaters. This long quotation from a white male AD points to the shift in audiences' theater-going habits of the past few decades, highlighting contemporary challenges:

> The only thing that I think we did not talk about, which I think is a profound change in the major regional theaters or professional theater in America is we've had two, three events in the last 15 years that have really upended the model that we've had before of philanthropy and ticket-buying. ... I think that that's part of the reason roles keep adding to the Artistic Director's plate... Obviously after 9/11... ticket-buying patterns dropped from about three weeks for most theaters to about 10-12 days. ... our

competition was not only for entertainment options such as professional sports or movies, but it was also for just dining out with friends. … and at the same time, I think we're seeing a generational shift in attitudes toward philanthropy. There are not… as many large donors or individuals or foundations. They tend to be far more targeted to social causes, or if they're an individual donor they want to see the results of their donation much more graphically than their parents or their grandparents did. And so the pressures on the Artistic Director I think have become far more intense about ticket sales, money, finances, budget. … we're in a sea change where we've got the whole generation of baby boomers, particularly the younger side of the baby boomers, who never had the arts experience in schools, or theater experience. And now they're the people we're relying upon to be subscribers or donors or whatever … Are we a field that's doing work for a fairly prosperous, more elite class? Or are we doing work for a broader community? And how do we manage those pressures?

The responsibilities of the AD have always included attracting audiences through the programming that represent the AD's vision for the theater. But the description in the quotation above about generational changes and their effects on why current audiences may or may not choose to come into the theater, points to an awakening that things cannot just stay the same: theaters need to move with the times and with the demands of the current potential theater goers and potential new donors. The tension between "a fairly prosperous, more elite class" and "a broader community" is clear, but it can translate into a variety of possible solutions, depending on where a theater is located and who its mission aims to attract.

The Stage Directors' Survey results showed that directors of color who were or had been an artistic director attributed their success in achieving the leadership role to their experience in cultivating or drawing new audiences and to their community-outreach experience. They did so in larger numbers than their white counterparts. Particularly, women of color assigned credit to these two elements in their backgrounds for their success in attaining a leadership position: cultivating or drawing new audiences was ranked 3rd out of 39 characteristics, and community-outreach experience was ranked 4th. Male directors of color ranked their community-outreach as number 6. White male directors ranked neither of these two elements in their top 10, while white female directors ranked cultivating new audiences as number 7. It seems clear that directors of color see addressing the absence of certain population groups in their theaters as a high priority and they believe the theater that had selected them as artistic leader valued this credential.

> Directors of color see addressing the absence of certain population groups in their theaters as a high priority and they believe the theater that had selected them as artistic leader valued this credential.

Both interviews and survey results pointed us to the more central role of audience relations in the career paths of people of color. They are putting systems in place to ensure that the theaters at which they work weave this effort into their daily programming. Interviews with people of color brought to light their vision and their models of what a theater can do to bring in new and diverse audiences. A female NIL-AD of color told us about her efforts:

We in the LORT theater system have never actually asked the people that we want to have in our audience why they don't come to be in our audience. We have projected our reasons on why Black people don't come to the theater…. And so the basis of [the

community outreach] program [I] was [doing was] really creating affinity groups that all happen to be African American, but also looking at very specific kind of social segments of the community.... I would bring together different affinity groups for different conversations to see what happens when different energies collide and ideas and thoughts around age and education and all of that. And what I found is that price is almost never a barrier for folks if the art is interesting, and that what overwhelmingly people felt is that there was … no effort at what we called 'authentic partnership' with the community; that they only heard from us when there was a show about Black people on the stage, and that it was once a year, and that they felt like the theaters treated them and their dollars like a commodity and that it wasn't actually about relationship-building, and that if you're going to come into our community and you want our money, then you need to make the effort to create a relationship, establish an authentic relationship.

Here is an example from another woman of color NIL-AD's efforts in building sustainable and meaningful connections with the community:

So it... involves a lot of intentional one-on-one meetings with strategically identified individuals, organizations, or businesses. And in those meetings, it's about being very transparent with what our self-interest is at the [Theater], what our agenda and our goals and objectives are, and surfacing with whoever we're talking with what their real self-interests are and exploring whether there is any alignment or connection between our self-interests, and if so then organizing. And the result of it … we're already seeing ticket sales. So the results are that it's a way by which then you build new audiences, you deliberately diversify audiences and engage first-time theater-goers. It also um—the impacts that we saw … where it led to new Board Members, it led to new funding sources, new individual donors, it made the education work better, and it makes the artistic work better. And it starts with the artistic content, which is why it's deliberately housed in the artistic department. Because when we outreach to communities, we're starting with the play; what is this play about?... It's a process that takes time and relationship building. And time tends to be something we don't have at LORT or we don't budget for at LORT.

The emphasis that directors of color place on community outreach and cultivating new audiences contrasts with the results of a 2012 survey done by Theatre Communications Group (TCG) of priorities set by theater Boards of Trustees. The survey asked Boards to select their top 5 concerns. Top Board concerns aligned with their primary fiduciary responsibility: Individual giving/donor cultivation, 65%; Audience development, 51%; and Board development, 48%. One could argue that "audience development" may include diversification of an audience. However, the option "Diversifying the audience" was explicitly available on the survey, and was only selected by 19%. Similarly low, "Diversification" of the staff, artists, and Board was selected by 14%. These lower selection rates reinforce the view that Boards are primarily concerned with their financial responsibility and building the donor base, and not with diversity of its audience, staff, and the Board itself.

Tensions may arise between a Board's priority focus on their fiduciary responsibilities and the field's need to diversify staff, leadership, and audiences in order to remain relevant in changing demographics. This tension may result in silencing voices that cry out for bringing in different and

new groups because these groups are often viewed to be outside of known potential donor groups. Yet, as some of the quotations provided above show, results of diversification can lead to ticket sales, expansion of Boards and donors, and better artistic work.

Would hiring more racially diverse artistic directors in LORT theaters bring about more diversity in the audience? What the combined survey and interview data support is that directors of color have more experience in and put a more explicit focus on developing more diverse audiences. They credit that expertise with being able to attain an artistic director position. If a theater or group of theaters is committed, like LORT member-theaters, to promoting diversity throughout its ranks, tapping into the expertise of directors of color can be one step along that road to wider inclusion.

We need to add a note of balance to this section. Our focus on the specific strength of leaders of color in bringing in new and different audiences is not intended to overshadow the many other strengths non-traditional leaders bring to their positions. That minority directors place their strength in community-outreach in their top 5 list of skills that white directors do not credit as strongly with their career success stands out starkly enough to warrant this attention.

5.2 Career path to become an ED

In contrast to ADs, the majority of whom share directing as the one major career path, the men and women who make up the ED group of LORT theaters came to their position with a variety of backgrounds. Table 5.1 represents an overview gleaned from detailed analysis of resumes, CVs, and biographical statements. Among EDs, general management is the most frequently encountered background. A distant second route was marketing. There were no differences along gender lines.

Table 5.1 Backgrounds of EDs

Background	Percent with background N=74
General Manager	43%
Marketing	19%
Production	11%
Finance	9%
Producing	8%
Development	7%
Founder of LORT theater	1%

5.2.1 Relating to a Board of Trustees

Board relations are a key element of the ED's job description. Interviews with current executive leaders highlighted the importance of Board exposure (either at a theater or another nonprofit) in order to be able to relate to Trustees on financial matters and fundraising, to learn "their vocabulary," and to build rapport as a leading voice of the theater to this body of mostly non-theater professionals. For example, one male ED talks about the benefits of taking a mentee along to Board meetings, which can "teach them good practices for organizing a Board, … what you should be looking for in Board members, what you should expect of your Board members, how to keep your Board members engaged, how to communicate with them."

A female ED described how, when she was an associate managing director, her own mentor had taken her to weekly breakfasts with Trustees. She called those meetings the most formative influence on her career progression, as, in her words, an "ED runs interference between the AD and the Board" and attending the breakfasts had given her an introduction to this important relationship.

Another ED explains that having personal experience sitting on a Board of an organization as a volunteer, generates "a better perspective on how to approach those volunteer leaders and volunteers of your organization." One male ED credits speaking a Board's "for-profit language" prior to coming into his ED role as an advantage, and a way for being taken seriously among the non-artists who currently tend to populate Boards:

> … it can't hurt to have some job in the for-profit sector, because almost all of your board members are going to be from that. And to be able to understand the concerns, the motivations, the kind business model that might be—that they're dealing with day-in/day-out—it can't hurt to have that. When I came in to [Theater], it certainly helped with the business turn-around that the board members—there was a shorthand, you know? I have my MBA from [school]. That meant something. I wasn't a, you know, kind of a flaky arts guy. I don't mean that in any bad way…. getting something on your resume that is part of the world that so much of your board members are going to be part of would be helpful. Don't live in the arts management bubble…

We also learned about an ED's relationship with a Board through the Operational Managers' Survey:

- Survey results with all operational managers who took the survey reported that Board relations are among the hardest skills to acquire for anyone aspiring for top operational leadership (reported by 28%), alongside leadership skills (27%), fundraising (27%), strategic planning (26%), HR/organizational behavior (24%), and cross-departmental expertise (21%).

- When we compared survey takers who had ED experience with those who never had been in that top leadership spot, significantly more people with experience rated Board relations to be a hard skill to acquire (35% of EDs versus 21% of never EDs).

It seems that when one has held the ED position, the difficulty of relating to a Board is more fully recognized because the complexity of this relationship-based skill may not be as apparent to those in next-in-line positions.

A female producer who is hoping to one day head a theater's managerial side told us that one crucial element she recognizes she needs is experience working with Board members:

> Part of the thing that I think with the executive director stuff is the board leadership and how to make sure that this person [who is an ED candidate] is going to succeed with the Board and be able to really bring them along. And because so much of these theaters depend on philanthropy — or so much philanthropy — that like it feels risky to not have someone who has done that before, you know? I get it.

We found a significant difference between male and female survey takers *who aspire to become an ED* on how hard it is to learn to relate to a Board — significantly fewer women (12%) rated Board relations to be hard to acquire than did men (31%). In our interpretation, the finding that *fewer* women reported Board relations to be one of the two most difficult skills to learn is related to the larger percentage of women in next-in-line positions in the survey sample who were directors of development. Of all positions on the operational side below ED, directors of development have the most contact with members of the Board of Trustees, which gives them many opportunities to learn and become comfortable working with Boards.

5.2.2 Sharing passion for the art with the artistic side

Executive leaders do not come into their position without a healthy dose of passion for the art of theater. On the contrary: many voices, especially strong among the search firm professionals we interviewed, highlighted the need for that passion and how a successful collaboration between the artistic and operational leader is a key focus of every new hiring decision. Apart from knowing how to manage an arts institution, having a similar esthetic as the AD counterpart was emphasized in a search firm professional's comment: [the ED] "really ha[s] to love the work. You have to feel that what's on stage is really terrific and you're really excited about it. How can you advocate otherwise?"

Survey results shed more light on the skill of working with artists. (See Appendix E for these data in detail.)

- The skill of "working with the artistic" side was selected at only slightly lower than fundraising skills, 39% vs 40% respectively, making it the second most selected skill that current and past EDs reported was instrumental for attaining their leadership position.

- Working with the artistic side was not a skill many survey takers considered to be hard to acquire (it fell below 10% of responses on what is hard to learn).

- When asked what skills they need to acquire to feel ready to take on an ED position, few next-in-line managers selected that they needed to learn to master artistic collaboration.

- However, women who are in next-in-line positions did report they needed the skill "working with the artistic side" at a statistically higher rate than men (22% vs 8%, respectively), as they did with the skill of producing, which can be considered closely related to working with the artistic side of a theater — producing a show (in the nonprofit theater world) is associated with an understanding of and ability to work with artists.

5.2.3 Business/operational responsibilities

The Operational Managers' Survey taught us more about which particular skills were considered hard to acquire to be an effective leader. We asked this question of the whole sample, allowing us to compare genders, but also groups who had or had not held a leadership position. We report only the differences that reached statistical significance.[9]

- Compared to women, we found that men reported the skill of leadership to be harder to acquire.

- For women, the skills of strategic planning and HR/organizational behavior were selected at higher rates than for men as harder to acquire.

- Comparing experienced leaders (those currently in ED positions and those who held one in the past) with those who had not reached that position before we found that strategic planning and cross-departmental expertise (i.e., knowing what each department that reports to the ED is responsible for) were viewed as harder to acquire by those who had never held an ED role.

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9   We examined whether the difference between percentages of men and women in various demographic and occupational groups is what would be expected by chance alone or if there are statistically significant differences, using a chi square statistic. The chi square statistic is sensitive to the number of people under examination, such that the larger the number of people in the groups being examined, the more likely it is that a relatively small difference between the groups will be statistically significantly different.

That men consider the skill of leadership harder to acquire contradicts widely shared stereotypes regarding gender differences in leadership potential. One interpretation is that the belief that men are "naturally" better suited to leadership is merely a stereotype (see Erkut, 2001, on masculine bias in the widely shared "implicit leadership theory"). Another interpretation is that some men are aware of this stereotype which privileges the male advantage, leading them to report that the leadership skills they themselves possess are very hard to attain.

"Leadership" skills can include many aspects, and a large survey cannot easily dig into how each respondent would define it. Additionally, leadership can be a skill that those next-in-line possess, regardless of whether they are interested in or aiming for the actual positional leadership of a theater. There has been much research on the difference in "leadership style" of men and women. As we discuss later in this report, in Chapter 9.5, women tend to lead more relationally, and younger generations lean toward distributed leadership (see Hewlett Foundation report, Ono 2016). Field-wide conversations on the different styles of leadership and which elements make for effective leadership in theaters of the 21st Century may be productive in bringing current leadership forward.

More women reported strategic planning and HR/organizational behavior skills to be hard to attain when preparing for executive leadership in a theater than did men. We don't know why more women view strategic planning to be a hard skill to acquire. A few theater professionals we consulted on this question mentioned that the majority of strategic planners they knew of were women. Perhaps, this skill, too, is viewed to be hard to learn by the group (in this case, women) that has the most experience in it. Or perhaps more women than men may need to have strategic planning demystified as planning for the future in the context of an organization's mission and values. HR/Organizational behavior has typically been women's domain in corporate culture. More women claiming that these skills are hard to acquire than did men may be a reflection of women's understanding that these skills may be dismissed as unimportant. However, perhaps women know how essential they are to the successful operation of a theater, particularly in an increasingly litigious work environment.

For never-leaders strategic planning seems a hard skill to acquire but not for current leaders. It could be that once a leader has gone through the process of strategic planning, which one is likely to do in that position, the difficulty — perhaps suggested by the name of the activity as *strategic* — dissipates and the process seems more like any other planning.

A final significant difference between current or past leaders and never leaders is the need for cross-departmental exposure. One respondent even wrote in the survey: "The range of essential skills on this list is an indication of the challenges faced by theaters. It's not realistic to expect one person to have multifaceted knowledge/experience in all of them!" We delved more deeply into the cross-departmental exposure issue to see which particular subgroup(s) among those with no leadership background selected this option more frequently. The groups are the directors of marketing/communications (33% of them), followed by 29% of those with the managing director title who are *not* the top operational leader of their theater, directors of development (27%), and general managers (26%). The small differences among these groups suggest that a sizable minority would benefit from cross-departmental exposure, regardless of their own position in the theater. We had heard about the importance of getting real, on-the-ground experience in each department from both the EDs and ADs we interviewed when we asked them about how the next generation should prepare for leadership roles in which they are expected to oversee all departments.

Female AD: You know you need to learn every aspect and every department in your theater well enough to understand what it is they need when they need it.

Male AD: if you're in one of these positions it helps to be a generalist. You need to know an awful lot about an awful lot of areas of the theater.

Female ED: I think people do have to have a more sophisticated skill set than you did when I was starting out. … the broader the breadth of experience, the better off you are in this day and age. People who actually know how to make theater have an advantage in that you have your own judgment to rely upon as well as the people who report to you.

This need for familiarity with different aspects of a theater's functioning parallels for-profit leadership preparation descriptions, as, for example, described in a recent New York Times article which calls "the path to the executive suite … long and winding" with "stops in many different types of specialties" (Irwin, 2016). A challenge for never-leaders may be how to attain cross-departmental exposure while carrying out their roles within their current departments. In the theater world it may be difficult to move from one department to the next in a paid position. Aspiring leaders, particularly those in large theaters whose departments tend to operate more like silos, may need to learn the requisite variety of tasks through attending other departments' meetings or volunteering in a smaller theater.

We do need to add a note of balance to this emphasis on cross-departmental training. Research (Morh, 2014) has shown that many women look at job requirements differently than men when they consider applying for a higher position: women consider requirements to be strict and more literal than do men, believing they need to be 100% qualified. Men more often take into account that

> *Mastering all skills* involved in theater is not necessary. What is likely to be helpful is *having an understanding* of each department's workings and priorities and how to support each department's needs

relationships can help them get a job, and, if they have half the skills mastered, they can learn the rest on the job. Additionally, there has been a tendency to evaluate women more based on their achievements, while men are often evaluated or promoted based on their potential (Barsh & Yee, n.d.; Barsh & Yee, 2012) These interconnected realities may make the requirement of wide experience/exposure a barrier for women in applying for a leadership position. Our results do not show a gender difference in how difficult men and women consider attaining cross-departmental expertise. Nonetheless, we would recommend that search committees and aspiring leaders alike keep in mind that *mastering all skills* involved in theater is not necessary. What is likely to be helpful is having an *understanding* of each department's workings and priorities and how to support each department's needs, which would be expected from an operational leader. A search committee allowing an aspiring leader to indicate which supports she may need to balance out her strengths in order to succeed is a more realistic approach. Stating this understanding in the description of a job opening can serve as an indication that a committee does not start with unrealistic expectations as the above quote from a survey respondent implies.

Promotions and appointments to leadership

In Chapter 5 we presented information on skills for varying paths to leadership and how different ADs and EDs navigated these paths. In this chapter we describe the institutional landscape of promotions and appointments that highlight patterns of behavior not of individuals but the theaters in which they work.

One pathway into a leadership position in the theater at the LORT level is being promoted from a lower position within the same theater or from another theater (within the LORT system or outside of it). We define promotion as stepping into the leadership spot from a role that is not at the top, for example, from associate artistic director, associate director, associate producer, freelance director, dramaturge/literary manager, etc. on the artistic side; from general manager, finance director, director of development, production manager, etc., on the executive side.

Another path is to move laterally, from one artistic or executive director slot into another, working through a search process. We noted whether or not the theater a person worked at previously was part of the LORT member-group of theaters. If not, for executive directors especially, we separated out those who had been employed at any theater previously and those who had worked in other industries (including other arts sectors), but not in theater.

> Female artistic directors get promoted within their own theater at much higher rates than men. Being an internal candidate is, however, the only advantage women currently enjoy in LORT member-theaters.

6.1 Paths to LORT leadership from inside and outside of LORT

Table 6.1 shows that female artistic directors get promoted within their own theater at much higher rates than men (40% vs 12%). We interpret this phenomenon in the context of greater familiarity generating trust. We have argued that, in general, women remain outsiders in theater leadership, not easily trusted. The exception occurs when the people who make the hiring decision know the particular woman's work intimately. When being promoted from within, a female candidate is not an abstract entity belonging to a class of people that cannot be trusted; rather, those who make the hiring decision know the quality of her work well. This phenomenon, where familiarity with a particular woman's work trumps distrust of women in general has been observed in other industries.[10] Here is one voice from a male Trustee about an internal candidate who confirmed this interpretation: "We knew we liked how she worked. We vetted her with her previous mentors. She checked out well, we knew we were on solid ground to trust her with the job."

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10 In her report on women's leadership, Erkut (2001) points to research results of evaluations among peers lending credence to the importance of familiarity in overcoming a masculine bias in leadership: "Janet Irwin and Michael Perrault used what they call the Team View/360 approach in which their sample of 645 men and 270 women team members rated each other's work-related behaviors. Team View/360 methodology is a peer assessment system that asks members of a team to assess each other's behaviors along 31 items which can be grouped under seven Performance Factors (problem solving, planning, controlling, managing self, managing relationships, leading, communicating). When team members assessed each other on these 31 items, the results showed that women were rated higher than men on 28 out of the 31, including the items that fell within the performance factor of "leading." The authors point out that when peers on a team who know each other's work intimately do the assessment, the masculine bias completely disappears."

An alternative explanation of the prominence of promotion as a pathway for women to leadership was offered by one of the artistic directors in our sample: It could be that men who hold associate artistic director positions or similar positions from which they are promoted to artistic director have more options than merely being promoted within the theater they are already employed by. Consequently, they leave for other theaters after a short stint as an associate artistic director. Our data do not support this interpretation for our sample, as there are no differences between men and women in the duration of their associate artistic director positions.

Being an internal candidate is, however, the only advantage women currently enjoy in LORT member-theaters. Moving from one AD position into another within the LORT group is more prevalent among men (11% vs 0%). Attaining an AD position in a LORT member-theater from a similar leadership position outside of the LORT group is also twice more prevalent among men than women (27% vs 13%). Men with previous AD experience account for about a third of the male AD group, while among women there are very few who had been an AD before. This may be an effect of there being many more men with AD experience that can become candidates for LORT member-theater AD positions, while women have historically not exceeded more than a fifth of the LORT theater ADs and are only slowly trickling in from other theaters where they were an AD.

Table 6.1 LORT ADs' progression from immediately preceding positions

Promotion or Appointment[1]	Male (n=59)	Female (n=15)	Chi Square[11]
Promoted from non-AD to AD within same theater	7 (12%)	6 (40%)	5.451*
Promoted from non-AD to AD from other LORT theater	7 (11%)	2 (13%)	
Promoted from non-AD to AD from non-LORT theater	14 (24%)	4 (26%)	
Held previous position as AD at other LORT theater	7 (11%)	0	
Held previous position as AD in non-LORT theater	17 (29%)	2 (13%)	
Founder of current LORT theater	5 (8%)	1 (6%)	
Previously founded a theater	11 (19%)	2 (13%)	

1Totals do not add up to 100 due to rounding or unknown career path.
*p = .02

On the ED side, promotion appears to work differently. Table 6.2 presents an overview of the paths immediately before becoming an ED in a LORT member-theater. Unlike the statistically significant difference favoring women on the artistic side, on the operational side, women and men were promoted at around the same rate *within* their own theaters. Keeping in mind that none of the differences reported in Table 6.2 are statistically significant, it is still informative to examine trends that appear to vary by gender. More men acquired ED positions in LORT theaters from another LORT, or a non-LORT theater.

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11 In the tables we present, we made the decision to only report those chi square statistics which show significant differences so that we could keep the tables included in this report as uncluttered as possible. (For an elaboration on statistical significance, see Appendix E.)

Table 6.2 LORT EDs' progression from immediately preceding positions

Promotion or Appointment*	Male (n=46)	Female (n=28)
Promoted from non-ED to ED within same theater	11 (24%)	7 (25%)
Promoted from non-ED to ED from other LORT theater	6 (13%)	2 (6%)
Promoted from non-ED to ED from non-LORT theater	1 (2%)	1 (3%)
Promoted from non-ED to ED from outside theater world	6 (13%)	7 (25%)
Held previous position as ED at other LORT	10 (22%)	4 (13%)
Held previous position as ED in non-LORT theater	6 (13%)	5 (18%)
Held previous position in equivalent role outside theater world	5 (11%)	1 (3%)
Founder of LORT theater	0	1 (3%)
Unknown	1 (4%)	0

*Totals do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Generally, management is a transferable skill. The skills of an executive/operational manager are much more transferable into the theater field than they are for the artistic director position. Currently, promotion into the LORT ED position from outside the theater world appears to be more common among women. A woman's position immediately prior to being promoted into a LORT ED position was somewhat more likely to be one outside the theater than that of a man (25% vs 13%, respectively). Additionally, three times more women than men came into ED positions after *never* having worked in the theater before (18% vs 6%). This trend may continue and could help level the playing field among EDs along gender lines and ought to be vigorously pursued for bringing in professionals of color into the operational side of the theater.

6.2 Types of positions held immediately before becoming an AD or ED in LORT

Being an associate AD is the most common immediate stepping stone among ADs prior to their current appointment: a pattern we observed in 18 ADs who had held an associate artistic director position prior to becoming an AD in any LORT theater (24% for total sample, proportionally equal percentages among male and female ADs). Of those 18, 10 had been an associate AD at the same theater where they later became AD; however one of these 18 had held an AD position in another theater in between the associate AD and their current LORT AD position. The reader needs to keep in mind that all leaders for whom we are describing the immediate-prior position had amassed considerable experience prior to their leadership positions, so knowing their previous position's title is admittedly a limited data point. After all, certain position titles could entail varying levels of responsibility and job flexibility, especially for directors who may be in an assistant director position at one theater while they may be concurrently directing major shows in various other theaters around the country building up their portfolio and reputation.

In spite of our findings that an associate AD position is one of the most frequent backgrounds of current LORT ADs, it appears that there is no unified view on the merits of being an associate AD as a stepping stone to eventual leadership. People we interviewed had a variety of views about which paths seem blocked and which paths they would recommend for those aspiring to AD positions. For example, several interviewees talked about the pros and cons of holding an associate artistic director or associate director position in a theater. A female AD called the associate AD position "good preparation." More frequent were the voices suggesting an associate AD position is not a viable steppingstone to top leadership. A male NIL-AD said "until recently it's been rare to find an associate artistic director being named artistic director of a theater." Similarly, a male AD told us:

> On the day that I leave I would be incredibly surprised if the powers that be saw fit to move somebody within the organization up into one of these jobs. ... if there is a LORT opening, there is a national search, and in most instances, not all, but in most instances, those are outside candidates that are, that are identified. Very often people who have relationship with that theater, you know, a director who's worked there as an associate artist, directed several plays there, the organization loves them, the community loves them, those are the people that are often spoken to when those kind of positions come up and they often get the job but very rarely are they internal hires from people who are already on permanent staff.

We did find a trend that the largest budget theaters (level 6, with over $10Million budgets) hired many *fewer* ADs who had been in associate AD positions just prior to their leadership appointment, compared to the other theaters, presented in Table 6.3. We do not know why the largest of LORT theaters have not favored promoting associate ADs. One female NIL-AD told us

> I have yet to see a major LORT theater where an associate artistic director ascends to the highest position. I think that it's just the nature of the business, that in order to become artistic director you have to leave your institution. I've seen artistic directors come back. I've seen people who had been associate artistic directors become the leader of those institutions, but usually it's after being artistic director at a different institution, so I just think it's the nature of how things happen. Before—you know, up until this point [of my career], I think ascension within a company was entirely possible.

Table 6.3 Appointments of ADs with Associate AD and previous AD experience, per budget level

Budget level	Associate ADs immediately prior	Previous AD experience
Level 3 (11 theaters)	3 (27%)	1
Level 4 (10 theaters)	2 (20%)	0
Level 5 (30 theaters)	11 (36%)	5 (one of whom was Interim AD)
Level 6 (23 theaters)	2 (9%)	2

Looking beyond the associate artistic director position, other position titles *immediately* before becoming an AD include producer/associate producer/producing director; (freelance or assistant) director; playwright; dramaturge; literary manager; director of new projects; program manager; production/design manager; actor; also, two artistic directors had held an executive leadership position as managing or executive director in a theater. What is clear from the variety

of these titles and the differing responsibilities they entail is that career progression to an AD position at a LORT theater is not linear. People are being selected to be ADs not based on what they were doing during the period immediately prior to their candidacy but on the strength of a portfolio that includes a variety of experiences and skills acquired over a long period.

Among the EDs, also, there is no particular position that stands out as having led to an ED-level position. Seven people had been a general manager at a theater (six men and one woman), and four held associate managing or associate executive director positions (two men and two women). The others had held a variety of positions immediately prior to their leadership position at their current LORT theater including producer, director of development; director of finance, audience development coordinator, director of administration, chief financial officer. Again, these leaders had amassed considerable experience prior to their ED appointment in a LORT theater, and the title of their immediately preceding position may not reflect that depth of experience.

> The Stage Directors' Survey results show that there are many female theater founders, particularly women of color, who are not being tapped for AD positions or even positions below AD.

Overall, our findings show that the path to becoming a LORT leader can pass through working in LORT theaters as well as theaters outside of LORT, and for the managerial side, it can also include positions outside of the world of theater.

Several EDs lamented the financial limitations of theaters to promote from within because "middle-management is virtually lacking" and added that there is very little movement in LORT leadership (see also comments we quoted in the section on *Age, tenure, the perception of entitlement, and leadership style* in Chapter 9). Another male ED, on the other hand, does not see it that way and finds that

> LORT is itself its own great sort of training ground, because there are theaters of every different size … There's an ability to work your way through these different theaters of different sizes so that you are honing your skills on the way up… Most of the people within LORT have worked in any number of other theaters that are also within LORT. And you know, we get together, we learn about each other, we learn what we're doing in our theaters, and we learn about opportunities at those theaters. And people frequently move around.

LORT is far from constituting the entire universe of large nonprofit theaters in the United States. Promotion from within and "frequently moving around" among LORT theaters are not the only ways to becoming active within LORT or even making it to the top leadership level. In fact, these two models of career progression can produce a status quo whereby who is already there remains there, and who is not, is kept out; that is, they slow down the pace of achieving diversity. The Stage Directors' Survey results show that there are many female theater founders, particularly women of color, who are not being tapped for AD positions or even positions below AD. They tend to have led smaller theaters (budgets lower than $1,000,000). This talent pool appears not to have been vigorously recruited.

6.3 Need for conversations about career progression in LORT member-theaters

We have found that there are multiple paths to leadership as revealed by institutions' promotion and appointment patterns. There are also different opinions about the best path to follow. Is looking at how others have achieved their level of leadership a guide for going about attaining it for oneself? Is seeing a certain path helpful when envisioning leadership as attainable? Or, does the variety in backgrounds and career paths rather create an overwhelming mystery around how to make it to the top for an ambitious person? Here are two people wondering how one makes progress on the artistic side:

> **Male NIL-AD:** I guess one question would be ... how your background shapes your current [job] or the future as a leader? You know, is it different if you come from a stage management background versus a directing background versus a production background?

> **Female NIL-AD:** I came from the newspaper business where it's just going from a small newspaper to an urban newspaper to a large urban newspaper ... like that was the traditional track and I don't know if it's the same in theater where they can move up, if the size of the theater matters.

The next comment from a male NIL-AD illustrates uncertainty about the role of gender in career progression:

> There aren't a lot of people who come up through the dramaturgy route, a lot of people stop at the associate AD. I think there's a lot of discussion in the dramaturgy community as there being a gender limit, that dramaturges disproportionately are women, as many supporting arts administrators tend to be, but as to why that is or to what extent they become associate AD positions... IS that a gender bias? And moving up, is that a gender bias? ...Professional dramaturges, you know, when I go to conferences and look around, yes, there are far more female dramaturges. Just sort of seemingly it's disproportionate a number of dramaturges, but one thing that has been absurd that — I have no documentation to support this necessarily — would be this, do male dramaturges tend more frequently to become, to get named associate artistic directors than the female dramaturges?

A male NIL-ED gives full voice to the need for more transparency regarding how one ought to craft a career path to leadership in LORT:

> I think what would be useful is more open conversation about the reality of what it takes to get sort of the jobs that people are pursuing in a no-bullshit way. ... And I think that a lot of times within theaters there's very little upfront conversation about "this is what the process actually was." ... helping people understand the process, whether it's a development position, a marketing position, artistic position, like "this is how it actually happens." ... people have no clue how to advance in this field. And ... part of that is no one really talks about how it happens or how it doesn't happen or what's worked or what hasn't worked. And so people just don't know and so it all looks like magic or it all looks like politics or it all looks like you just got to know a guy or a girl. ... "Someone who I don't even know probably saw me speak at some place who

told a person who told another person who got me into that thing and that's how I got there".... To say "I submitted my résumé and got an interview..." but that's not how it actually happened. The industry still treats it like it's old school, work hard or network your way to the top or résumé your way to the top or job hunt your way to the top and that doesn't feel honest.

The need for information and transparency around promotions and appointments appears to be much needed by people who are next-in-line to top positions, and also for those who are in positions lower down in the pathway to leadership. This conversation would fit into the mentoring and supervision relationship that a current leader can build with an ambitious person coming up through the ranks. Through examples of how others have crafted their path, a mentor or supervisor can point out various routes of advancement and support the next-in-line in each step of that progression. Introductions by leaders of their junior managers to other leaders and various possible role models for conversations around this topic could be key, and can be initiated both by senior leaders or independently sought by those next-in-line. These conversations with professionals from different types of theaters or even different industries can enlighten the field with career path models that are currently outside of the realm of LORT theaters and that can bring innovation to the career path, selection process, and leadership model.

For theater professionals aspiring to leadership positions conferences and meetings can also be crucial venues to meet larger professional circles. Additionally, peer mentoring can be helpful in these conversations. We heard about the existence of affinity groups in some (larger) theaters where people at similar levels of responsibility share experiences, give advice, and generally support each other. This type of information sharing can be replicated in many more theaters.

Preparation for leadership: Formal and informal education and mentoring

How do leaders prepare for their roles? Do they have a level of education that helps? Do they have a particular skillset that prepares them well? Are there elements to their profiles that make them stand out as the ones who will ultimately rise to leadership positions? Overall, our findings on education and training did not show any specific steps one needs to take in order to end up in a leadership position. A sizeable number of survey takers and interviewees promote getting broad experience in a theater, across departments and even across different types and budget levels of theaters, in order to be best prepared to take higher positions. Another sizable number credit their formal education for their success in rise to leadership. For aspiring leaders, the lack of clear career preparation can be both liberating and hampering. We also discuss the merits of relationships and mentors as part of this chapter on preparation for leadership because mentors can be instrumental in placing obstacles in perspectives for aspiring leaders.

7.1 Formal education

On the Stage Directors' Survey, those who were or had been ADs when they took the survey assigned quite some weight to their degree/formal training for having helped them attain their artistic director position. In fact, it was the top reason the current and previous ADs selected from a list of about 40 attributes. We did not ask this group what level of education they had attained.

The Operational Managers' Survey showed a quite different result: the weight given to formal training or degrees fell down to the 15th spot on the rank-ordered list of factors that lead to an appointment to top managerial leader of a theater. About half of the sample had attained a bachelor's level degree, and around 40% had gone beyond that level. The rest either had a high school degree or did not respond to the education question.

A second question in the Operational Managers' Survey was filled out by 81% of the sample and provided more insight on education and training; it asked which training program was the most important for preparing the respondent for their current position and allowed respondents to write in their answer. Most answers focused on education programs: 76% of women respondents who have a master's degree and 82% of the men who do, entered the name of that graduate program in the fill-in box, accounting for about 58% of the total sample that considers a master's or graduate program the best preparation they had for their leadership position. However, a sizeable portion of the respondents (24% of the women and 14% of the men) answered the question by saying that on-the-job training was the most formative experience in preparing them for their leadership role. These survey responses came from theater professionals both in and outside LORT.

Next we looked in detail at the educational background of the leadership in LORT member-theaters and their direct reports as revealed in their resumes, CVs, and/or biographical sources. We also listened to opinions about educational preparation in interviews with LORT leaders and people directly below the top. A slightly larger percentage of women ADs had attained an education

level higher than a bachelor's degree than had men (64% vs 51%). Among EDs, women had fewer post-BA level degrees, with 46% at master's level or above, while men showed 55% at that level. These gender differences were not large enough to be statistically significant.

Opinions about whether or not extended education (beyond bachelors') is needed in order to attain a leadership level position were extremely varied both among men and women interviewees. Many leaders mentioned advantages to having a master's degree, because the degree can offer both theoretical and practical hands-on experience especially if an internship program is part of the training where one-on-one mentoring is provided. Here are some voices that elaborate on the benefits of a master's degree

> **Female ED:** I actually think that there's a real value — I was an up-by-the-bootstraps person — but I think that things have become more complicated and I think when organizations are hiring — particularly for a study that's ultimately about women, you can't afford not to be —because there's already a prejudice, you can't afford not to have really good skills. And I actually, I didn't used to feel this way but I do now think that a graduate degree is really helpful. From a good program.

> **Male ED:** I think, [as a] stage manager, you just go out and do it but I don't think in undergrad people are taught enough how to be theater managers. I think there's other things, skills they can get in grad school. Not to say they can't do it by going out into the world, either by being a Production Manager or an Assistant GM, but there's so many things that I think are very valuable in grad school.

More comments throughout the interviews highlighted the *network* one builds while attending a master's program as one of the most worthwhile benefits from those experiences.

> **Male AD:** The one thing I tell people in terms of trying to pick a graduate program or a developmental program is, 'Go where the people have a lot of connections, to where they work in the field.'

> **Male AD:** I have my master's from [school] and the guy that runs the [school] theater department said to a couple of interns that we had last year, you know, 'Go down there and work for [AD's name] and offer to do anything that needs to be done and eventually you'll find your way into a position.'

> **Female AD:** I didn't go to grad school and I didn't have a big network, you know, the way some, some people coming out of grad school, depending on what school they go to, will immediately fall into the [school] network ...and there's mentors galore.

> **Male ED:** I think going to grad school for stage management isn't the best thing, but I think for arts management it can be very helpful to build those relationships.

> **Male NIL-AD:** ... the only reason I got the job at [theater] was because I was in grad school with somebody who was a year behind me ... something that really pushed through my application was that [friend from grad school] personally wrote [person at theater where NIL-AD got job].

Input from a female ED suggested another advantage of a graduate degree that is likely to be relevant because theaters like other businesses have come to rely on analyzing "big data." Echoing

other comments we heard, she suggests that running a theater has become more complex than it used to be. She said,

> [about the advantage of graduate school] understanding the vocabulary of business, understanding presentation style, ... and knowing how to manipulate data to mine information is an increasingly important skill and it's something that wasn't when I first started.

A male ED describes the same issue this way:

> Because you can't simply at this point and this complexity be an instinctive manager anymore. So I think you have to have training that prepares you to look at challenges from a vast array of perspectives that include understanding the quantitative methods that are available and being able to dissect them and see what that tells you.

Others see benefits specifically in getting an MBA in order to relate to Board members.

> **Male ED:** It can't hurt to have some job in the for profit sector, because almost all of your board members are going to be from that. And to be able to understand the concerns, the motivations, the kind business model that might be—that they're dealing with day-in/day-out—it can't hurt to have that. When I came in to [theater], it certainly helped with the business turn-around that the board members—there was a shorthand, you know? I have my MBA from [school]. That meant something. I wasn't a, you know, kind of a flaky arts guy. I don't mean that in any bad way.

Some leaders, however, considered getting an advanced degree "overrated." A female theater professor at a graduate school program told us "historically the men kind of do it on their own and don't feel the need to train. Women are more — I mean this is really a vast generalization — but ... women are a little more cautious, want to be — want to be prepared." A male ED, responding to whether he thought a degree was important, aligns with this observation: "what your trajectory on your career path and your work experiences have been is much more important in my opinion than what your degree is." Or another male ED:

> I find that the graduate theater management programs [names examples of schools] to be not that useful. That's just my point of view. To me, at the point at which you would be doing graduate work, you could be working. You could be — like I said, it's a cottage industry, you work your way up, it's a little bit of who you know and being there and learning on the job.

Some were of the opinion that "leadership cannot be learned," or that school-based learning is too specialized while a leader needs a wider set of skills and experiences.

These findings do not point to any clear-cut recommendations from the field on getting a certain level of education. Moreover, many interviewees commented on the high cost of getting a master's degree. Particularly those in positions below leadership said they dreaded taking on more debt to go to graduate school, especially on top of college loans, given how little theater jobs pay.

> **Male NIL-AD:** I'm in a lovely amount of debt as a result [of going to grad school]

Female NIL-AD: The other thing [needed for career progression] is growing my ability to write. I think a master's program would do that. Since that's not something I can afford, it's something that I will have to find ways to cultivate on my own.

Because attaining a master's degree is expensive, people with less financial support are often excluded from them. Organizations, such as LORT and TCG should consider taking on various aspects of training that are offered by the larger and most successful graduate training schools and offer those to aspiring leaders through paid internships and apprenticeships using outside funding mechanisms that focus on diversifying the theater workforce.

7.2 Learning on the job — informal education

Getting experience 'on-the-ground' doing a wide variety of tasks was the most highly recommended career path by both leaders and non-leaders, and considered the best preparation for a leadership position, even among those with a graduate degree. That the surveys pointed to the importance of "cross-departmental training" is an example of the view that graduate school is not a substitute for broad-based, on-the-ground training. Indeed, graduate programs that were highly regarded were praised primarily for having effective field placements.

Additionally, we asked LORT leaders (both ADs and EDs) in interviews to list the skills a person should develop in order to be a candidate for leadership. (The skills are also listed in Appendix C accompanied by a quote from an AD or ED illustrating what the skill entails.) The list also echoes the importance of broad-based, on-the-ground training:

- have an audience focus;
- seek exposure to boards of Trustees;
- seek wide/broad experience;
- keep learning and adapt to the times;
- get schooling AND experience on-the-ground;
- find internship experience;
- should have innate leadership qualities;
- look for good mentors;
- build and maintain relationships;
- become proficient in specific AD or ED tasks.

Here are some voices elaborating on the importance of broad-based experience:

Female AD: the more you do — and not sampling, not "I'm going to slum and do four days with the paint crew" — but the more you ... have a 360 participation in the field, I think the more successful you are and perhaps, more important, the more compassionate a manager you are likely to be and the more truly visionary a leader you're likely to be.

Male ED: Specialization is for insects, not good preparation for leadership.

Female ED: ...everything in life is the skill set you need to get into a position like this.

The way to go about gaining these skills was discussed at length in interviews when both leaders and those next-in-line talked about various previous positions they had held that prepared them for the positions they were in currently. They described how internships, volunteering, or taking on a variety of theater positions helped them gain knowledge on the job.

Getting experience 'on-the-ground' doing a wide variety of tasks was the most highly recommended career path by both leaders and non-leaders, and considered the best preparation for a leadership position, even among those with a graduate degree.

Both artistic and executive directors highlighted the need to understand the intricacies of the "other side" of the theater, as already discussed above. Some EDs pointed out that their producing experience or even directing experience was formative for their career as an executive manager in a theater. One male ED, when asked how one should prepare for an operational leadership role in the theater, said "I still think that [future leaders] should produce something."

An AD in our sample explained why he needs cross-departmental expertise:

> ...understanding that you are the first among equals. ... if it fails, it comes back to your desk. Whether it was your [responsibility]... whether you did it or not.... I have a philosophy that if I'm going to get blamed for it, then I need to know what's happening, and that I approve it.

Another male AD describes:

> Because I think increasingly, Boards are looking for people that have that artistic vision and obviously can pull off the productions and the context and make it exciting and that kind of thing, and they can get engaged by. But you've got to be able to be part creator, part budget meister, part producer, part...—you know, today. And you've got to have at least confidence in the financial skills and the development skills. So that's why a lot of people that have come out of smaller theaters that are very entrepreneurial or have jobs where you have to do everything, I think [they] are often picked up by some of the medium-sized or small-sized LORT theaters as artistic directors or as associates...

As much as leaders commented on the importance of broad-based experience, people in the pathway to leadership gave voice to the challenges of being acquainted with a variety of theater functions. For an ambitious person who wants to prepare for leadership it can be difficult to acquire this range of expertise while already being overworked managing a myriad of responsibilities. This harks back to a comment we cited before, which was volunteered on our survey with operational leaders: "The range of essential skills on this list is an indication of the challenges faced by theaters. It's not realistic to expect one person to have multifaceted knowledge/ experience in all of them!" Here is another voice of a female next-in-line who prior to this quote was explaining that staff at her theater is thin:

> ...it's overwhelming to me. It's not that I don't believe in working hard, because I do, but I think it's an unreasonable expectation. And I'm not the only one that works that much. I don't mean that by any stretch. I just think it's unreasonable expectations on the staff, and they're starting to really feel it.

Finally, one next-in-line operational manager's comments highlighted that, maybe especially in larger theaters, departments operating as "silos" makes the need for cross-departmental training even harder to come by:

> There is often a traditional director at the head of the department guarding his or her actions in order to keep other departments from knowing their next move. Until transparency between marketing and development and finance occurs, we may never move the dial on supporting cross-departmental leaders and inspiring our current managers and directors to feel confident enough to become future leaders.... Time and resources make this [mentoring for cross-departmental expertise] extremely difficult. Also, if you continue to ask "too much" for this experience it is not always taken well by the other departments.

She goes as far as to say that in some theaters leaders may actively promote mystery around certain tasks (like strategic planning, Board development and management) to safeguard their own leadership.

ADs and EDs have a role to play in promoting communication across departmental divisions as a business strategy that will also help aspiring leaders gain insights into what their counterparts in other departments are doing. This is particularly important in larger theaters whose departments often operate as separate silos and can be a focus of the Board of Trustees' oversight of the theater's operations.

7.2.1 Internships and volunteering

The model of "learning on the job" has been solidified in the theater field over many decades in the form of internships, fellowships, and assistant positions. Indeed, hardly anyone we interviewed had attained their position of leadership without prior exposure to at least one of these.

Several voices on how to prepare for leadership highlighted the value of volunteering, which can take the shape of serving on the board of a local smaller theater or other nonprofit, or volunteering in other departments or even a different theater in order to learn the ropes.

> **Female NIL-AD:** I also say that at night they [people who ask her advice on how to attain leadership] really should find the small theater company that they love and basically offer their service and do whatever it is that they—you know, that they need.

This male ED specifies the benefits of volunteering on a board in different terms, as adding to the integrity of one's leadership skills:

> The other thing that I always tell my students is that I believe that—I encourage them to volunteer for something. I think it's incredibly important, if you're going to be leading an organization that is dependent on volunteers to support you—and that means volunteer board leadership that are going to be writing checks and are going to be getting their friends to come—that I think having a personal relationship to the synapses that are—and the pleasure zones that are struck when you volunteer, is incredibly important, so that it helps you—it gives you a better perspective on how to approach those volunteer leaders and volunteers of your organization. So I tell every one of my students to—that they need to find—I don't care what it is: it doesn't have

to be the theater, it doesn't have to be arts. They need to volunteer. If possible, be a board member of something. That's ideal, if you can be a board member of something. So whether it's, you know, a board member of your college alma mater or, you know, the rowing club that you belong to or something, taking some role in a volunteer leadership, I think is incredibly important in helping you negotiate that in your job.

However, certainly the volunteering and often the internships do not provide living wages, turning them into a privilege for those who have other means to support themselves, and an unattainable goal for those who do not. Along with the increasing costs associated with attaining a college and graduate degree, the low or unavailable wages and the persistence of the model of volunteering in the theater world could be counted among the reasons behind class bias in theater employment, and the relatively smaller presence of people of color in the pathway to leadership.

> **Male ED:** So, if you're not in upper middle class family that can support that burden [of schooling], there's an issue. On the flip side, the internships, and the apprenticeships, are either unpaid, or very bottom-end compensated, and so there's a second set of barriers, to being supported while you're doing that work.

> **Male ED:** If you're starting out that way, you just probably have gone into, I'm talking as though I'm one of our college students, that you just graduated, you probably have more debt than you ever had in your life and now to really get the job that you want, you have to, you have to give yet another year that's probably unpaid or very little pay, just to learn more about it and then we'll start you at a salary that is sustainable. We don't do, I'm speaking kind of collectively of the whole organization, of all theaters, it's just we don't do a very good job of setting people up for success from the very beginning.

In Chapter 10, under the topic, *Models of sponsorship programs*, we describe particular programs that are already in place that provide a combination of internship/sponsorship and mentorship. They are extremely valuable, as attested by their recipients, and can serve as successful models for expansion initiatives.

7.2.2 Founding a theater

A surprising outcome, for us, was that founding a theater was an alternative path toward leadership that skirted around educational achievement. It also obviates the need to get on-the-ground training in various departments because founders, particularly founders of small theaters, have to do many different jobs to keep their theater alive. This career path was the number one qualification that women artistic directors (both white women and women of color) cited as the reason they were at the top leadership level.

Among artistic directors (current and past) who took the Stage Directors' Survey, having founded a company trumped all other credentials among women and took second place among men for why they thought they had attained their leadership position.

Stage directors who held an artistic director position when they filled out our survey comprised close to half the sample of women and about a third of the sample of men. Among women of color,

58% became an AD of a theater because they founded it; among white women, the percentage was 44%. Men of color became ADs because of founding their theater at the lowest rate, 29%, and white men at 31%.

While founding a theater is a frequent route to becoming its AD, founding is not a frequent route to the ED position — founders represent only 9% of the total sample who took the Operational Directors' Survey. Even then, more women than men among them responded that they were the founder of the theater they were leading, a significant difference between the genders (4% among men, 15% among women; chi square = 4.82, p<.05).

The experience of founding a theater encompasses the widest skillset one can develop, as founders are inevitably involved in more than one department. This aligns well with what we heard in interviews about the need to seek wide and broad experience, across departments.

> **Male AD:** 'Okay, I'm going to start a theater.' And because then you have to figure out how to get the resources and how you're going to do things, and I think that's an important trait for an Artistic Director.

> **Male NIL-AD:** Probably the best thing [someone who wants to be in leadership] could do is first start their own theater company, because they'll be forced on every level to learn all the things we're talking about from mission statement to funding to how to maintain a sense that you are relevant in the artistic firmament of whatever city you are in, to how to deal with the press, to how to deal with the larger theater community. There's nothing you're not going to learn by starting a theater company—a nonprofit theater company—and having to make it go year after year, play after play, you know, than starting your own company.

The following comment from a male AD suggests that starting work at a small company can be similar to the advantages of founding:

> Starting at a very small company, the level of responsibility for everything—every aspect—really did help me, at least to understand both my responsibility to, you know, essentially minutiae, but also to understand how to motivate people and how to train people to manage those aspects of the company.

The finding that women become ADs of a theater because they have founded it suggests that women do not get *selected* to run theaters at the same rates as men do. Moreover, in the LORT member-theaters, founding experience currently has not benefited women for landing artistic director positions: 27% of the men were once a founder, while 19% of the women founded a theater. A hopeful sign is that four out of the five women of color in next-in-line to AD positions whom we interviewed had founded a theater. There are many women of color who have founded theaters as evidenced in survey results with director-members of SDC. Hopefully these experienced women will become candidates for LORT AD positions soon.

7.3.3 Relationships and mentors

Central to preparation for leadership is the building and maintaining of relationships with a variety of professionals in the theater field so that others can speak to your strengths. The relationships interviewees mentioned were not just limited to mentor or sponsorship relationships, but spanned connections across the ranks and job descriptions throughout the theater. We were told that an artist can speak to the strengths of an operational manager, and vice versa. Viewed more broadly, every relationship can provide support for both parties in that all learning and teaching goes both ways:

> **Female AD:** The person who is interning for you today, you may desperately hope to work for twenty years down the road. Never assume there's anybody in the room you can't learn from.

> **Female AD:** … who you play in the sandbox with can also be important…

> **Male AD:** So it is all about those relationships and the network of colleagues. Once you're in the job, I don't know how useful it is to get into the job, not useful in the sense that those people are somehow gonna open the doors for you, but if you're interviewing for one of these jobs it's really useful to tell whoever is hiring you, these are the people I know, and these are the people who would come to work for me at a theater that I lead.

> **Female ED:** You want to know the artists in your field, you want to know the major collaborators, you want to know people that you want to emulate, you hope to be able to have a personal connection with them, and be able to utilize their expertise in sharing these stories and experiences and maybe helping you find your way.

> **Male ED:** … you gotta let people know everything they have to say is important, whether it is at that time or not, … and I think I use a term that's similar to "let your skin grow thick but keep your heart open"… surrounding yourself by people who you know are there, you can count on them, and you know what they are gonna be like when they run into a tough situation.

> Central to preparation for leadership is the building and maintaining of relationships with a variety of professionals in the theater field so that others can speak to your strengths.

Additionally, a majority of interviewees, both leaders and those next in line, talked about the influence of mentorship on advancement in the field and preparation for leadership.

> **Male AD:** I had to cultivate mentorship relationships. I was always very interested in working with and for people who had more experience than me. And I really believe that assisting more experienced people gave me a lot of information, a lot of insight, taught me some shortcuts, helped me develop my own taste. Part of it was a reaction against the way they did their work.

> **Female AD:** I think any leader worth their salt who's been doing it for a while under-stands that it is a profound responsibility to the field to mentor. And I'd be hard-pressed to think of anybody in our field who was asked and refused because we all got where we got because somebody took the time, so I think mentorship is a big part of it.

These quotes fit with the description of the theater field as having an "apprenticeship" model where future leaders learn at the elbow of the current generation, a model that is reported to both be established in the field already, and also gets promoted as 'the way to go about it':

> **Male ED:** I am a big believer in the sort of teaching hospital model of... what do you call it... of apprentice, an intern or a fellow, or the notion of sort of apprenticing your-self to more senior people, who are good mentors and teachers, I think makes a big difference.

> **Male ED:** I think an important thing for young people to know and remember is the way our industry is set up is very, very sort of apprenticeship-y. Apprentice type driven. ... so people really have to pay their dues. You're not gonna make a lot of money in the beginning. ... And it's often trial by fire and, because not all organizations have the resources to do professional development so it's really just, we get thrown into the fire and those that survive can move on.

These quotations show that, while mentorship is valued very highly, the apprenticeship model may not be readily available to every ambitious or capable person. As seen in the last quotation above, the financial struggles of being able to survive as an apprentice can prevent those without personal means to even enter the field.

Some leaders described that they would love to be able to solidify either a financially supported position at their theater that is meant to be one in which someone can be sponsored as a protégé, or a mechanism that can pair people with ambitions with those willing to mentor them:

> **Male ED:** ... [I want to] think of ways to endow a position or to fund that position so that eventually we can have a standing position that functions as that kind of leader-ship training position, generalist position that is then positioned to move into senior leadership

> **Male AD:** ... what I wish I could do more but I don't have the resources to do, is for theaters my size to really have available within our budget structure the ability to mentor the next generation of leaders and to have some way that, you know, 'I've got a two-year fellowship or assistantship, or, 'I have a position for an Associate.' Because I don't have an Associate Artistic Director. I wish I did.

> **Male NIL-AD:** I feel like there has to be some sort of — if that is something that is desired from not only young professionals but also from the people at the top — that there would need to be some sort of infrastructure in place so that it doesn't just become a free-for-all of, 'I want to talk to you about this,' or, 'I want to talk to you about that.' Because there has to be some sort of go-between or help in facilitating it.

Finally, it was clear that not every ambitious person who is looking for that mentorship can readily find it:

> **Female NIL-AD:** I would love to have a female AD mentor. And I feel like I could grow in leaps and bounds if I had someone who wanted to be challenged on their assumptions.

A crucial element in the last quote is the phrase "who wanted to be challenged on their assumptions." A few other voices equally pointed out that the value of mentorship lies most in a mentor letting their protégé take important decisions, letting them fail (safely), allowing them to learn by doing — not just by shadowing — and actively leading the protégé with a vigorous give and take to skill areas that they need to add to their resumes. One way of accomplishing this is to give the aspiring leader primary responsibility for the outcome of a project and let them have the opportunity to shine. Documented and even public assessment of a successful initiative can allow the protégé to garner visibility and/or connections or relationships that can, in turn, serve their future growth. One female NIL-AD who had been in her position for several decades described how she mentored others in the field:

> I gave him advice but I didn't touch it. He did the whole thing from start to finish so that he would have the résumé credit, so that he would have experience. He cut the budget, he made the calls, because—you know. So I advised him and kept him on track, but he did the work. ... [now talking about a different protégé] I helped him set up the chairs but he produced the whole thing. So that's been sort of putting my money where my mouth is. To hire somebody in a position where they get exposed to lots of departments and then, even though they're an assistant, trying to let them take something all the way from the beginning to execution because otherwise projects at LORT theaters are too big and multi-year and ... you just can't run it. The company's running it. So whenever there's something small enough or manageable enough that they could run — and or encouraging them to come up with the ideas themselves so that they get that follow-through.

Other voices talked about the balance between failure and success and how future leaders need to approach both:

> **Male AD:** ...without experience of different aspects of the theater, you can't lead the theater. ...you have to know what it's like to succeed and you have to know what it's like to fail and you have to know what it's like to collaborate and you have to know how people work together.

> **Female AD:** ...anybody who really wants to be a leader needs to put themselves in a position where they can safely fail at and learn how to live with that and learn from that.

The ultimate support mentors can provide is to talk up their protégée's qualifications publicly to enhance their visibility and privately when called by search firms. We heard over and over from search firm professionals and Trustees who served on search committees that they look for endorsements of candidates from theater leaders they trust.

Seema Sueko, a panelist at the San Francisco Women's Leadership conference in August of 2016 (we name her with her permission), elaborated on the mentorship from two of her mentors by highlighting three elements that need to be in place to make the relationship effective: (1) The timing needs to be right for both the mentor and the mentee to be able to give and receive feedback; (2) There needs to be an element of mutuality in the relationship: the mentor receives as much as she gives to the mentee; and (3) The relationship needs to be open to protected vulnerability, such that both partners can process successes and failures safely with each other and grow together. [This panel discussion can be viewed at http://howlround.com/livestreaming-the-women-s-leadership-conference-american-conservatory-theater-and-the-wellesley]

In the leadership literature, there has been a growing emphasis on the value of sponsors, as opposed to "mere" mentors. A sponsor is someone with clout who is vested in a protégée's success, advocates publicly on their behalf, offers guidance and feedback, but also expects that the protégée will, in return, deliver "outstanding performance" (see Hewlett, 2013). In other words, it is a two-way relationship. Examples of this kind of support for aspiring leaders were evident in some interviews, and were also highlighted by conference attendees. The stories showed that sponsorship can provide effective promotion of aspiring leaders into higher prominence.

7.4 What people on the pathway to leadership say they need to learn to become qualified

Below are some NIL voices, both from those who report ambitions for reaching the top and those who say it is too early in their career. They describe what they would need to learn to be able to pursue their ambitions. Their focus was mainly on fundraising, among both AD and ED candidates, which echoes the results of the surveys described above. These LORT professionals had a long track-record in the theater at the time we talked to them, and had already gained deep experience often in different departments of the field. In addition to the wish to mastering "the ask," their comments reflected a desire to complete an already pretty well developed portfolio by deepening and widening their exposure to different departments within theater operations, community relations, board relations, strategic planning, and HR.

> **Female NIL-AD:** ... asking for money; learning how to be okay being the voice of an institution.

> **Male NIL-AD:** ...one thing that I've been doing over the last couple seasons has been developing my freelance career... another thing has been a lot of the experience that I've had interacting with our Board.... [As a leader] you should know a little bit of everything.... the strongest Artistic Director sort of understands all the individual components of the institution.... awareness of really creating bridges between the work that's happening on stage and the community within which that stage is built

> **Male NIL-AD:** I don't have a lot of experience doing the sort of big-donor asks or anything like that. I've not been around any of that. And I know that the fundraising thing is something that's particularly important.

> **Female NIL-ED:** ... development experience, in terms of making asks—you know, making major asks.

Male NIL-ED: ... comfort with long-term planning.

Male NIL-ED: ... see more and different types of productions and a different variety, broaden the diversity of my knowledge of the theater itself; nuts and bolts of HR, things as simple as payroll, taxation, how benefits and all those sorts of things factor into our work as a company and taking care of folks.

In addition to mastering the "ask," the importance of having broad expertise or cross-departmental experience is something we heard over and over again. People who are founders and those who came up through working in smaller theaters, tend to, by necessity, become experienced in doing a variety of tasks. Internships and attending graduate programs, which have strong "on-the-ground" training components, have been recommended as ways to broaden one's skill set. Here is an interesting perspective regarding preparation for gaining experience by working at theaters of different sizes. This female NIL-AD describes how someone can gain experience in both understanding the larger-budget theaters' workings and doing on-the-ground work honing skills:

> [when offering advice to those interested in gaining skills] I sort of tell them to take two paths, depending on whether or not they have to have a job for survival. I tell them that they have to work at a place that is big, so that they can see how a big institution happens and how, you know, everything is somewhat compartmentalized but then how does it all get integrated again and understanding that kind of professionalism. But then I also say that at night they really should find the small theater company that they love and basically offer their service and do whatever it is that they need.

While this advice is likely to be useful in the beginning of one's career, the person who has moved up the ladder in a particular department to become its director (e.g., director of development, finance, or marketing) or an associate AD may not easily find time to volunteer at a small theater at night. Here is what we heard from an associate AD on how she managed to get experience in finance:

> The [search firm professional] suggested ..., 'Sit on the Finance Committee meetings.' He said, 'Make sure you understand the finances really well. He who controls the finances controls the organization.' ... So I went to their last one and I'll continue attending them and that's really important. You know, when I ran [smaller theater she had founded], I did all the budgeting, so I am a bottom-line thinker. But it was a much simpler organization so I think that's really useful.

As will become more clear in the next section, a mentor within one's theater can take a pivotal role in ensuring that an ambitious next-in-line professional gets exposure to other departments than the one the protégée is already employed in. Mentors can invite their protégée to sit in on meetings, meet with Board members, and ensure that they take an active role throughout the organization without sacrificing work-life balance.

> Mentors can invite their protégée to sit in on meetings, meet with Board members, and ensure that they take an active role throughout the organization without sacrificing work-life balance.

Gender and race in the pathway to leadership

2013–14 Next-in-Line for Artistic Leadership

31 white men

3 men of color

21 white women (2 race unknown)

5 women of color

2013–14 Next-in-Line for Executive Leadership

25 white men (1 race unknown)

2 men of color

55 white women (2 race unknown)

5 women of color
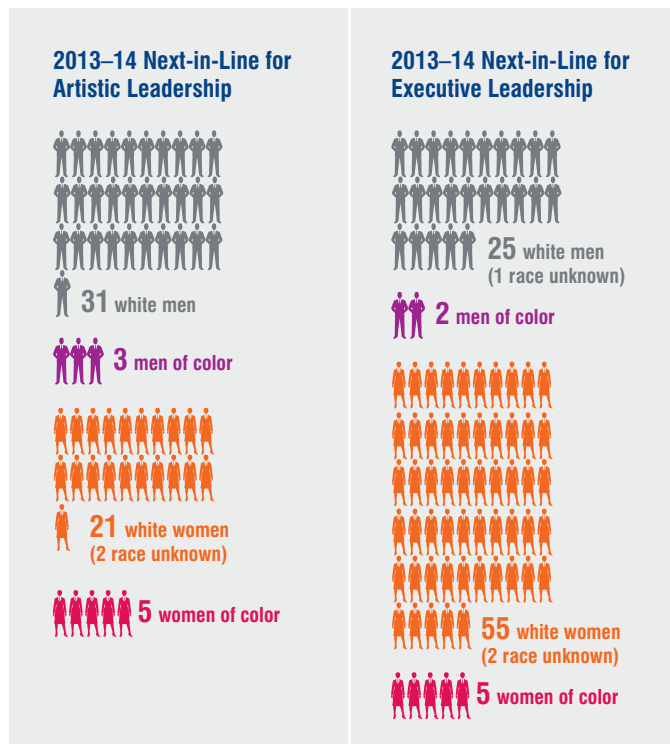
Figure 8.1 Gender and race breakdown of professionals immediately below top leadership in LORT theaters in 2013-14

We investigated the status of people on the pathway to leadership to find out if the scarcity of women in leadership of LORT theaters could be attributed to their absence in lower-level positions. In Figure 8.1., we illustrate the gender and racial breakdown of people next-in-line to top leadership in the 74 LORT member-theaters in 2013-2014. The majority presence of women in non-leader managerial positions is a clear indication of a glass ceiling for women on the executive side of theaters. On the artistic side, men and women are present in almost equal numbers in positions that could lead to the top, again lead-ing us to interpret the rather stark dearth of women artistic directors at LORT as a glass ceiling blocking their progression to leadership. To provide further insights into why fewer women make it to the top of LORT theaters, this section of the report delves deeper into whether levels of ambition and barriers to upward movement could be either personal or systemic or both.

Theater professionals of color are totally absent from the rank of ED, and their scarcity among ADs — particularly the scarcity of female ADs of color — has already been noted. To get a clearer understanding of this situation we oversampled ADs of color (we sought them out rather than relying on a random selection for interviews, which was the method we applied for the total interview sample recruitment) and those in next-in-line positions on the artistic and managerial side for one-on-one interviews. Interview responses from this oversample are incorporated in the discussion about the status of those on the pathway to leadership.

8.1 Ambition for the top position

Understanding why there are so few women and people of color in leadership positions requires examining if they are interested in the top job. To gauge interest in a leadership position, both on

the artistic and the executive side, we asked about ambition in interviews with professionals in LORT theaters and in surveys. When we describe here how many people reported being ambitious for an AD or ED position, we need to be mindful of the limitations of these samples.

8.1.1 Artistic director ambitions

First we report on the state of ambition for the artistic director position. Out of the 998 stage directors who completed the Stage Directors' Survey, 360 reported they had *never* been an artistic director. We asked this group if they had ever applied to a leadership post; 30% of the white directors and 25% of the directors of color replied "Yes." Comparing men and women, 32% of the men and 26% of the women responded "Yes." Neither of these comparisons is a statistically significant difference, which indicates that the ambition for the top role is equally present among male and female directors and across race.

Although we do not have data on the ambitions of other professionals in the theater field who have credentials that would fit the profile of an artistic director (for example, producers), we hypothesize that the gender and race balance in ambition extends into those professions as well.

> The ambition for the top role is equally present among male and female directors and across race.

An encouraging finding was that among the directors of color in the "never AD" group who had applied to become an AD, 23% told us their application was "in process" when they completed the survey. While this does not represent a large number of people — in fact only 3 — that percent is significantly higher than the 1% among white applicants (no white men and 2 white women).

Here is a cursory overview of what was reported in the survey among both ambitious male and female stage directors as reasons for *not* succeeding in *getting* the AD job they applied to:

- Not having enough fundraising experience was reported by close to half of the sample.

- More female directors (39%) reported not having enough experience producing shows compared to 21% of their male counterparts, a result that approached being statistically significant.

Reasons given for why a stage director chose *not* to *apply* for an AD position are the most interesting among the 16 female directors of color who took the survey: 38% reported it was too early in their directing career to apply for a leadership position and 31% reported they had not received effective mentoring to prepare for the leadership role. However, they were the group *least likely* to report that they don't like fundraising, that they only want to direct, that they don't find openings for someone with their skills, or that they are happy in their current position.

That female directors of color report being comfortable with the one skill — fundraising — which many directors report needing more experience in, suggests that their road to the AD position should be fairly straightforward. Search firms should look deeper particularly into theater founders of color for serious candidates for AD positions and for positions immediately below the top level to give them the experiences they report they need. Taken together, these findings are another sign that qualified women of color stage directors exist. They need to be recruited into the slates of candidates.

8.1.2 Executive director ambitions

In Table 8.1 we report the answers to a similar question about ambition from executive leaders and their direct reports from the Operational Managers' Survey. Of the 174 respondents who had *never* been an ED over half were *interested* in the top leadership position (54% of all never-EDs; 61% among men and 50% among women, which is not a statistically significant gender difference). Again, this shows a gender balance in the ambition for leadership on the operational side of theaters. (We cannot comment on ambition for leadership among managers of color because there were not sufficiently large numbers of professionals of color in the survey sample for meaningful analyses by race.)

Table 8.1 Ambition for and application to the top operational spot

Questions in Operational Managers' Survey	All	Men	Women
	n = 174	n = 59	n = 115
Have you thought of holding the top managerial/executive position in a theater as a realistic goal for yourself?	54%	61%	50%
	n = 171*	n = 59	n = 112
Have you ever applied to an Executive Director position?	17%	22%	14%

*Some respondents skipped this question.

A smaller subsample of these ambitious managers reported that they had *applied* to an ED position: 22% of the men and 14% of the women, a gender difference that was not statistically significant. Very few people answered follow-up questions about why they thought they did not get a position they applied for; a majority of the ones who did answer selected lack of fundraising experience as the reason why (reported by 63% of both men and women who failed to get that leadership position to which they had applied).

8.1.3 Ambition and gender among professionals in LORT member-theaters

The survey results about ambition we reported above came from samples that included professionals both inside and outside of the LORT system. Here we turn to professionals employed in LORT member-theaters. When investigating ambitions among professionals already employed in LORT, we considered every direct report to an AD or ED listed among staff on the LORT theaters' websites to be part of the path to leadership by virtue of their position. Figure 8.1 at the beginning of this chapter captures the gender and racial/ethnic background of that group.

We interviewed a subsample of those in positions from which they could move into leadership in order to understand more about the ambitions of these possible future leaders and whether they viewed their current positions as preparation or stepping stones to that leadership post. These interviews were intended to provide deeper background to our survey findings. Each interviewee was recruited from one of the theaters that was randomly assigned to be part of our interview sample (24 out of the 74 theaters, 8 each along 3 budget sizes).

We interviewed 20 men and 29 women in next-in-line positions; 27 worked on the artistic side (14 women and 13 men) and 22 on the executive side (15 women and 7 men), all recruited from the randomly selected sample of 24 theaters (randomization was stratified by theater size so that we could learn from people working in smaller, medium, and large LORT theaters). The random sample was augmented by an additional 7 interviews with people of color who were in non-leader positions, yielding 49 NIL interviewees in total. Each of these people in next-in-line positions was asked whether they were interested in ever becoming an AD or ED of a theater.

Table 8.2 Interview sample of next-in-line (NIL)

NIL interviews	Men		Women	
	NIL-AD	NIL-ED	NIL-AD	NIL-ED
All interviewees	13	7	14	15
Interviewees ambitious for the top position	12	7	9	6

Overall, more men than women report being interested in achieving the top role in a LORT member-theater (a statistically significant difference, chi-square = 10.436, p<.001). Among female NIL-ADs, 9 of the 14 reported being ambitious, and among the male NIL-ADs, 12 of the 13 did so. Among female NIL-EDs, 6 of the 15 reported an ambition for leadership as did all 7 male NIL-EDs. Job titles of those with ambition to eventually become an AD or ED included associate producer, producing associate, director of production, associate artistic director, artistic associate, director of programming, director of education, company manager, general manager, director of development, director of marketing and communications, and associate managing director. The sample with ambition spanned in age from 20s to 50s. Older NILs we interviewed tended to no longer be interested in moving up to leadership, starting with NILs in their 40s and then more strongly among those in their 50s and up. There were white and people of color among these ambitious next-in-line, both on the artistic and on the executive side. Differences along racial lines were not statistically significant, indicating similar levels of ambition among white and people of color.

The reasons interviewees reported for not being ambitious for a leadership position in a LORT theater varied widely. Since all but one of the male NIL interviewees expressed ambitions to seek the top position, the following reasons mostly represent women's perspectives. The most commonly cited reason was that the NIL was not interested in fundraising, which they viewed both an AD and ED to be deeply involved in. Of the six NILs who explicitly gave fundraising as their reason for not wanting the top, four worked on the artistic side and two on the executive side of the theater. Others reported being happy in their position and wanted to remain employed where they were able to practice their strongest skill, for example, as a playwright, finance director, education director, or general manager. Others were too young to consider the leadership spot, while a few had "been there, done that" and preferred to stay where they were.

There are sufficient numbers of women just below top leadership on both the artistic and operational side to make a difference in women's representation in leadership.

What can we make of the gender difference in ambition among professionals in next-in-line positions in LORT member-theaters? The first thing to note is that there are sufficient numbers of women just below top leadership on both the artistic and operational side to make a difference

in women's representation in leadership. So, the gender difference in ambition should not be a reason to stop making serious efforts to diversify leadership. Instead, individual theaters and the whole industry need to work toward creating the perception that promotion of women into leadership is viable by putting programs and initiatives in place that ensure that more women make it to the top and can function as models for others to follow. Otherwise, the reality of so few women being top leaders likely may have a chilling effect on other women's ambitions.

8.2 The intersection of gender and race

As is immediately clear from the two panels that show the gender and racial make-up among leaders in Figure 8.1, women of color are the least well represented group in top leadership in LORT member-theaters. It appears that the confluence of racial and gender bias has kept them from entering the regional theaters, which can influence the success of future recruitment efforts. With only one woman of color who is an AD, we can safely say that for women of color, there are no mentors in this group of theaters who look like them, who will have had experience with the types of challenges they will face. Outside of LORT, we equally found small numbers of women of color in leadership position, as attested by the few women of color who took either of our surveys. The experience base of mentors available to support the career development of aspiring women of color does not include the multiple systemic hurdles that this group will face on their way to leadership.

Having so few women of color in the pathway to leadership in LORT theaters, even in the ranks leading up to the pathway, is a major issue that the field will need to address urgently. However, if just two or three women of color were appointed as artistic or executive leaders of a LORT theater, those few appointments would bring an immediate and dramatic shift to the diversity of the field, doubling, even tripling their scant representation.

There is a relatively sizeable number of women of color who have founded theaters (more than half of those who took our Directors' Survey had done so). These leaders could be attracted to LORT theaters and bring their strengths to the regional theaters, ensuring that a new leadership model does not only include them as spokespeople among LORT leaders, but also brings their models for fundraising, audience inclusion, and audience development to these larger stages (see Chapter 5 for more on the strengths of people of color in reaching out to new and different audiences).

Another, remarkable, finding for women of color who took our survey was their report of being much less averse to fundraising (for more details, see the Stage Directors' Survey results in Appendix D, and also above in Chapter 5). Compared to white men and women, women of color were much less likely to select fundraising as a reason they did not seek the top spot. Their strengths in a skill that is so instrumental to the survival of the regional theater should help them move up in the ranks to leadership.

Although men of color have made it into the leadership spot at higher rates than women of color (5 men vs. 1 woman of color), their virtual absence among the next-in-line (5 men vs. 10 women of color) is an indication that for them, entry into the field is also a hurdle. For example, only 10 people of color completed our survey among operational managers, a number that is not sufficient for statistical comparisons, resulting in the exclusion of their data from our analyses. This is an indication that there are very few people of color employed on the operational/ managerial side, at least in larger theaters.

In addition to race, further personal characteristics can make a person stand out as "other" from the norm or trusted leadership stereotype. Age, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, socioeconomic background, ability, religion/spirituality, education, etc., are all elements of a person's background that can lead to a lower trust in their abilities to be leaders. It was not the charge of this study to put these characteristics front and center, but we do acknowledge fully here that we know these characteristics can stand in the way of a person along their career path.

Barriers to leadership

In every career path there are barriers to progression. In this chapter we focus on the barriers that surfaced in the data collected, some of which appear to disproportionately impact the career progression of women and people of color toward leadership in the theater world. Most of these barriers are systemic ones, not the results of personal decisions women or people of color make along their career paths.

9.1 Work-life balance

Theater has not been impervious to the pull of the 20th and 21st century "efficiency" drive, nor to the drive to focus on the bottom line and be a successful, constantly growing business. We heard about tensions around working many hours without compensation, staff shortages, and lack of opportunity to progress because of a lack of "middle-management," etc. Some interviewees also lamented the absence of time to reflect on direction, mission, and how business-based emphases get in the way of creating the theater one feels passionate about or of a more balanced work-life style that allows for "a life outside work." Indeed, the barriers toward progression that we discuss in this chapter all can contribute to some theater professionals leaving the field, or scaling back in favor of a lifestyle that they can balance better between work and life. (We cite some more examples of the stresses of a life in the theater further in this chapter under *Budget constraints*.) This quote from a NIL sums up some of these elements:

> **Female NIL-ED:** It's being short-staffed, you know? It's the fast pace of our business. We load in, we load out, ... So it's very little time. And then the salary range in an arts organization, non-for-profit art, is extremely limited. ... At one point we were contributing to 401k's... We are not doing that anymore. It's a lot of work. ...[about staff] they're not getting paid for that additional work that they're doing,... it's so fast-paced there is no time.... production staff, sometimes they sleep in their cars in the garage because in three hours the show is going to end and they have to load out....

This struggle with the demands of the field affects all employees in it. Next, we focus on one aspect of work-life balance that disproportionally affects women.

9.2 Family responsibilities as a barrier

Theater professionals have long hours of intense work preparing for a production, and evening and weekend work when the production is brought to the stage. This is particularly true for people employed on the artistic side. People on the operational/management side tend to have a more steady work flow but they, too, are called to work on weekends and evenings, especially the development and box office staff. Thus work demands can put pressure on employees' life outside the theater. But there are at least two ways work-life balance issues can disproportionately affect women's theater careers: a *perception* that women will find it difficult to combine work in the theater and family responsibilities, and the *reality* that more women than men women shoulder a larger share of family responsibilities. In this chapter we present our findings from interviews

and surveys in the context of what is written and said about work-life balance issues for women working in the theater.

When we started out collecting data for this study we expected to hear about how family responsibilities can place a limit on aspiring leaders' ability to move up in the organization, accept a job in a different location, travel for work, and can create other work-family conflicts. We expected that we would hear about these issues mostly from women because while the work-family conflict can raise problems for both male and female theater professionals who want to or need to be involved with caregiving, in practical terms, it is often the woman who is expected to shoulder the day-to-day responsibilities associated with the home and family, a topic extensively discussed in the women's leadership literature, what Arlie Hochschild (1989, 2003) has dubbed the "second shift." The literature on gender equity in leadership in other fields has also highlighted the family-responsibility challenge women face in their rise to leadership (e.g., King, 2005; Pew Research Center, 2015). We were also primed to hear about family responsibilities as a barrier based on blog posts written by women advocating for gender parity in the theater (see for example, Drostova, 2015; Stolowitz, 2013), advocacy reports (WomenArts, 2016), and conference proceedings (https://tcg2015.pathable.com/meetings/286420). Indeed, Carey Perloff, in her book, *A Beautiful Chaos* (2015), writes about the fact that when she gave talks about her career as an AD of a large LORT theater, the first questions she was asked were about how she managed her career with two small children.

> A *silence* surrounds the topic of family responsibilities in the theater world.

We were surprised that childcare and other family responsibilities did not emerge as key concerns, neither in the interviews nor in the anonymous surveys. Subsequently we turned to seasoned theater professionals to understand the meaning behind the disconnection between what is well established in other fields and in theater advocacy compared to the interview and survey results. These further consultations led us to conclude that a *silence* surrounds the topic of family responsibilities in the theater world.

9.2.1 What the interviews and surveys originally suggested

In our interviews, a stereotypical *perception* was voiced by a few male ADs that women may not want to or may not be able to travel widely to go and direct in other locations, which can require leaving their families behind.

> **Male AD:** ... you find most Artistic Directors in many cases—at least I've heard historically— have been men because they've been much more mobile. You know, if women want to have a family, they become sort of, okay, they're in that area and they can't go freelancing a lot and work in other regional theaters where eventually they may get asked if they want to be Artistic Director and have families at the same time. So I think that's an interesting dilemma around the female side.

A female AD reinforced the idea that having family responsibilities can be a disadvantage for women in the eyes of search committees. She accidentally found out a search committee's evaluation of her: "I wasn't supposed to see it, but I saw it. And they said that the downside of me was that I had a small child."

In interviews on the executive side the sentiments expressed in the quotations below were not widespread but, again, they existed.

> **Male NIL-ED:** [speaking about who is being groomed for leadership in his company, which does not focus on women] I don't think they aspire for that type of leadership role given their family situations.

> **Male ED:** She ended up departing after [ED's predecessor] was hired. She had started a family.

In all, only a few interviewees articulated that family responsibilities are a challenge for women. When the topic was mentioned, it was often about *others*' perception of family responsibilities making work in theater hard for women. We did not find responses suggesting that women themselves felt that shouldering family responsibilities hindered their career development.

Our survey data also suggested that family responsibilities are not much of a problem. The survey sample was composed of a select group of directors who were members of SDC. We did not find women showing resistance to moving to another location, nor talking about family responsibilities as an obstacle to career progression.

- Among women (and men) who were offered an AD job but didn't take it, reluctance to moving to a new location was *not* checked as one of the reasons for refusing the offer.

- A lack of job openings in one's geographic location was *not* tagged as a reason for never applying to a position as artistic director.

- One's family moving away was *not* selected by directors who previously held an AD position as a reason for leaving that AD position.

Similarly, in the survey with executive leaders and their immediate reports in theaters with larger budgets (starting at $1Million), we did not find that these managers had felt restrictions on their decisions to apply to, accept, or turn down a higher position related to their own or their family's opposition to moving, paralleling the findings from the survey with stage directors.

Echoing the survey takers, relatively few of our interviewees who aspired to a leadership position brought up raising a family as a barrier to equal access to leadership for *themselves*. Indeed, a female associate artistic director bristled when we asked "What are your family constraints."

> If I'm really honest, I feel like these questions make me crazy because they'd never be asked of a guy. That's the only thing I can tell you. You know, I don't mean to be hostile about it, but I really have trouble with these questions because I just don't think a man in my position would be asked them and I don't know how to answer them.

Her discomfort with the question as being gender-biased, and the silence of the majority of people we talked to on giving voice to family responsibilities making theater work hard for women suggested to us that perhaps there was more to learn about this topic. We wondered about alternative explanations. It could be that most interviewees, by virtue of already being in a higher management position at a LORT member-theater, were a pre-selected group who had found personal solutions to this issue. For example, their leadership position may have come after their children were grown, or they may have chosen not to have children. Or, they may have thought that this was a personal, not a systemic challenge. We also wondered whether some people may have been

keenly aware of the challenges but avoided talking about them because we focused our questions on leadership, and they may have viewed bringing up this barrier as potentially negating the seriousness of their ambitions.

9.2.2 Additional interviews on family responsibilities

We knew that the job description of artistic leaders requires travel to direct at a variety of theaters nationally and internationally and to scout other directors and new productions, as well as late nights at the theater, dinners with potential donors, etc. All these tasks are not easily combined with family responsibilities. Preparing for leadership by directing widely and traveling around the country is also hard to combine with family responsibilities, putting many women, and some men, at a disadvantage. On the managerial side, even if there is less travel involved for executive leaders, the hours spent at the theater attending performances, meeting with potential donors, or taking care of last-minute details can be hard to align with family schedules and responsibilities.

Seeing all these potential barriers but not hearing about them in surveys or interviews, we decided we needed to ask more direct questions about family. We reached out to eight seasoned theater professionals. We specifically asked these people about whether family responsibilities were a challenge to reaching leadership positions in the theater. The answers suggested a different story than the one found in the interviews and survey answers.

In a private email, one next-in-line manager wrote,

> I see every day the challenges I have to get in front of that donor at the last minute, attend a dinner on a Saturday night, etc., because I have a child. I often have to turn to one of [my male colleagues] to help me out. I have seen firsthand that the role of mother and senior leader is a tough one!

This woman's personal quandary about combining work and family echoes what was said by the few interviewees who mentioned the topic of women's family constraints. One can see that the perception of family as a barrier may result in not being groomed for leadership; it can cast a shadow on female candidates such that selection committees and others who have an influence on hiring may exclude women from consideration. Indeed, a female AD spoke of her own theater's attempts to *overcome* the challenge having family responsibilities can place on women, which she emphasized was *rare* in the industry.

> We're an organization that is very family-centric and very flexible around childcare issues. It is a place where a woman does not have to drop out of career flow to deal with her family, right? I'm also reminded when I get back into national conversations that that's not normative.

Another female AD highlighted the need to make accommodations for directors' family responsibilities, which she was happy to do: "I had to make a decision that if I wanted to work with female directors who were my peers and of my age group, I had to house their families." She named childcare the "biggest x-factor" when asked about what recommendations she would make for the field to become more family-friendly. She added that theaters paying for childcare may be one model, but providing recommendations for and working on short-term admission arrangements with local care programs, schools, or summer camps that have been vetted by staff may be a second, more immediately feasible model for theaters to implement.

A female AD attributed her own success in part to the modeling ("leadership by example") of a female mentor at the time she became a parent, and talked about wanting to perpetuate that type of leadership and mentorship in her own theater. She elaborated on what she valued in this leader who was both a role model and mentor:

> ...leaving aside the questions of ... 'would I still have a job' and everything, but more importantly she [my mentor] had no doubt that I would continue to do my job well and that I would want to and that I was committed to what I was going to do and that having a child would be an expansion of my universe and my point of view that was not a threat to my work.

Echoing the value of a supportive mentor, a NIL-ED wished she had access to a female mentor who understands what it means to have family responsibilities:

> I'd love to have a mentor in either capacity but I do find that there's a lot of men who maybe don't have children and don't have responsibilities and that they may not really understand what it's like to be a working mother.

Eventually, a female AD reframed the disconnect between the lack of concerns about family responsibilities in our interview and survey findings on the one hand and women's voices in blogs on the other who are advocating for gender parity and more support for child care. She suggested: "Women are trained, at least in my field, to shut up when they have children, because it is a liability. You won't get the job!"

This framing, that it is safer for women to be silent about family responsibilities, was widely echoed in a focus group of 16 women who were theater professionals and friends of theater gathered to give feedback on the early recommendations emanating from our research. The theater professionals in the group not only said they wouldn't talk about family responsibilities in a job interview, they also said that they don't trust theaters doing the hiring not to hold it against them if they have family responsibilities. This framing provides a context for understanding why the female associate artistic director quoted earlier resisted answering questions about family constraints: Men are not asked these questions with the assumption that there's someone at home taking care of the family, so it is not the theater's concern. If she, as a woman, acknowledged being challenged by family conflicts, it can be perceived as a weakness.

> "Women are trained, at least in my field, to shut up when they have children, because it is a liability. You won't get the job!"

A second double standard for men and women in regards to family responsibilities was highlighted by a freelance director we had a confidential conversation with. She described:

> I have experienced first-hand the contrast in what happens if [freelance director husband] arrives at rehearsal with [child name] versus when I do. ... He arrives with a small child. Everybody descends, to figure out how to help him make that day possible given that situation... People would jump — you know it's not their job — but they would figure out how to help. And I had multiple situations at a LORT level where I really basically don't ever let on that there is even an issue... But the feedback I got [after the tech rehearsal] was "it was great, [child] sat in the corner..." He [my husband] as a male director finds that people are quick to help, ... but when I am trying to figure it out, I find that people aren't always as quick to help figure out a solution.

In a society where caring for children is still largely viewed as a woman's responsibility, when a man takes on that role, he is rewarded for doing it, while with a woman it is taken for granted that she will accommodate her family around her employment and set up her own supports behind the scenes.

We conclude that there is an industrywide silence surrounding family responsibilities. Those aspiring for leadership rarely break this taboo when speaking publicly. Additionally, we believe that the industrywide silence affects the potential applicant pool for leadership. Family responsibilities keep many women and some men *from entering the pathway to leadership* and also create a *"leaky pipeline."* Those who are well advanced in their theater management careers and those who have already reached leadership positions (which is the majority of our interview and survey sample) likely made sacrifices to deal with family issues and do not feel it is in their best interest to bring it up. Others may have left the field, or did not enter it in the first place, finding theater work not to be family friendly.

An industry that voices a resolve to diversify leadership needs to be more resourceful in addressing family constraints. An initiative in the UK is aiming to "change the landscape of the industry for parents" with a study that will survey working parents on what they need to increase their work-life balance. It will be very interesting how theaters will implement their recommendations and if these will also make it to the U.S. scene (Hemley, 2016, and www.pipacampaign.com).

> Family responsibilities keep many women and some men from entering the pathway to leadership and also create a "leaky pipeline."

9.3 Establishing legitimacy as a theater professional of color

We have argued all along that search committees do not frequently trust that women will be able to run a theater. Legitimacy as a theater professional is one component of that trust. One white AD mentioned, when talking about efforts to bring more people of color into the theater "I discovered that you had to bring in people at a level of responsibility where the community and the theater would take them seriously." In further conversations with aspiring leaders, the meaning of "take them seriously" became clearer. A woman of color told us "we are not given formal authority." She was employed in a NIL-position with high-level responsibility and had a fair amount of decision power and independence. However, the publicly visible decision making was placed in the hands of her supervisor rendering her independence and decision power invisible to the public and hence to selection committees. Consequently, when she applied for a leadership position, the formal authority that she had been holding in her NIL position was not seen and her leadership ability was not recognized, and she was passed over.

> Many directors of color say that not being asked to direct a wider repertoire and not being placed in positions of visible formal authority stifles their career growth.

Another woman mentioned that if she had not had a white male mentor willing to put her in visible decision-making positions early in her career, as a woman of color, she would not have been able to progress to the point she had. At the time of our interview, her most prominent mentor was a leader of color. She said she recognized that the leadership position of her current mentor did not have as much effect on her career progression because of the mentor's race. Because her early-career white male mentor had spoken to her strengths, she had been taken more seriously

by the theater community as having leadership potential. She said that since leaving the theater run by her white male mentor, her legitimacy is more often publicly questioned and her current mentor of color talking about her strengths is not generating as much trust in her.

The "take them seriously" quoted above is in stark contrast to another white AD's approach to lack of diversity:

> The easy answer in diversity in the theater is programming. You do a play by August Wilson, then you get a black woman to direct Shakespeare, you're done. The bigger question is, I haven't been able to meet enough exciting young African American directors to help prepare them to be the next Artistic Director of my company.

This comment goes to the heart of the challenge faced by directors of color who feel pigeonholed in directing a limited repertoire, even if it occasionally includes Shakespeare. Many directors of color say that not being asked to direct a wider repertoire and not being placed in positions of visible formal authority stifles their career growth, such that the white AD quoted here may forever be seeking the "exciting young African American director" until more leaders in the field, including this AD, offer more consistent, more equitable, and more focused grooming for opportunities more widely.

9.4 Culture fit

Another barrier theme that particularly men and women of color brought up, can be called "culture fit" for the fit between a leader's individual culture and the culture of the theater they are selected to be in charge of. For people of color, culture fit refers to the work that the theater community needs to do internally to ensure that it is open and welcoming of a leader who does not look like the leaders the community has had in the past. Additionally, it refers to the continued support a theater needs to give to an appointed leader when this leader encounters push back from groups of patrons or other theater supporters who may have not been as ready for a less traditional leader as the theater itself. This quote from a NIL-AD illustrates that scenario:

> I think the worst thing any artist of color could do right now would be take an Artistic Directorship at an institution that's not a good fit and fail, because every failure for one is one that everyone pays for for ten years. It's just the way it goes. People are still talking about the financial hoopla around [theater] when [name] left. So it becomes the reason why they don't open the door for the next guy. So there's a tremendous amount of pressure that I feel [that] all of my colleagues who are people of color also feel. You can't fuck up; you've got to be your best, you've got to be the best, and you've got to have an authenticity and integrity about the way that you work.

Search firms also used the term "culture fit," but coming from them it indicated the explanation of why a certain leader is or is not selected easily in some theaters. Mostly that type of reasoning places the predominant culture of the theater in the center as the one that others need to conform to, and weighs the culture of a leadership candidate in relation to it. This kind of "culture matching" is viewed negatively by those who come from non-traditional backgrounds.

> [the search firms] usually bring up diversity with the Board: 'we're looking at the culture of the organization and finding a good match for the culture.' And to me that was

all code for, 'Oh, so that's how you can easily eliminate somebody of color.' ... Because, if the Board says, 'Well, we really need somebody who knows all these rich people.' Or, 'Who these rich people are going to feel comfortable with'....

Non-traditional candidates' culture being viewed as the outlier during a leadership selection (e.g. their race, sexual orientation, gender, gender expression, etc. are different from what a typical leader in that theater has been like) can set up the candidate for immediate failure. It does not serve any leader that their culture should be re-molded to fit with the theater's predominant culture. A theater needs to ascertain that its entire community is committed to support and grow with non-traditional leaders, through both successful and less successful seasons. Every theater would benefit from working to reach that point, work which will ensure that diversity infuses itself in every rank of employment. As we have pointed out in a previous section on the tasks of a selection committee (see Chapter 4, under *Formation of a Board search committee*), the best route to successful diversity includes 3 elements (see Dobbin & Kalev, 2016): getting managers or decision makers positively engaged in solving the problem by giving them ownership over finding the solution; exposing the decision makers to people from different groups with whom they have to work as equals, so that they diversify their idea of who is a "decision maker"; and adding an element of accountability for change to the process by publicly (or within the appropriate circles) explaining the reasons behind certain decisions. Each of these elements focuses on effecting change on the decision making process, not on the part of the diverse candidate in asking them to adapt to the majority culture. In fact, only by allowing non-traditional leaders to bring into their leadership style what makes them different and what has shaped their paths, will the strengths of those leaders be put to the best use.

9.5 Age, tenure, the perception of entitlement, and leadership style

Tenure and age are complicated and potentially contentious aspects to consider in leadership research. On the one hand, a long-tenured leader can be a strong role model for the field and add a depth of long-term experience; on the other hand, he or she may be keeping a leadership spot occupied such that no vacancies arise in coveted positions for many decades creating the impression of stagnation.

> **Female AD:** [talking about barriers toward leadership] ...there's the most hard and dangerous one which is nobody likes to talk about which is willingness to step aside. Nobody ever talks about that. Everyone thinks it. People in [leadership] positions fear that that's what somebody's thinking. People who aspire to positions are thinking it. And nobody says it out loud because it runs so counter to all our capitalist ethics.

A recent report on state of arts leadership in the San Francisco Bay Area by the Hewlett Foundation (Ono, 2016) argues that in succession planning what was once characterized as a pipeline problem can now be described as a bottleneck because the baby boomer generation (those born within two decades of the end of WWII) have not taken retirement in significant numbers. In the small universe of LORT theaters (74 total in 2013-2014), there are many illustrious long-term leaders. A fifth of them even founded their theaters, and have stayed at the helm of these institutions. Overall, among the 142 leaders for whom we could calculate longevity in their position (out of 148), three had been in their position for over 40 years, six over 30 years, 22 over 20 years, and 31 for more than a decade.

With respect to age, among artistic directors 46% were over 60 years old, 20% among EDs. More EDs than ADs were under 50 years of age when we collected our data (32% vs 15%). What are younger generations who vie for these few leadership positions to do when working on their leadership preparation in a field where "people don't retire," as was shared in the interviews?

The long-tenure and age issues are compounded by what is talked about as the elimination of many intermediary positions in the theater. Some leaders were well aware of how few spots there are for advancement.

> **Male ED:** I think one of the things that I think is very problematic about arts organizations in the United States—because most of them aren't that big. Of course there are some giant ones, but most of them aren't that big, which means there's not that much depth in the staff, which means there's not very many opportunities to promote from within.

> **Male ED:** … we have this reality of all this energy and training that's coming out of these grad school programs and I don't know that there's going to be room for all of those people.

> **Female ED:** There aren't a lot of intermediate positions. There are not as many as there were at one time because not only do managers stay for a long time but now GMs stay for a long time. There used to be more movement within the field.

The tension between "landing" a coveted next-in-line position among few available in an illustrious theater and the desire to progress both in status and in income is clearly reported by this NIL-AD: "I [am in] one of those jobs that once you get them you sort of stay in them for a while … there aren't a lot of postings for jobs like this." He reports that unless someone were to contact him with "Hey, have you ever thought of doing this?" he is unlikely to leave his position merely because there is very little chance of finding one that would seem like progress.

Related to the age issue and lack of mobility at the top is the *expectations* of the younger generation on the need for change. For example, a NIL-ED, when talking about how "times have changed" exclaimed: "…there is resistance to change … [but] we need different approaches for different generations of potential funders." A female AD characterized the younger generation's desire for change as a "sense of entitlement," creating a tension between the up-and-coming generation's drive to occupy higher levels of leadership and the industry's more hierarchical tradition of meritocracy:

> … there are some pretty contemporary evolving social dynamics that are part of answering that question and there are some old-school dynamics that are still part of answering that question. And what I mean by that is the millennial notion of "I have a right to be in the room, I have a right to be in every conversation" … we're dealing now with a generation that is coming up the escalator towards leadership, coming up the escalator with — here's where I will intentionally use the word — with a really dynamic sense of entitlement. But the old-school scenario of meritocracy still applies, and so it's a very interesting time to watch evolving leadership because there is a need to earn where it is you want to be, there are still old-school gender and cultural biases that have to get unpacked and have to get acknowledged that can skew who ends up in leadership positions to this day. We're not past that; we're nowhere

near past that. But you also have, just for perfect storm, a generation that asserts that they belong in the artistic equivalent of a C-suite. And so back to what I think is the genesis of your question, what are the skills that are needed? A profound work ethic, ambition that's always coupled by deep and respectful curiosity, and I think a rigorous capacity for self-evaluation.

This AD's assessment of leadership skills as requiring a "rigorous capacity for self-evaluation" in order to check a sense of entitlement, does not necessarily clash with what we heard in the next-in-line interviews at LORT theaters. The next-in-line sample we interviewed was mostly in the age group which the Hewlett Foundation report refers to as Gen X (born between 1965 to 1980). Whether they were ambitious for leadership or not, the interviewees did not take for granted that their education, experience, and their passion for the art of theater would land them automatically in the seat of leadership without gaining the necessary depth of skills and experience. Indeed, the underlying tone of this AD's description of the next generation's sense of entitlement resonates more with what the Hewlett report refers to as the expectations of Millennials (born between 1981-1997). Ono (2016), the author of the report, highlights the increasing levels of education among Millennial arts managers coupled with their increased expectations for faster advancement and equivalent salary levels. In a field like theater, where unpaid internships have traditionally been the modus vivandi post-graduation, the realities of higher student loans and cost of living in major cities where most of the larger theaters are housed clash with the models of previous generations' career trajectories and their expectations of the same on-the-job-learning advancement from younger candidates. At the same time, the higher cost of living has led to postponed retirement among current leaders. These conditions are creating a dearth of open positions, further fueled by the elimination of intermediary positions and "the collapse of the mid-sized house," which one leader pointed to as one of the reasons that it is much harder to gain experience to become a leader in a LORT theater.

The Hewlett Foundation report makes recommendations for what future arts leadership should consider (Ono, 2016): (1) support for career pathways that result in more diverse leadership through a variety of professional advancement models focused on flexibility, shared knowledge, and transfer of relationships across generations of leaders; (2) distribution of leadership capacity-building across generations leading to a more shared and empowering responsibility model; (3) support for fostering shared values of diversity and innovation leading to organizations that embrace the voices of emerging leaders as much as the experience of seasoned ones.

If and how LORT theaters put any of these recommendations into action will remain to be seen. It may be unlikely that ambitious young theater professionals who are interested in being part of this group of larger non-profit theaters will sit around waiting. People who have management skills, which would make them suitable for ED preparation, can leave for work in other non-profit and even in for-profit fields. For frustrated directors and producers on the artistic side, there is the time-honored option of founding one's own theater, although we do not have information on whether founding theaters is as widespread in the current financial climate as it used to be.

9.6 Other barriers to progression

We asked each next-in-line interviewee — regardless of whether they felt ambition for a leadership role or not — to sum up the barriers they saw to leadership progression. Four broad categories emerged from their responses:

- Budget constraints and subsequent lack of opportunity

- Industry-related barriers

- Lack of relationships and/or mentors

- Perceived bias/discrimination

Below we report voices that illustrate each of these four topics. The comments were made by women as well as by men, by white professionals and also by professionals of color. Because LORT is a small world and we promised each interviewee complete confidentiality, to further disguise who said what in these somewhat piqued comments, we do not provide the interviewees' race or gender next to their comments. These comments can be taken as starting points for conversations among NIL and their supervisors or mentors in how to move forward and address the particular barriers the NIL experience.

9.6.1 Budget constraints leading to lack of opportunity for career development

This topic includes theaters running on tight budgets, and a lack of employment depth in departments, such that too much work is expected from too few people. We heard that the resulting limited movement across or through levels within departments leads to a lack of career growth and, related to it, income stagnation of those in NIL positions. Some of these comments from NIL are similar to what we heard from ADs and EDs about low turnover for top leadership.

Additionally, budget constraints were cited as limiting career development that can take place through the attendance of conferences and other networking opportunities. Many interviewees knew about, for example, the TCG conferences, but few received the funding or could afford their own way to attend them.

> **NIL-ED:** it's overwhelming to me. It's not that I don't believe in working hard, because I do, but I think it's an unreasonable expectation. And I'm not the only one that works that much. I don't mean that by any stretch. I just think it's unreasonable expectations on the staff, and they're starting to really feel it.

> **NIL-ED:** there aren't very many openings. That's the biggest issue. And then hearing about them is kind of hit and miss.

> **NIL-AD:** ... the type of position I think that I would be looking for does not necessarily become available a lot. And when it does, there are probably 50 other people who want it as well.

> **NIL-ED:** ...usually they get to the point where their boss isn't gonna go anywhere, they know that, so they have to look elsewhere...

NIL-AD: ...because to be honest I went to grad school to not be an assistant. But I took the job because I wanted to work at [theater name] my entire life and also to work for somebody like [leader at this theater] was a no-brainer. But I had hit my threshold on the pay, I guess I would say. And so I think it came from a desire for a step up but also a very practical need that I needed the money to pay my loans back.

NIL-AD: trainings aren't given because so many times you fall into a position like this and you hit the ground running and you're just trying to keep things up in the air, but you don't have time to actually sit and think about, 'Okay, well how am I leading?

NIL-ED: I don't see salaries, I don't see the basic needs or the benefit side improving quickly enough.... no money for training...

NIL-AD: I can't afford to go work for free again. I've got debt. I feel that's how I made a lot of my connections, was working for free. Now I'm 31 and I'm sort of like, 'You know what? I can't do that.' But that's how a lot of doors end up being opened, is you're at the right place at the right time, normally as an intern.

NIL-AD: ... it's strange to me that the head Artistic Director—and this is a generalization—can be making—or the Executive Director, the Managing Director—can be making over $200,000 and that the junior staff that are also working very hard, are making $30,000 or $40,000 or less. And ... it seems like there's a calcification and polarization that's happening.

NIL-ED: TCG yes.... they do a conference yearly. It's not something that we can attend all the time.

NIL-AD: I've gone to a number of TCG conferences along the way, I've gone to a couple of the LORT ones. Like many people, we cut back on travel and that kind of thing, so there were people now that did go like 6 or 7 years ago, and I find those fascinating, and if you get to the right one it can reinvigorate why you show up at work every day.

NIL-AD: I also haven't been, I haven't been sent to a TCG conference in three years, so in those sort of national forums, I don't have a presence per se.

It would be all too easy to dismiss these comments as coming from a few disgruntled employees or an "entitled" younger generation. Low salaries, overwork, few opportunities for advancement, limited opportunities to travel to conferences and trainings, however, are systemic issues that require responses from top leadership as well as from the Boards of Trustees. Investment in employees is clearly an investment in the growth of both the employees and the institution, and can be part of a theater's strategic planning.

9.6.2 Industry-related barriers

Every industry has its quirks: the specific skills needed for progression to the top; struggles between generations on how to actually go about doing the work; how information about open positions is shared; how different contracts or positions lead to advantages or disadvantages; and how to enter into the industry with experience from other fields, etc. Many people just below the leadership spot (and also some leaders) pointed to the lack of a central holding place of infor-

mation for career progression in the theater field, opportunities to find out about open positions, and for making new connections. Beyond making those holding places more readily available and expanding upon them, mere free and unrestricted access to them for junior members of the field was also an issue. The next set of voices expressed how barriers that are typical characteristics of the field of theater are perceived as blocking career growth.

The following comments speak to the difficulty in breaking into the theater, challenges of directing, and finding appropriate jobs.

> **NIL-AD:** ...the tricky thing for me [on the artistic side] is that I'm not a director. I actually don't direct.

> **NIL-AD:** Art Search is kind of essential, those who have a subscription do, ... [theater] companies have access to them but if you are in school you don't have open access to them. And LORT doesn't keep a site or any listing of opportunities for the community: what's available, what's required. Expectations, things like that.

> **NIL-ED:** ... if you are coming from the outside, it's very difficult to get in.... There's not really one place to go for any resources about how to move within the community.

> **NIL-AD:** I feel like a lot of really promising young talent, male and female, go other places [than LORT theaters] to get to do more, because ... it's the golden handcuffs of a large institution where a lot of people stay for decades.

> **NIL-AD:** [about the lack of opportunity for an associate director to direct shows in their own house] ... staff members don't get treated as well as guest artists.

> **NIL-AD:** I don't hold it against anybody. But more and more you're finding that these Associate AD positions are being replaced by Artistic Producers. And what that means is more opportunities for guest artists. But what it also means is that you have one less opportunity for a director to really create an institutional home.... I do think that there probably aren't enough practical workshops. ... you have to go to Yale and take management classes if you really want to understand some of the kind of nuts and bolts of what it means to run an institution. And I think that kind of thing is not easily accessible to people on the artistic side of the theater, you know, to directors ... it's harder to seek those opportunities out.

> **NIL-AD:** ... there might be some closed-mindedness about the value that people can have to an organization based on their experience and education outside of the traditional coming-up through the ranks.... there are a lot of transferable skills that people can bring in from other industries and in theater I get the sense that, unless you come up through theater, it's really hard to get into theater.

9.6.3 Lack of relationships and/or mentors

In Chapter 5, *Skills for different paths to leadership,* we discussed the central role of relationships both for visibility and skill acquisition for career progression in the field. The comments we include here give voice to frustrations with relationships and the level of mentoring available and wishes for more effective connections within one's theater and outside it.

NIL-AD: I wish I knew some of the artistic directors better than I did. I think there is an "artistic-directors-talk-to-each-other" mentality.

NIL-AD: I feel like I'm sequestered, you know, so it's very hard for me to make those connections, ... I'm sort of actively looking right now for new employment and, so I'm trying to make connections and trying to leverage relationships I currently have in order to learn about other opportunities at other theaters. And while it's a very small network of people, it's still really challenging to get your foot in the door. Even when you're currently positioned fairly well in an organization, it's just a real challenge.

NIL-ED: [career development] is just being at the right place at the right time and *who you know*

NIL-AD: I've been somewhat limited because I've stayed in the same place for so long. There are clubs in the theater and there are friends taking care of each other and giving each other jobs. And I'm not hooked in to a lot of those unities, partially because I didn't go to grad school so I didn't make those connections and also because I wasn't one of these freelancers hopping around and meeting a bazillion people at all of these different theaters.

NIL-ED: ... relationships with board members would be cool to incorporate.... colleagues in LORT would also be relationships that I would like to cultivate. I know there are conferences. I don't know if it's yearly or every two years, but we don't often get a chance to talk with our peers in other theaters or nonprofit organizations. So that would be something that I would like to cultivate in the future. I'm also a scenic designer. My degree is a BFA actually, so from an artistic standpoint I would love to have more contact with other folks, you know, other designers, relationships. It would awesome to spend a sabbatical or take some time off to just focus on that for a little while, but it's impossible given the schedule.

NIL-AD: I just need more support from my mentors... [and] financially supporting more training for myself... allowing for more travel so that I can see more different types of work and bring that work to the organization.

In our survey with people on the managerial side we found that, of those who were not in leadership positions, only 27% had a mentor at their own institution who could help them learn the skills they felt they needed in order to be able to prepare for a leadership position. A smaller group (16%) reported they would actually leave their theater because they needed a mentor to support their growth. The most frequent response was 41% reporting that they would have to develop their career at their theater without benefit of a mentor. Thus, more than half of those next-in-line for executive leadership reported they wanted a mentor but did not have one.

Our results show that people in a position to serve as mentors and those who can benefit from mentoring all value it. Yet, for a variety of reasons the traditional, intense relationship-based informal mentoring that organically grows out of mutual affinity and respect is in short supply. Can formal programs developed to pair experienced professionals with aspiring leaders serve the same career development function as more organically developed mentor-protégée relationships? The research evidence does not show that formal mentoring programs are as effective as informal mentoring but that they are not without value (Chao, Walz, & Gardner, 2005; Inzer & Crawford,

2006). What Ragins and her colleagues (Ragins, Cotton, & Miller, 2000) found is that satisfaction with a mentoring relationship had a stronger impact than the presence of a mentor — whether the relationship was formal or informal — or the design of a formal mentoring program. Among our interviewees, those who had participated in formal mentoring programs and fellowships were positive about the experience, particularly if they had developed a strong connection with the mentor to whom they had been assigned. They also expressed a sense of pride and accomplishment in having been asked to take part in a selective program.

But we know that informal mentoring relationships are few and slots in formal mentoring programs are even fewer. What is an aspiring leader to do? With this question in mind we return to the primacy of interpersonal relationships in forging a career in the theater. Networks of relationships may be more readily available than mentors. While having a mentor who will give you opportunities to learn from your mistakes, "watch your back," counsel you, and speak to your strengths to others is invaluable, forging even "weak" relationships — as Granovetter famously wrote in "The strength of weak ties" in 1973 — with many people can be good for career development. The challenge can be to be conscious of absorbing those "weaker" learnings and use them to progress to leadership.

9.6.4 Perception of bias

In the surveys we asked of the respondents who had applied for a top leadership position but did not get it, to check all the reasons why they thought they did not get the position. Among the reasons they could check were typical foci of discrimination: "because of my race," "because of my gender," "because of my age," "because of my sexual orientation." These options were presented in individually randomized order among all other reasons in order to eliminate the possibility that their position on the list of options might have influenced whether they were checked or not by the respondents.

These responses indicative of bias were not frequently checked, which is typical of survey responses asking people if they were being discriminated against. Social scientists have learned that individuals taking surveys have difficulty in reporting with certainty that a negative outcome can be attributed to bias (see Pew Research Center, 2016). Responses that would indicate perceived bias were not among the frequently reported reasons applicants perceived why they were not selected. However, there *were* respondents who checked one or more of the bias reasons. Since the world of theater leadership is primarily white and male, one would expect that female and minority theater professionals would be more likely to report bias reasons for not getting the leadership job they applied for. Our analysis of the demographic characteristics of who checked bias responses reveals that proportionately more women and people of color than white men checked bias reasons. However, that is not the whole story. There were some white men who checked bias reasons for not getting the top position. This may reflect that a small number of white men perceive that the current emphasis on diversifying theater leadership makes their race and/or gender no longer an asset but a liability.

In contrast to survey results, we encountered more reports of perceived bias in the more intimate context of one-on-one interviews. We heard in several interviews stories of barriers that were placed against the career progression of a white woman or a male or female person of color that were rooted in others' unconscious and perhaps not-so-unconscious biases. The following responses to "What are your barriers toward further progression to leadership" were offered.

NIL AD: one of the things that sort of I've been looking for, and I don't know what's out there, is a mentor of color, actually.... And I'm finding, especially having just gone to the TCG conference, that there aren't a lot of people like me in capacities working for larger institutions. And that's been a challenge ... I think there are challenges that I sometimes put in my own way from dealing with some of the racist stuff in an organization like this, that would be nice to sort of talk to somebody who's been through it before.

NIL-AD: [talking about bringing one's emotional intelligence to work] And we're seen as weak. And if men do that, they're seen as collaborative.

NIL-AD: I do sometimes feel frankly like there isn't as much room for strong women who are not lowering their voices.

NIL-ED: I think another challenge is that my level of education may not match my peers. I think I definitely make up for it in experience but the label isn't there for the high profile mission.

NIL-ED: When we think about apprentice programs, apprenticeships and internships are basically one of the best ways to break into the field, but you know, the stipend or lack thereof, what you're able to give them... first of all it restricts you geographically because anyone who doesn't have a home base of some kind nearby a theater is just kind of out of luck and likewise anyone that needs to support themselves, it's just not an option. They don't have the luxury of taking half a year or a year to work for free. ... That's just one of the key ways in which we really find ourselves wondering why there aren't more people that don't look like us and well, maybe that has something to do with it! And certainly I've seen the financials of these theaters, there's not a huge pot of money that we're sitting on and not wanting to pay them, so it's a bigger problem.

NIL-ED: I have an accent so it wasn't easy integrating into the existing staff here... And I told them actually that they were prejudiced ... against me ... And I wanted to resign. ... So this happened again this past summer.... I'm the first generation of immigrants here and I got my master's in this country. I love where I work, but to tell you the truth when it happens twice, it kind of bothers you, you know?

NIL-AD: ... one of my biggest, consistent arguments... was that [my mentor] didn't seem to think that black directors could direct anything other than black work.... It was a subconscious idea that he had bought into that black directors are good for interpreting the black experience, but not much else.

NIL AD: Because there has always been this sense that as long as there are some brown people on stage, it doesn't matter who's behind it. And now there's a lot of conversation, 'No, no,' that it matters desperately.... We have to actively decide that it's a problem... that we are all-white institutions and that because of that there has never been a commitment to look outside of what is right in front of us and there's been no effort to curate those voices.

NIL-AD: I couldn't understand what was happening and how come... I just felt like I was overlooked for a whole lot of opportunities. And I was reluctant to accept for a while that it was either because I'm a woman or because I'm a black woman.... it

was the "old white boys" network—not necessarily middle-aged... What I was seeing and hearing when I hear people talk about them [other white, male professionals employed in similar positions as the speaker] was, it was almost like ... there were doors that were open for them right away, already, just by virtue of who they knew or where they came from. And even though nobody had seen their work!

An AD described observing bias related to reluctance to perceive a person's growth and development:

> I had a really moving conversation with a youngish woman who is at a major theater that will go nameless, and she's been there for ten years and she's bumping her head on a ceiling and she was very clear that she is perceived by the people who are in a position to take that ceiling away, they still see her as the person who came in ten years ago. Even though I have never met her before, I look at what the resume is and I meet the person and I think, "man, this is a phenomenally capable human." Right? And I think sometimes — sometimes our history travels with us in disadvantageous ways.

These comments about experiencing and observing discrimination that cover a range from gender and race to social class show that LORT member-theaters are not immune to bias as work environments. We do not know how widespread the instances of discrimination are; however, their existence is consistent with the scarcity of women and minorities in theater leadership.

What is needed to make progress: Strategies for change

As we noted earlier, our aim with this research is to level the playing field, such that anyone with the appropriate ambition, skills, and talent can have an equal chance of making it to the top position in a regional theater, regardless of gender, race, or any other personal characteristic. As Bonnie Marcus (2014), a career coach and entrepreneur, puts it, in a perfect world, we would all live in a pure meritocracy, where we would be judged solely on our performance. This report and the research we conducted as well as the studies we summarized in Chapter 2 show us that decisions about who gets hired, who gets mentored, and who gets promoted in theater are often influenced by assumptions and preferences, including those about gender and race. In this chapter we first identify ways to define the major hurdles toward equity, and then highlight some of the models we have found that make strides toward greater inclusion.

10.1 Recognizing and defining the problem: Is it a glass ceiling or a "pipeline" issue?

Any push for change needs to be based on recognition that there is a problem and needs to define the nature of that problem. The problem is the scarcity of women and people of color in top leadership in regional theater. There is no controversy about the existence of the problem. However, people disagree whether the problem is a manifestation of a glass ceiling whereby candidates with qualifications exist but are not being promoted to leadership, or whether qualified candidates are scarce, making lack of diversity in leadership a "pipeline" issue. There are implications for what actions to take depending which view one has. If it's a glass ceiling, keeping qualified people out is irrational from a business perspective and also violates societal norms of justice: immediate action is called for to diversify top leadership. If it's a problem with the lack of qualified people in the pathway to leadership, the action implications are to wait until the talent supply is strengthened before moving to diversify top leadership. It is clear that viewing the nature of the problem as a weakness in the pipeline favors maintaining the status quo in the composition of top leadership, at least for the near future.

We have shown throughout the report that the scarcity of women in top leadership is due to a glass ceiling. There are abundant numbers of ambitious and qualified women who can take up leadership positions in both the artistic and operational side of the theater. The scarcity of people of color is more complicated. In the data we provide on LORT member-theaters' gender and race composition in positions below top leadership in Figure 8.1 in Chapter 8, we see that there *are* professionals of color, both women and men, who are in positions next-in-line to leadership but there are few of them and none have made it to the top on the operational side of the theater (see Figure 1.2 in Chapter 1). We need to keep in mind that the availability of people of color to take positions on the operational side of the theater is not limited to the world of theater. There has been modest progress made in bringing white women with expertise in marketing, development,

finance, or general management from outside the theater world into LORT, but these initiatives have not been extended to people of color. Additionally, programs in theater management and also directing have been graduating steadily increasing numbers of professionals of color for many years now (for example, the Yale School of Drama, personal communication). Why more graduates of color from theater management or directing programs have not been recruited to work in LORT remains a mystery. We believe there is both a glass ceiling and a "pipeline issue" operating that keeps people of color from top leadership.

> The scarcity of women in top leadership is due to a glass ceiling. There are abundant numbers of ambitious and qualified women who can take up leadership positions in both the artistic and operational side of the theater. The scarcity of people of color is more complicated. There are professionals of color, both women and men, who are in positions next-in-line to leadership but there are few of them and none have made it to the top on the operational side of the theater.

10.2 The issue of trust — recognizing bias

Throughout the report we quoted many voices from interviews that lack of familiarity and, directly associated with it, lack of trust is a factor standing in the way of diversifying top leadership. Many interviewees also said they understood why Trustees who shoulder the responsibility of overseeing the financial health of their theater behave in a risk-aversive manner. Deciding that a person is "qualified" to be a leader is a judgment call. Like all subjective judgments, this one too, is influenced by our all too human decision making shortcuts. Psychologists call this heuristics. Nobel laureate Daniel Kahneman and his colleague Amos Tverksy have called attention to the familiarity heuristic which influences judgments under conditions of uncertainty. Selecting a leader is definitely an uncertain and a risky situation. People who choose leaders therefore often favor those candidates who are familiar. They want to behave responsibly by choosing as leaders people whom they can trust implicitly, and they trust that white men who predominate among existing leaders will do a good job. In other words, they trust what they know. Our finding that women in NIL positions are more likely to be promoted to AD in their current theater illustrates the importance of familiarity in undergirding trust that she will do a good job. Equally talented women and people of color outside of LORT do not appear to be easily trusted because they remain unfamiliar, creating a vicious circle of exclusion. Unless and until decision makers overcome their lack of trust, the gender and racial composition of leadership, in the words of an interviewee we quoted earlier, "it will ever be thus."

10.2.1 Conscious and unconscious bias

The findings show that Trustees' tendency to avoid risk by choosing white men may in part be arrived at rationally through a risk-benefit analysis. Choosing a white man over equally qualified women or people of color reflects the residue of years of exposure to whom represents the prototype of a leader. This is what Iris Bohnet (2016) refers to as "statistical discrimination" — discrimination against women or people of color based on the fact that the average theater leader has been a white man. Consequently, on the face of it, another choice appears risky.

However, because selecting a new theater leader is an occasion for a "rational" choice, one can encourage slow and deliberate thinking (à la Kahneman's thinking, fast vs. slow, see Kahneman, 2011) and allow information to come into clear focus during slow deliberation. These strategies can be effective for coming to see that individual candidates, be they women or people of color, are *not* risky choices. In fact, an argument can be made that challenges the traditional cost-benefit analysis: As times are changing, if the world of theater cannot change with the times in its leadership composition, how it does business, what audiences it attracts, and how it reaches new audiences, it may not survive for long. Thus, a rational business case can be made for going with leadership that may *seem* unfamiliar but is equipped to address the changing landscape. We have discussed in Chapter 5 that especially people of color have particular successful models for audience development and credit those credentials with their attaining an artistic leadership position. People of color also report that fundraising is less daunting to them than their white counterparts do. Each of these elements should be attractive in leadership selections.

Unconscious bias is different. It is not the result of rational risk-benefit analyses. Indeed, research shows that many people who believe themselves to be fair and unbiased judges of character can have implicit beliefs about gender, race, age, or sexuality that tend to favor their own group or discredit others merely on the basis of their group membership, or reflect societal stereotypes (Baron & Banaji, 2006; Banaji & Hardin, 1996; Banaji & Greenwald, 1995; Greenwald & Banaji, 1995). Banaji and Greenwald tell us that everyone has implicit biases and these biases can be triggered by the merest hints of a person's group membership. An example of implicit gender bias can be found in Cecilia Mo's (2011) report in the Clayman Institute's *Gender News*, in an article titled, "What? Me Sexist?":

> When following instructions to sort images rapidly, the average person found it easier to pair words like "president", "governor", and "executive" with male names and words like "secretary," "assistant," and "aide" with female names. In other words, many people had a lot more difficulty associating women with leadership.

An example of an implicit racial bias can be found in an experiment conducted by Bertrand and Mullainathan (2003), published under the title, "Are Emily and Greg More Employable than Lakisha and Jamal? A Field Experiment on Labor Market Discrimination." The authors mailed thousands of résumés to employers with job openings and tracked which ones were selected for callbacks for interviews. The resumes were identical except for the name of the job applicant, which were randomly identified by stereotypically African-American names (e.g., "Jamal") or stereotypically white names (like "Emily"). The same resume was roughly 50 percent more likely to result in callback for an interview if it had a "white" name. The authors conclude that because the résumés were identical, differences in outcomes could be attributed only to the racial coding of the names. The employers who did not invite candidates with black sounding names for an interview knew nothing more about them beside what they assumed was their race. Very likely, each one of these employers was unaware that they acted on an implicit bias against blacks.

10.2.2 Recognizing implicit bias: the Implicit Associations Test

If people tend to be unaware that they likely harbor implicit biases, what are they to do about it? Howard Ross (2008), in his paper, "Proven Strategies for Addressing Unconscious Bias in the Workplace," writes that

> The most effective tool available for testing one's own unconscious bias is the Implicit Association Test (IAT), created and maintained by Project Implicit, a consortium made up of researchers from Harvard University, the University of Virginia, and the University of Washington. ... To take the IAT, without charge, go to https:// implicit. harvard.edu/implicit/

The Implicit Associations Test (IAT) is designed to detect the strength of a person's automatic association between two value-laden perceptions (for example, competent, incompetent) with two categories (for example, women, men). Using a keyboard and a computer screen people are asked to respond rapidly with a right-hand key press to items representing one category and one value (e.g., men and competent), and with a left-hand key press to items from the remaining two (e.g., women and incompetent). Test takers then perform a second task in which the key assignments for one of the pairs is switched (such that women and competent share a response, likewise men and incompetent). The main idea is that making a response is easier, and therefore faster, when items closely related in the test taker's mind share the same response key. The IAT produces scores based on how fast a person responds to these two tasks, which are interpreted to indicate strength of an unconscious bias against or in favor of one of the categories.

When people recognize they have unconscious biases, they can do something about it. One of our interviewees, a female ED, had participated in a training on implicit bias conducted by Mahzarin Banaji, one of the IAT's original designers. The ED shared with us that she heard Professor Banaji say, having become aware of her own implicit biases, Banaji now conducts searches differently. She reviews each applicant's work without looking at any credentials: screening out names, where the person went to graduate school, or where the research was conducted, and the like. Before she makes the decision whom to invite for an interview, she just reviews the work. Professor Banaji said that since she started avoiding reviewing credentials before the interview, the interview pool has hugely broadened. What Professor Banaji has been practicing in her recruitment is what Claudia Goldin and Cecilia Rouse (2000) demonstrated in their study of "blind" auditions behind a screen for an orchestra. When the jury could not tell who was playing behind the screen, female musicians' likelihood of being advanced in the search and hired increased significantly.

10.3 Getting your Board on board

As is more than clear by now, the impact of Trustees on leader selections cannot be underestimated. Frequently in our conversations we heard about the powerful effects a Board can have on a theater's hiring processes.

> **Male ED:** Wealthy white men might think that the executive that is running the theater that they're the Board of should look like them, if that's how they're currently running whatever business they're in, because they're all coming from whatever financial business or what—however they ended up on the Board. So if the Boards

aren't diverse in their nature, then they're not going to be as aware and look for a leader for the organization that's also diverse.

Male AD: [about diversity] ... the Board has to insist that it's something they want. As the Board goes in to a search process, a selection process for a new leader, the search firms that they use are unlikely to go down those avenues of diversity unless the Board declares that that's what they want or at least that they're really interested in pursuing those possibilities.

Male NIL-ED: I think the quintessential change that has to happen is not on the leadership level but at the Board level. It's that the Board has to start diversifying, because in the end they are the people who make these decisions. You know, I used to wonder why so many leaders looked the way they looked. It's because they look like their Board members.

Board of Trustees members are recruited based on their generous donations, which indicate their level of passion for the theater. However, it does not necessarily mean that they have any experience in overseeing a theater or in being involved in any of the myriad of tasks that are necessary to get a play produced. Therefore, the leadership of the theater needs to carefully groom the members of their Board of trustees and educate them on what the priorities are for their theater. Diversifying Board composition[12] and using decision making strategies such as ruling by unanimity — which gives less socially powerful voices on a board equal say (see Karpowitz, Mendelberg, & Shaker, 2012) — are likely to be effective.

For non-profit theaters the bottom line has become a very important focal point, and members of a Board of Trustees are primarily in charge of the fiduciary health of the theater. The corporate world has gathered a plethora of data showing that diverse firms perform better financially (Badal, 2014; Hunt, Layton, & Prince, 2015; Smyth, 2016; Woetzel, Madgavkar, Ellingrud, et al., 2015). Being mindful of the effects of unconscious biases, of the tendency to focus on what is familiar in risky decision-making, a theater can bring its Board's selection decisions in line with a staff that is fairly gender-balanced (but needs to include more people of color) by slowing down the leadership-selection process.

10.4 Success stories on diversifying from the theater world

10.4.1 Leadership

What can be done to promote diversity in leadership was one of our conversation topics with interviewees, and some of our respondents gave us examples of success stories. A male AD articulated his own theater's efforts in creating a working group that focused on diversity, in his case, the hiring of people of color among the staff:

...[We] started taking on how do we recruit more people of color for the staff. We didn't really have any systematic way of doing it and people just kind of started doing their best. And so the actual work group came out of a desire to be more methodical, thoughtful, and articulate a more sustained vision of what success would look like.

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12 We heard from several theater leaders that their Boards were balanced along gender lines. A study by The Urban Institute sets the percent of white Board members in non-profits at 86%. A 2013 study by Ostrower estimates 91% of non-profit arts organization board members to be white. From these, we can extrapolate safely that the board members of the theaters in our study are overwhelmingly white as well.

Clearly, the words systematic, methodical, thoughtful, and "articulating a sustained vision" (which are characteristic of "slow" thinking) indicate that this leader saw the need for change in how hiring takes place. The weakness in the pathway to leadership mentioned earlier would greatly benefit from a systematic approach.

The example of the Oregon Shakespeare Company's efforts to diversify both its staff and its offerings came up several times in the interviews, for example by this male AD:

> I was just at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and they have probably the most aggressive diversity program of any theater around. ... They've appointed some people of color in some pretty big managerial positions that they didn't have before. That's creating a lot of backlash, as you might imagine, because they don't have the managerial skills sets to understand. But is the theater right or wrong to do that? I don't know. They probably feel like "you know what, it's a learning curve. They'll figure it out. This person's smart, they can pick it up. It's more important to us to have a person of color in that job than it is to somebody who has more experience."

This leader brings into question the qualifications of the newly appointed staff. His comments highlight the lack of trust in non-traditional leaders and the push-back they face.

In this context we repeat the quotation from a leader of color who addresses the backlash against hiring more diverse leaders:

> ...there are people who will tell you the downside is that you're putting into these positions [people] that aren't prepared for them, and *I* will tell you that nobody is prepared for one of these jobs when they come into it. Nobody, and I don't care what you've done before. At the start, as the stock market tells us, top performance is no guarantee of future gains, each of these theaters is idiosyncratic. Nobody knows, you cannot be sure of anybody's success in one of these jobs."

What these quotations show is that the theaters that go beyond the "expected" and select non-traditional leaders, need to make these choices purposefully; business as usual is not likely to diversify top leadership. Will those intentional choices to bring in diversity create "risk" for the theater's bottom line? Not necessarily. The current success of the Oregon Shakespeare Festival and the exponential growth of its budget over the past few years may be an indication that their model is actually working and that the integration of their "aggressive diversity program" may be, at least partly, responsible for this.

Some interviewees (leaders, Trustees, and search firm professionals) had concrete illustrations of how to guide any new hire into more certain success. The hiring theater can support the newly hired leader by supporting intense observational time at the beginning of that leader's appointment; or they can provide consulting/coaching time either with others on staff, on the Board, and/or by paying a professional firm. Ultimately, any candidate — be they male, female, white, or people of color — will succeed only when surrounded by a supportive team of Trustees and staff who all stand behind the same vision and mission for the theater. As the same leader of color quoted above makes clear: "...nobody comes to one of these jobs fully formed." Getting continual support from one's Board and theater can ensure that whoever comes into the leadership position can thrive and grow on the job to the fullest of their abilities. Without this support, nontraditional

leaders are set up to fail as they battle push-back which dilutes their legitimacy as a leader and can exhaust their energies.

10.4.2 Audiences

Following up on Chapter 5 where we address that people of color highlight their experience in bringing in diverse and new audiences, we describe here one particular program started by a leader of color when she was the artistic director of a non-LORT theater. Other leaders and next-in-lines have used or created similar programs. We quote the leader's words here, only edited to remove identifying information.

> Consensus Organizing for Theatre is a type of community organizing. The concept of consensus organizing was created by a gentleman named Mike Eichler. And he created this process in the 70's and the 80's while he was doing community building and social work.... in a nutshell, it is a process by which a theater deliberately builds stake in multiple pockets of communities and those communities build stake in the theater and in the particular show or shows you might be doing, or your initiatives, by surfacing the mutual self-interest. And that's critical. So it's a process that involves a lot of intentional one-on-one meetings with strategically-identified individuals, organizations, or businesses. And in those meetings, it's about being very transparent with what our self-interest is at [the theater], what our agenda and our goals and objectives are, and surfacing with whoever we're talking with what their real self-interests are and exploring whether there is any alignment or connection between our self-interests, and if so, then organizing.... we're already seeing ticket sales. So the results are that it's a way by which you build new audiences, you deliberately diversify audiences and engage first-time theater-goers. ... it led to new Board Members, it led to new funding sources, new individual donors, it made the education work better, and it makes the artistic work better. And it starts with the artistic content, which is why it's deliberately housed in the artistic department. Because when we outreach to communities, we're starting with the play; what is this play about? And anyway, so that's that. It's kind of like taking a dramaturgical approach—the same intense dramaturgical work that a director or an actor take and extending it to the work that we do with community.

> ... just last week [the local community college] said, 'We're buying $7500 worth of tickets so that 250 of our students can come see [two plays].' And they're connecting it to their curriculum and we're using their faculty as post-show speakers. ... when I describe it, it's not rocket science. It's a process that takes time and relationship building. And time tends to be something we don't have at LORT or we don't budget for at LORT. ... for it to succeed in any LORT it does require a slight culture shift and it does require people deliberately budgeting time or hiring somebody who they know is budgeting time to build relationships.

Although this diversifying model focuses on audience, elements of it can be used to address diversity in other areas of theater.

10.4.3 Models of sponsorship programs

TCG and LORT have established several sponsorship programs that provide paid opportunities for up and coming theater professionals. We list a few here, with a short description and their website URL, and focus on those that support new leaders or diversification of the field. We provide this information as an example of possible programs and cannot claim comprehensiveness or webpage accuracy for the duration of this report's life. We are also aware of several programs that combine mentorship and training that are housed at theaters and sponsored by the theaters themselves (for example, the FAIR initiative at Oregon Shakespeare; an initiative by Victory Gardens Theater, etc.). Many of these initiatives also pay attention to inclusion and diversity. However, it is beyond the scope of our work to list them all here, and to keep this list updated over time. We limited ourselves to the LORT and TCG initiatives that are active at this time of writing. They can serve as examples for future initiative.

- **TCG New Generation Program** (https://www.tcg.org/grants/newgen/newgen_index.cfm)

    - **Objective #1: Future Leaders** - Emerging leaders in all areas of the theatre field are mentored by accomplished theatre professionals at a host theatre. $80,000 ($40,000/nine-month period) will be paid to the theatre in support of an eighteen-month mentorship with up to an additional $10,000 available to the mentee either to defray outstanding student loan debt or to meet unique costs incurred when an international mentee is selected.

    - **Objective #2: Future Audiences** - Theatres with a successful track record of reaching age-specific, culturally specific and/or underserved communities will receive a matching grant of up to $65,000 ($32,500/year) to support the development or expansion of technology aimed at cultivating a diverse audience. Up to $5,000 in additional funding will be available to help recipients transition out of the program.

    - **Objective #3: Future Collaborations** - A geographically unrestricted grant of up to $6,000 will be paid to theatres and individual theatre professionals to facilitate international collaboration by way of hosting or traveling abroad. The Future Collaborations objective is funded by The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

- **TCG Leadership [U]** (https://www.tcg.org/grants/leadershipu/). Leadership U[niversity] is administered by TCG with support from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

    The overall intent of Leadership U[niversity] is to nurture and support an interdependent, inclusive, and sustainable theatre field by developing the individuals who are the core and future of theatre.

    This program provides support in two initiatives:

    - **One-on-One** grants of $75,000 will be awarded to six visionary rising leaders from all areas of theatre for professional development via mentorships at TCG Member Theatres, with an additional $5,000 honorarium for their mentor. Up to an additional $10,000 Opportunity Fund will be available for one or more of the following: outstanding student loans; approved supplemental activities; and/or life needs (i.e. health care, child or elder care, or other medical expenses). An additional Travel Fund of up to $4,500 will be available for mentee and mentor travel.

- **Continuing Ed grants** of up to $5,000 will be awarded to mid-career and veteran professionals at TCG Member Theatres for learning opportunities that will advance their leadership skills in all areas that include artistic, administrative, educational and production.

- **TCG SPARK Leadership Program** (https://www.tcg.org/grants/spark/). The SPARK Leadership Program is developed and administered by TCG with support from American Express and The Joyce Foundation.

> The specific intent of SPARK is to create a more diverse theatre landscape by supporting the professional development of exceptional rising leaders of color who aim to take on executive leadership positions at U.S. not-for-profit theatres. Building on the success of the Young Leaders of Color Program, this pilot program will provide ten leaders who self-identify as leaders of color with the opportunity to participate in a curriculum that will focus on Knowledge & Skills-Building, Networking & Professional Connections and Self-Awareness & Inclusion Training.

> **Three-tiered professional development focus includes:**

> - **Knowledge & Skills-Building:** SPARK will provide the necessary practical skills for success in leading a not-for-profit theatre organization.

> - **Networking & Professional Connections:** SPARK will provide opportunities to develop empowering relationships with mentors, sponsors and career influencers, as well as with peers who are pursuing similar career goals.

> - **Self-Awareness & Inclusion Training:** SPARK will provide tools and resources to empower participants and ensure they promote diversity and inclusion in their work.

- **TCG Rising Leaders of Color** (https://www.tcg.org/grants/rlc/index.cfm)

> RLC will change the face of the theatre field by nurturing and supporting an intergenerational network of leaders of color at various stages in their careers.

> RLC will provide theatre professionals who self-identify as leaders of color with professional development and networking opportunities at TCG's National Conferences and beyond, including periodic webinars, group teleconferences, and introductions to recipients and alumni of TCG's grant programs. In addition, participants will engage in dialogues about the next generation of theatre leadership, sharing their goals, challenges and insights to better move TCG's programming toward advancing a more interdependent, inclusive, and sustainable theatre field.

- As of our writing (2016), LORT has articulated plans to establish a mentorship program "with the specific intention of preparing women and managers of color for leadership positions in theatres" (http://www.lort.org/Diversity_Initiative.html). We do not have further details of this program.

10.4.4 Programming

There are working examples of ensuring diversity in programming. One systematic effort to bring diversity to the stage is being put into action at ArtsEmerson in Boston. Their "Diversity Grid" is set up to examine programmatic decisions, prior to solidifying a season, and bringing culture, race, class, gender, form, and intended community focus to the fore.

Figure. 10.1 ArtsEmerson's "Diversity Grid"

	COUNTRY	CULTURE	GENERATIVE	FORM	VENUE	ONE BOSTON	GENDER	FAMILY	ARC	X FACTOR
ERNEST SHACKELTON LOVES ME	US	Euro	New work	music theater	Paramnt		F/M		new	Shackelton
MR. JOY/ EMERGENCY	US	Af/Am	new prod	solo	Black Box?	yes	M	older	arc	
AN AUDIENCE WITH MEOW MEOW	US	Euro	New Work	music theater	Majestic	yes	F		new	celeb
CHOPIN WITHOUT PIANO	Poland	Euro	First US tour	music theater	Paramnt	yes	M/F	*	new	Student Collab
CARMEN/ MIDSUMMER	South Africa	African	"no/ yes"	Music Theater	Majestic	YES	M/F	*	ongoing	Happy Audiences from Flute
OCTOROON w/ Company One	US	African American	"recent work/ new prod"	play	Black Box	yes	M	no	ongoing	local company
TWELFTH NIGHT	UK	Euro		Shakespeare redux	Paramnt		M	*	new	Trad
THREE SISTERS (Maly)	RUSSIA	Euro		Play	Majestic	Yes	M			RUSSIAN community
HISTORIA DE AMOR	Chile	Latino	New Work	multimedia	Majestic	Yes	M/F		new	film elements
***THE WONG KIDS**	US	Asian American	Recent Work	Play for young people	Paramnt	yes	M	*	new	MaYi
CUBAN REVOLUTIONARY	US/Cuba	Latino		solo	Black Box	yes	F	no	new/LTC	
BECKETT	UK	Euro	Classic	solo	Paramnt	no	M	No	new	
PREMEDITATION	US	Latino	New work	Ensemble Play	Paramnt	yes	F/M		new/LTC	Comedy

Country: What country did the work originate in?
Culture: What is the culture of origin in this work?
Generative: Is there a generative component to the project?
Form: What is the form this project takes?
Venue: Which space is it suited for?
One Boston: Does this project create opportunities to foster the race/class equity conversation?
Gender: What is the gender composition of the artistic leadership of the project?
Family: Is the piece suitable for a family audience?
Arc: Is there a relationship already building with this company at ArtsEmerson?
X Factor: Is there an intangible element here that is helpful in understanding its place in our season?

It creates accountability for artistic choices and is a concrete step toward focusing on diversity on and around the stage. According to ArtsEmerson's AD Dower (2015), "A season does not just 'come together.' It is built on a foundation of our actual values, and determined by the ordering of our priorities toward those values." Figure 10.1. illustrates that the values and priorities that this AD brings to the season focus on including diversity. Many artistic directors make sure that their seasons are balanced and that they align with the aesthetic that the audience can expect from the

theater. However, having a clear, visible, shared, and accountable starting point like the grid for ArtsEmerson, the lineup of plays answers additional questions than may usually be asked when putting together a season. Including accountability in diversity planning is one of the three steps that Dobbin and Kalev (2016) recommend in order for a successful move toward greater diversity. Having to explain choices or reasoning to others leads one to pause and ensure that no particular choice gets favored over another without cause.

10.5 Success stories on diversifying from outside the theater world

There are success stories outside the theater world. We already mentioned the Rooney rule from the world of professional football in Chapter 4 in connection with having members of underrepresented groups included in the slate of candidates to be interviewed. The Rooney Rule has been credited with in increasing the number of Black head coaches in NFL, by merely mandating the presence of Black candidates in the slate of candidates to be interviewed.

The success story of "blind" auditions following Goldin and Rouse's (2000) research on the benefits of holding auditions behind a screen, has increased the numbers of female members in orchestras (the joke goes, so much so that orchestras had to add a ladies room). Voices in the theater world have advocated for similar gender-blind readings (see Norman, 2009) to increase the representation of women. The only research that is similar to a 'blind" audition in the theater world was conducted by Emily Sands, which we reviewed in Chapter 2. Sands found that whereas men and women were not different in their lower opinion of the quality of scripts purportedly written by women, when asked questions that required anticipating others' reactions to the scripts, women rated these scripts harsher than did men. These women were not interested in producing plays which they anticipated would do poorly in critics' or audiences' opinions; hence further diminishing their own shaky credibility as judges of solid theater. Their judgments reflect the widespread gender-bias that women's plays are not appealing, even while Sands' research has shown that these judgments are not based on actual economic realities because plays written by women tend to fill more seats of their run (see Sands, 2009), and producers' decisions not to afford them longer runs is not economically rational. It is as if the widespread "taste-based" decision (in contrast to an economically rational decision) to undervalue women playwrights' work has been "overlearned" by women who make programming decisions. The respondents in Sands' study were operating in the reality of their current experiences, namely a theater world that is predominantly functioning from a male point of view, as demonstrated in the higher numbers of male directors, playwrights, and play perspectives found on U.S. stages. These women judged plays written by women to be "out of the norm."

In other words, as Julia Jordan and others have pointed out (see Chapter 2), as long as the "blind" reading takes place in a world built on patriarchy, even with female literary managers making the selections, the readings will remain embedded within a "mindset and power structure" that cannot be "undone with polite discussion, a wish, or a prayer." And the underlying conditions upon which selecting plays, choosing directors, and otherwise bringing a season together will be taking place will continue to be embedded in patriarchy (Anderson, 2014) and a "literary imagination of whiteness" (Morrison, 1992).

All this analysis points to the need to not only come up with practical suggestions like mandates for parity, structures that check on compliance and provide or withdraw support accordingly, or any kind of other "affirmative action," but to initiate an industry-wide shift in who holds power such that power is shared and does not suppress minority voices. This charge may sound overwhelming. How could one group of arts institutions in the US effect change and work toward reducing the effects of patriarchy? The task at hand is achievable through the deliberate and focused work of a group of highly passionate, inspired, and inspiring professionals like those at work in theater. More importantly, the example that will be set by this group will in turn effect that societal change. Indeed, the function of theater is not only to hold a mirror to the varieties of human conditions, but also challenge it and bring fresh perspectives. In the words of a visionary educator, Emily Style (2014), good theater, just like a good curriculum, must both hold a mirror to *and* open windows for new ideas.

Recommendations for the future

11.1 Implications of the research for action

In this chapter we present recommendations for action separately for members of Boards of Trustees who are the ones doing the hiring of leaders, for theater professionals aspiring to a leadership position on the artistic side, and for those aspiring for leadership on the operational side of theaters.

Our research questions were:

     1. Why are there so few women in artistic and executive director positions?
     2. What can be done to achieve greater diversity in theater leadership?

If we had to define our findings in just one sentence, we would surmise that trust in women's capabilities to lead a LORT member-theater is lacking, and this lack of trust is at the root for women's stark underrepresentation in leadership positions.

What can be done to increase trust in women's potential? The "Lean in" movement's recommendations to women themselves to promote their potential and performance in the workplace are partially applicable here. Over the past few decades women have been doing just that, as attested by all the "count" studies and blog posts on women leadership issues (see Chapter 2 for a brief overview). But these efforts alone have not shifted the balance. Therefore, the first set of recommendations we make are directed at decision makers in hiring processes: primarily members of the theaters' Boards of Trustees and particularly Trustees serving on search committees. These recommendations are also relevant to search firms, and even LORT leaders themselves, especially if they are the "remaining" leader during a search for their counterpart (AD or ED). They often carry the shared responsibility to take the lead in the search effort. Becoming aware of and addressing unconscious biases against the qualifications and accomplishments of women when there is a vacancy are not easy processes. Open conversations, employee surveys, or 360° employee evaluations can confirm that the ambitions, qualifications, and commitment of women to succeed in leadership are a reality and need to be taken seriously in order to level the playing field. The same methods can be used to establish that not all is well in the world of theater when it comes to hidden biases against other underrepresented groups in leadership.

A first step toward building trust in women's potential is to lend credence to the numbers and data gathered, not just through this study but also by many others. Our numbers show that there are many skilled and qualified aspiring women just below the leadership level in LORT member-theaters; in fact, on the operational side women outnumber men 2 to 1, while the artistic side shows gender parity in positions just below the leadership spot. That women's abundant presence in next-in-line positions is not reflected in the top leadership spot is clear evidence of a glass ceiling. This glass ceiling can be addressed immediately, without delay. If the theater field is serious about representing all voices, as the missions of many theaters claim, addressing this glass ceiling should be at the forefront of every leadership discussion and hiring process until a 50/50 balance is reached. Claiming that women do not have the ambition, have not been able to gain the skills, or

that their work-life requirements get in the way of their progression are merely excuses to keep the status quo and reflect a lack of commitment to change the leadership field.

Once a theater takes the numbers seriously and commits to hiring a woman or a person of color, that theater's staff and Board need to stand by their choice firmly, and provide abundant and continued support to both the new leader and to the existing staff so that the leader can succeed in what she was hired to accomplish.

A second step toward building trust in women's qualifications may lie in the creation of a gender-neutral and objective list of qualifications that an applicant for leadership should be able to showcase to be a viable candidate. These qualifications are embedded in the common functions that a leader must perform, and transcend the uniqueness of any given theater. During a search process, these qualifications should be the starting point for a first assessment, as they would be grounded on unbiased criteria. The common job description elements that we arrived at in our analysis of the CVs and bios of current artistic and executive LORT leaders show that these qualifications can be defined and therefore are available for inclusion in an objective assessment list.

Finally, trust in women's capabilities will deepen further when we see the presence of women in leadership in the LORT member-theaters increase. There is strength in numbers for "normalizing" what a leader looks like. Our data showed that being an internal candidate during a search is the only area where women benefit compared to men when considered for leadership: Boards have *promoted* female associate artistic directors to a leadership spot more than they have male associate ADs in LORT theaters where these associates were already in employment. These women leaders were already known, already employed at the theater, and therefore the Trustees' familiarity with these women's work trumped the distrust Trustees usually display of women as leaders. A second finding in our analyses of a large sample of U.S. stage directors was that a majority of the women became artistic directors because they had *founded* their own theaters. They were not *selected* to run the theater by a search committee, they had to found a theater in order to become artistic director. Furthermore, we found that women's founding experiences are currently not given as much credit as men's founding experiences are: currently LORT member-theaters have more male artistic directors with founding experience than female artistic directors with that background. Increasing familiarity with more women's work and leadership capabilities by purposefully including women on slates of candidates for open leadership positions will deepen trust in their potential. These women founders need to be considered as serious candidates similar to men. Their inclusion on slates of candidates for an open position will help shift the stereotype of what a theater leader should look like from the current white, male model to one that is more diverse by gender and race.

Our work further revealed that people of color not only face the same glass ceiling as women do, but that they are fewer in number in the pathways to leadership. Nevertheless, there *are* currently viable candidates of color in the pipeline, just below the top. In the immediate present, these qualified professionals need to be considered as feasible candidates for leadership, and there are hopeful signs that some indeed are. However, the absence of a sizeable pipeline of potential leaders of color will need more targeted and committed attention. We want to caution however, that using the starker absence of people of color in the pathway to leadership as a reason to ignore the glass ceiling for women is an excuse that will keep the status quo for everyone. Addressing barriers to leadership for all underrepresented groups simultaneously and with the same candor and swiftness will ensure that the leveling of the leadership playing field benefits everyone, regardless of race and/or gender.

11.2 Recommendations for theater Trustees

When selecting a leader:

- Use vacancies in leadership as an opportunity for the theater to engage in self-examination: Where has the theater not met the diversity and inclusion goals of its mission? This reflection will help articulate the skills and experiences to include in the job description for the next leader.

- Help guide the development of clear criteria for a bias-free scoring template for hiring across the theater field. Start by articulating the expected level of competence of a leader. Have this template vetted by experts on diversity and inclusion in the industry.

- Ensure diverse search committee membership that includes a variety of voices. Make sure each voice gets heard by instituting unanimous voting which enhances underrepresented groups' visibility and effective participation.

- Conduct a publicly posted, external search for all major leadership positions, which will expose you to the widest slate of candidates.

- Commit to interviewing applicants from underrepresented groups (consider the Rooney Rule). Only hire search firms with a record of placing diverse candidates in similar positions.

- Ask the search firm to initially disguise the personal and demographic characteristics of leadership candidates, so as not to be influenced by characteristics irrelevant to doing the job.

- Reconsider demanding exceptional fundraising skills from artistic director candidates. Instead, look for core skills:

  - skill and enthusiasm for speaking about the theater

  - relationship-building skills that can lead to deep, personal bonds with potential donors

  - willingness to support development efforts.

- Continue to support artistic director growth once on board.

- Consider investing in professional leadership coaches for a new hire over the first year of the transition.

- Provide support to the leadership team during the transition period to a new leader. This is particularly important for theaters that have shared/dual leadership.

Ongoing support of your theater's leaders:

- Schedule regular check-ins of structured time to engage, mentor, support, and learn from your theater's leaders. Provide, for example:

  - support for artistic or cultural choices

  - professional coaching for managing a large team and budget.

- Take action to streamline conditions of employment and salary equity.

- Provide leaders and aspiring leaders with clear and specific goals, and tie performance evaluations to business accomplishments that are aligned with the theater's mission, including its diversity and inclusion mission.

Support for the internal theater community:

- Recognize, confront, and correct instances of gender and racial bias within the board and among staff.

  - Anonymous surveys about experiences of bias among employees are a productive first step in identifying any potential friction.

  - Create an internal diversity committee, which includes board membership, to ensure the topic has a place in each conversation.

- Make work-life balance a topic for open conversation at all employment levels (e.g., child care, excessive working hours). Develop a work-life balance framework that increases equity and equal opportunities for growth.

- Ensure that aspiring leaders participate in fundraising and board relations so they can cultivate those important skills.

- Create opportunities for career development at both early- and mid-career junctions. Develop and participate in mentorship programs specifically for high-potential women and people of color.

- Invest in your theater's education programs to attract young people into careers in the theater.

- Mentor a variety of aspiring leaders, from various genders, cultures, and races. Keeping diversity in mind, replicate what works.

- Initiate and support conversations with state and federal government to increase funding for the arts and introduce a jobs program that includes paid work at theaters or other arts institutions.

11.3 Tips for those preparing for leadership

Our research shows that being appointed to lead a theater depends on the selection committee's willingness/ability to recognize and trust your qualifications. Our next set of recommendations are intended to give theater professionals who aspire to leadership positions research-based recommendations on how to develop their portfolios and position themselves vis à vis the search process. We do this separately for those seeking leadership on the artistic and the operational sides of the theater. We also indicate which recommendations are more relevant to people early in their careers and which are more relevant to mid-career professionals.

11.3.1 Aspiring artistic directors

A. Building your directing portfolio:

- Insist on directing plays outside of your cultural background. Avoid being "pigeon-holed." Often, directors of color report that they are only asked to direct work by playwrights of color. Women are called to direct plays written by women. Having a limited portfolio can be a significant barrier toward career progression. Read widely, and learn what appeals to you as an artist. In addition to taking on any opportunity that pays, create your own smaller productions that are of a wider selection, more experimental, or closer to your interests. With permission, watch those you can learn from closely but quietly during their rehearsals (this is their show), and keep good notes. Ask to be their assistant if you can.

- While you are freelancing, build experience by directing plays widely, in many different theaters. To do this, cultivate positive relationships with a wide variety of theater professionals, including theater critics, to become one of the few directors who comes to mind when a season is being planned. This is a lifelong process, but every exposure counts.

- Learn and practice to clearly articulate and defend your programmatic choices. If something fails, understand why and own that failure so you can translate it into future success. A negative review may not mean a fully failed production; patrons have their own opinions and may surprise you. Be open to their input and suggestions.

- Produce shows in addition to directing them. Producing exposes you to many skills that are necessary to reach the top and lets you understand planning and budgeting. Start small, but do it all: budget, raise money, create connections, rent a space, get rights to a play, create contracts, and so on. During your student years, get involved at every level of your school's theater or find a small theater to get deeply involved with at every level of responsibility and in every department. Start your own production mainly to forge contacts with playwrights and other passionate players in the field. Even if you didn't make any money, the show could still be a success for your career.

B. Tips for early career development

- If you are employed at a theater, seek clear and specific articulation of work expectations from your manager or supervisor. Insist on regular performance reviews that align your accomplishments to the theater's goals. Put in writing what your ambitions and your plan for growth are. Often supervisors can support you in attaining them. If reviews are not part of the culture of your place of work, keep notes for yourself on your successes and failures and how you can grow from those.

- Understanding each department's role, priorities, and responsibilities develops a wider and deeper set of leadership skills. Work — or volunteer if you can — at a smaller theater where cross-departmental expertise may be easier to gain.

- Understand the structure of theater companies, how they operate, and why a company chose the model it adopted.

- Understand budgeting: What resources does it take to produce a play?

- Understand development: Understand what sources of monetary support (ticket sales, donations, foundation support, etc.) are in place. Find which programs within the theater earn your passion (play development, education, etc.) and understand how you would fund them. Understand who gives money, and why.

Working with mentors/sponsors

- Mentors can help you grow and develop through their close relationship with you; sponsors are people with power in the field who are willing to champion you. Sometimes they are the same person. You need both.

- Seek out mentors who have faced the same challenges you are facing. If those are not available, find mentors who "get you" and can support you in your specific situation.

- Search for a mentor and/or sponsor once you are ready to improve/challenge yourself. You can offer your own expertise and skillset to balance the relationship.

- Ask mentors/sponsors to speak to your strengths in public.

- Search for mentors willing to see you through a project from start to finish. Find opportunities where you can safely fail and learn by doing rather than shadowing. Enlist mentors to publicly give you credit for your successes.

- Initiate targeted conversations around leadership aspiration within your own cohort and with those who can support your growth. Do not wait for others to initiate this conversation for you.

- Cultivate and maintain relationships throughout the field with peers and with people in diverse positions in different organizations. Familiarity leads to trust, and trust can help you become the leader search committees will select.

- Speak about work-life balance issues with mentors, peers, and allies, and participate in a theater-wide conversation around this topic. Erasing the taboo on mentioning family care or life outside work will help level the playing field to leadership.

C. Tips for later career development

Tips on expanding your skills:

- Understand and participate fully in fundraising/ development. It is a critical skill, can be learned on the job, and is the number one reason why women believe they don't succeed in reaching the top. It is made up of the following skills:

    - Learn to effectively articulate the theater's mission. Reading past grant proposals can help. Understand and learn to articulate why you want to represent the theater.

    - Gain a strong command of public speaking and community outreach. Talk with experienced development professionals about how they built their skills and which tools they used to learn them. Learn to speak with a variety of audiences. Learn to articulate the necessity of the particular theater.

- Work on building deep, personal bonds with potential donors. Fundraising = Friend-raising. Find common interests, and truly listen to develop a deep relationship. Learn to articulate the mission such that the donor would feel included in the theater's mission and would want to get and stay involved.

- Understand who gets involved in fundraising (AD, ED, Board members, Development office) and in which way.

- Understand how the fundraising budget is projected, if it is met, and what happens if it isn't.

- Build on any experience you may have gained through founding a theater. Those skills are very marketable as wide, cross-departmental expertise. Founding a theater is also a great alternative path into leadership if the type of theater you hope to lead is non-existent. If the theater you founded did not survive, apply the skills you have acquired in a larger-budget theater. Understanding that scaling up in budget is critical to your success, focus on understanding structures and budgets even better.

- At a larger organization where departments can be more siloed, seek approval to sit in on meetings of different departments so you can get cross-departmental exposure.

- Seek out introduction to a Board's function and decision-making processes through approaching (with approval of your supervisor) a Board member; find opportunities to sit in on meetings at your own theater; or make Board connections at a theater you patronize. Become a Board member at a theater or other non-profit to learn about Board governance, internal dynamics, organizational culture, and a Board's fiduciary responsibilities. Understanding the relationship between the Board and the artistic and operational leaders of the theater is crucial to success.

Tips for those seeking leadership opportunities:

- Don't wait to seek a leadership position until you feel one hundred percent prepared. Apply and present the skills and experiences you have that align with the position, and learn to articulate the supports you might need as a new leader and how those balance against your strengths. Even a first, unsuccessful interview is an opportunity to make new contacts.

- Reach out to and maintain relationships with search firm professionals so they know your ambition and potential. Attend conferences (TCG) where you can connect with industry leaders and professionals.

- Learn about leadership relationships between artistic and executive directors by attending high-level meetings, if possible, and observing interactions and relationship dynamics among senior staff and Board members.

Preparing a job application for leadership:

- Understand the context of the vacancy you are applying for: why did the leader depart the organization, and what kind of legacy did that person leave at the theater? What is the turnover rate; is there a history of diverse leaders; is the theater financially stable?

- Learn to articulate the theater's mission clearly. Learn as much as possible about the organization; speak with current and previous staff members.

- Learn to clearly articulate your own vision and mission as the artistic leader of a theater. Have a clear definition of your own aesthetic and how it fits with the theater's mission.

- Be prepared to translate the theater's mission into programming.

- Highlight your past experience in programming, and practice conversations in which your choices may be challenged.

- Place your strengths in the context of the mission of the theater and defend your potential. Clearly articulate that you understand how to scale up if necessary and which supports you have built around you to achieve that. Never underestimate your ability to learn on the job to make up for any lacking or leaner prior experience.

- Demonstrate deep understanding of the operations of both the artistic and administrative sides.

- Do practice interviews with people familiar with the process of theater leader selection.

11.3.2 Aspiring executive directors

A. Tips for early career development

Preparing for executive leadership:

- Understanding each department's role, priorities, and responsibilities develops a wider and deeper set of leadership skills. Work — or volunteer if you can — at a smaller theater where cross-departmental expertise may be easier to gain. At a larger organization where departments can be more siloed, seek approval to sit in on meetings of different departments.

- Board relations are considered the hardest skill to attain among operational leaders in larger theaters. Seek out introduction to a Board's function and decision-making processes through approaching (with approval of your supervisor) a Board member; find opportunities to sit in on meetings at your own theater; or make Board connections at a theater you patronize. Become a Board member at a theater or other non-profit to learn about Board governance, internal dynamics, organizational culture, and a Board's fiduciary responsibilities.

- Understand and participate fully in fundraising/development. It is a critical skill, can be learned on the job, and should include the following:

  - Learn to effectively articulate the theater's mission. Reading successful past grant proposals can help. Understand and learn to articulate why you want to represent the theater.

  - Gain a strong command of public speaking and community outreach. Talk with experienced development professionals about how they built their skills and which tools they used to learn it. Learn to speak with a variety of audiences. Learn to articulate the necessity of the particular theater.

  - Work on building deep, personal bonds with potential donors. Fundraising = Friend-raising. Learn to articulate the mission such that the donor feels included in the theater's mission and wants to get involved.

  - Understand how the fundraising budget is projected, if it is met, and what happens if it isn't.

- Build your own portfolio and keep records of how it grows. Add strong writing samples, budgets, and strategic plans.

- Participate in or observe strategic planning sessions at your own or another institution. Understand the plan of action and whether it led to success.

- Learn from those who oversee a larger budget and manage a larger staff. If you are being selected to manage a larger budget and staff than you are used to, seek informal or even professional coaching to understand scaling up.

- Gain a clear understanding of HR/organizational behavior and how an organization can protect itself and care for its employees.

- Seek clear and specific articulation of work expectations from your manager. Insist on regular performance reviews that align your accomplishments to the theater's goals. Put in writing what your ambitions and your plan for growth are. Often supervisors can support you in attaining them.

- Expose yourself to the operations of the artistic side by producing shows or by sitting in on season planning and budgeting meetings to understand its process.

Working with mentors/sponsors:

- Mentors can help you grow and develop through their close relationship with you; sponsors are people with power in the field who are willing to champion you. Sometimes they are the same person. You need both.

- Seek out mentors who have faced the same challenges you are facing. If those are not available, find mentors who "get you" and can support you in your specific situation.

- Search for a mentor and/or sponsor once you are ready to improve/challenge yourself. You can offer your own expertise and skillset to balance the relationship.

- Ask mentors/sponsors to speak to your strengths in public.

- Initiate targeted conversations around leadership aspiration within your own cohort and with those who can support your growth. Do not wait for others to initiate this conversation for you.

- Search for mentors willing to see you through a project from start to finish. Find opportunities where you can safely fail and learn by doing rather than shadowing. Enlist mentors to publicly give you credit for your successes.

- Speak about work-life balance issues with mentors, peers, and allies, and participate in a theater-wide conversation around this topic. Erasing the taboo on mentioning family care or life outside work will help level the playing field to leadership by removing barriers for those who take care of others.

- Cultivate and maintain relationships throughout the field with peers and with people in diverse positions in different organizations. Familiarity leads to trust and trust can help you become the leader search committees will select.

B. Tips for later career development

Seeking leadership opportunities:

- Don't wait to seek a leadership position until you feel one hundred percent prepared. Apply, present the skills and experiences you have that align with the position, and learn to articulate the supports you might need as a new leader and how those balance against your strengths. Even a first, unsuccessful interview is an opportunity to make new contacts.

- Reach out to and maintain relationships with search firm professionals so they know your ambition and potential. Attend conferences (TCG) where you can connect with industry leaders and professionals.

- Learn about leadership relationships between artistic and executive directors by attending high-level meetings, if possible, and observing interactions and relationship dynamics among senior staff and Board members.

Preparing a job application for leadership:

- Understand the context of the vacancy you applied for: why did the leader depart the organization, and what kind of legacy did that person leave at the theater? What is the turnover rate; is there a history of diverse leaders; is the theater financially stable?

- Learn to articulate the theater's mission clearly. Learn as much as possible about the organization; speak with current and previous staff members.

- Learn to clearly articulate your own vision and personal mission as a leader in non-profit theater.

- Highlight any past experience in producing and practice conversations in which your choices may be challenged. Understanding how to work with the artistic side is a key asset for aspiring operational leaders.

- Articulate your strengths in the context of the mission of the theater and defend your potential.

- Clearly articulate that you understand how to scale up if necessary and which supports you have built around you to achieve that. Never underestimate your ability to learn on the job to make up for any lacking or leaner prior experience.

- Demonstrate deep understanding of the operations of different departments in both the artistic and administrative sides of a theater.

Alternative paths to executive leadership in theaters may include:

- An entrepreneurial path that starts with creating your own organization

- Preparation through for-profit experience

- Preparation through specialization in one area, e.g., development, marketing, or finance, before branching out to learn about all the other departments that keep a theater running.

11.4 Additional issues for theaters' preparation for diverse leadership

11.4.1 Culture fit

When search committees hire more women, more people of color, the theater world will have taken a major forward step toward diversifying leadership. Simultaneously, as already discussed in section 9.4, the culture of the theater needs to support the success of new leaders. Expecting the newcomer to automatically fit with what is an "established tradition" places an unfair burden on them. The challenge of creating a successful culture fit falls on the theater as well. Culture fit involves creating safe/brave spaces and ensuring support for people who enter leadership in environments where they were previously un(der)represented. Simply hiring people who have remained outside of theater leadership will not guarantee that diversity will be sustained. Success in diversifying leadership and the pathways to it may require making adjustments to the prevailing cultures of many theaters. Gender identity and expression, race/ethnicity, physical ability, sexual orientation, class background, and many other personal characteristics all are potential sources of disadvantage or even discrimination. Interviewees reported incidents where they felt pushed to the side, unseen, and underappreciated for their contributions. Organizations need to adapt to welcome diversity and change, and need to create safe spaces for discussion of differences.

11.4.2 Populating the pathway to leadership

Without putting explicit and exerted efforts into what the people on the pathway to leadership should look like in terms of their diversity, change will not happen just because we wish it to. Reaching out to a diverse group of youth in high school, engaging with them through theaters' education departments, and growing them to leadership with planning and forethought will be required. Any efforts will need to be supported with financial means so that the chance to enter and stay in the field is without excessive debt burden. Advocates have called for a federal jobs training program for the arts in order to level the access to the field for anyone. But other supports can be put into place through expanding and funding existing successful programs.

11.4.3 Embracing the next generation

To keep theater relevant for future generations, leadership models will need to change. Women's tendency to lead more relationally aligns well with what the Hewlett Foundation has defined to be the preferred leadership style of the Millennials: distributed leadership. Whatever the future of leadership in theater will look like, women (and people of color) who have so far been underrepresented in the top jobs are well equipped and positioned to introduce sustainable new models.

11.4.4 The financial future of non-profit theaters

The information we gathered pertained largely to present and past conditions of the theater world. However, more than a few people we interviewed raised important questions about the theater's future: (1) who will be the subscribers, (2) who will be the donors and/or members of the Board of Trustees, and (3) what will be the new models of leadership to attract the best and brightest of the new generation to lead theaters? These were topics which came up in cautionary conversations imploring the need for theaters to change. They share a concern that Millennials

(born between 1981-1997) may not become subscribers in sufficient numbers to replace aging Baby Boomers; they may not become sufficiently passionate supporters of the current theaters to join Boards of Trustees or to make major donations; and they may not find the more centralized leadership models of theaters to their liking as places of employment.

Some advocates lament that theaters' focus has been on the "1 percent," for fundraising especially, and call for a change in methods of attracting donors and sustainers to the theater. The use of social media and different ways of integrating technology in theater, its development models, and its audience engagement will need to be examined and integrated in theaters of every size. These topics should be among those of future research and action.

In conclusion, our substantial data collection documented that the dearth of women in top leadership of LORT member-theaters represents a glass ceiling. There are sufficient numbers of qualified women aspiring for leadership. Immediate action is possible to achieve gender equity in leadership. Professionals of color also face a glass ceiling. There are well-qualified aspiring people of color inside and outside the theater who can be tapped for leadership to make immediate increases in racial diversity. But the number of leadership candidates of color is smaller. Concerted, long-term efforts are needed to attract and retain more people of color on the pathway to LORT member-theater leadership. The information we gathered also lead us to conclude that *unless* there is there is intentional action, in the words of one of the ADs we interviewed, leadership in large nonprofit theaters "...will ever be thus."

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Research methods

"Why are there so few women leading theaters?" This study's main goal was to understand the scarcity of women in leadership positions. A.C.T. partnered with the Wellesley Centers for Women for a research study to tease out the reasons for the lack of gender equity and to make recommendations to achieve greater diversity in theater leadership. The partners adopted a research strategy to (1) better understand the career paths of those in current leadership in order to make recommendations for aspiring future leaders in the pathway to leadership, and (2) examine the search process to make recommendations to hiring committees.

The 74 U.S. theaters registered with LORT (League of Resident Theaters) make up the universe of the theaters that are the primary focus of this investigation. The focus of the research was not on LORT as a service organization; rather it was on the individual theaters which were members of LORT in 2013-2014.[13]

The research strategy aimed at better understanding the career paths of those in current leadership and those in positions immediately below top leadership in order to make recommendations for aspiring future leaders on the pathway to leadership, and at examining the search process to make recommendations to hiring committees.

The charge was to examine the lack of gender equity in LORT leadership. Because women of color are the scarcest entities in theater leadership, we also collected data to examine reasons behind the scarcity of people of color, male and female, to get a broader view of what keeps groups of people out of reaching the top leadership positions.

The *specific aims* of the study design included data collection to examine:

1. job requirements associated with top leadership positions, preparation for the role, and perceived key qualifications for selection;

2. aspirations and preparation of people on the pathway to leadership who are next-in-line to AD and ED positions;

3. the search process for selecting top leadership.

Consistent with the study's specific aims, individuals who participated in the data collection were invited to contribute to a study that examines how people develop careers to become leaders in LORT member-theaters, co-led by researchers at Wellesley College in partnership with American Conservatory Theater (A.C.T.). The study design focused the data collection on leaders' job requirements, preparation for the leadership role, and the selection process. We purposefully did not emphasize *gender and race* in the interview and survey questions. It was in the data analyses that we examined gender and race patterns in the information we gathered. The reason for not highlighting gender or race in the questions was to get as broad a view of the process of prepa-

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13 LORT is the largest professional theater association of its kind in the United States, with member theaters located in every major market in the U.S., including 29 states and the District of Columbia. LORT administers the primary national not-for-profit collective bargaining agreements with Actors' Equity Association, the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, and United Scenic Artists. It also deals directly with personnel and management issues involving theater staff, artists, and craftspeople. LORT theaters tend to have budgets above $2,000,000. The number of member theaters changes over time, depending on which theaters elect LORT's contractual/administrative model. The focus for this study is on the theaters that were members of LORT in 2013-2014, not the service organization itself.

ration and selection for leadership as possible within which we could look for gender and race patterns if they existed.

A1. Background

A. Leadership structure of LORT theaters

Of the 74 theaters, 53 had a dual leadership model with an artistic director (AD) and an executive/managerial director (ED) both reporting to the theater's Board of Trustees.[14] In the remaining 21 theaters, the artistic and operational responsibilities were combined in one person, whom we refer to as the AD/ED. In these single leadership theaters, the top managerial director reports to the AD/ED.

B. Data sources

We designed a multifaceted data collection strategy that incorporated primary data from a variety of stakeholders: ADs and EDs of LORT member-theaters, members of Boards of Trustees of LORT theaters who had been involved in the leader selection process, search firms that manage searches for top leadership positions, and people on the path to leadership in these theaters. We also consulted with approximately 30 people with expertise on U.S. theater.

Because top leaders have been recruited from both inside and outside the LORT membership, our research into the status of the pathway to leadership included data collection from people both inside and outside of LORT theaters through confidential online surveys.

Information from primary sources was augmented by information from industry sources, mainly TCG and LORT archival websites, theater websites, and resumes and bio-sketches of theater leaders and those in the pathway leadership. Figure A.1 represents an overview of all sources of data that informed our findings.

In the parlance of social science research methodology, the study' data collection design was *multimodal* in that we employed several different modes of collecting information — telephone interviews, electronic surveys, and archival research. It was also a *multi-informant* design because we collected data from multiple stakeholders. The data analysis strategy we employed is one of *mixed methods,* combining quantitative analysis of survey results and qualitative analysis of interviews and resumes. Triangulation of the various sources informed our analyses and recommendations, with information from the different sources used to supplement and verify each other.

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14 In university-based theaters, leaders report to the academic dean, not directly to a Board of Trustees. There are 12 university-based theaters in our LORT sample.

Figure A.1. Data sources and sample sizes

Sources of Information

inside and outside LORT

Survey with executives/managers: What is valued in an executive's career path that leads to an ED position?

N=333

Survey with stage directors: What is valued in a director's career path that leads to an AD position?

N=998

Conversations with field experts including members of theater boards of Trustees and professionals in search firms

N=30

OUR FINDINGS

inside LORT

Interviews with ADs, EDs, and NILs of randomly selected theaters in 3 budget groups

What is the career path to leadership?

How did you prepare?

N=97

Resumes/bios, online information

What is the job description?

N=300

C. Informed consent

Wellesley College's Institutional Review Board reviewed and approved the procedures for data collection involving human subjects. Individuals approached to participate in an interview were asked to review an Informed Consent Form and indicate their consent either by signing the form or giving verbal consent which was audiotaped. The form included the following assurances: "All interviews will be analyzed anonymously, without any personal identifiers that can be connected to interviewees' names or the theater name. The report resulting from the study will focus on general trends, not individuals. … Your involvement in these interviews is completely voluntary. You can choose not to answer some or all of the questions asked and can stop the interview at any time." People invited to participate in the confidential surveys were also presented with the same information to which they were asked to agree before they could proceed to the survey questions.

D. Data collected

Understanding the job requirements for ADs and EDs and their preparation for these roles

1. We *invited* both the AD and ED of a random sample of 24 theaters, eight each from three budget groups to be interviewed. The budget groups for our selection were modeled on TCG's categories:[15]

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15 TCG-defined budget groups: Budget group 1: $499,999 or less; Budget group 2: $500,000-$999,999; Budget group 3: $1 Million-$2,999,999; Budget group 4: $3 Million-$4,999,999; Budget group 5; $5 Million-$9,999,999; Budget group 6: $10 Million and more.

A. 8 theaters came from budget groups 3 and 4 (up to $5 Million);

B. 8 from budget group 5 (between $5 and $10 Million);

C. 8 from budget group 6 (over $10 Million).

2. In theaters where the artistic and managerial leadership was combined in one person (the AD/ED model), we interviewed the AD/ED and the top operational leader, who reports to the AD/ED. In this report we refer to that top operational leader as an ED.

Twenty-two ADs were interviewed (2 refused, **92% response rate)** and 23 EDs were interviewed (1 refused, **95% response rate).**

Interview protocols used in these confidential interviews are attached to this appendix. (See Appendix A2.a. *Leader interview protocol*)

3. We examined the CV/resume/biographical statement of ADs and EDs in all LORT member theaters. The coding system we used to analyze elements in their career development is attached. (See Appendix A4. *Codes for analyzing career development*) It was developed after conversations with experts in both roles, and subsequently refined during analyses.

4. We surveyed director members of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, using a confidential online survey. The survey was sent to full and associate member of SDC who were directors or directors/choreographers, excluding members who were listed exclusively as choreographers. The survey achieved a **43% response rate**, which is very high when compared with national averages for online surveys.[16] Of the 998 participants in this survey, 62% had been in the past or were at the moment they took the survey in an AD position; they responded to questions about their preparation for the AD role and what qualifications they believed were important for their selection to that role. The detailed report of the SDC survey methodology and results is attached. (See Appendix D: *Findings from the Stage Directors' Survey*)

5. We surveyed the managerial staff in theaters with budgets above $1 million that belong to the Theatre Communications Group using a confidential online survey. Total **response rate was 52%,** which is exceptionally high for an online survey. Of the 333 participants in this survey, 43% were or had been the top managerial leader of a theater. They responded to questions about their preparation for the ED role and what qualifications they believed were important for their selection to that role. The detailed report of the TCG survey methodology and results is attached. (See Appendix E. *Findings from the Operational Managers' Survey*)

Understanding the aspirations and preparation of people in the pathway to AD and ED positions

1. In the same random sample of 24 LORT theaters described above, we interviewed key staffs who were listed on the theater's web page right below the top artistic and the top managerial position. We refer to these key staff, which constitute the top of the pathway, as being next-in-line (NIL).

2. Twenty-four NIL-ADs were interviewed and 19 NIL-EDs. Two NIL-ADs were not able to be reached for interviews, as were 3 NIL-EDs. One NIL-ED turned down the interview. The interview protocol used in these confidential interviews is attached to this appendix. (See Appendix A.2.B. *Next-in-line interview protocol*)

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16 The average response rate for email surveys is around 25% http://fluidsurveys.com/university/response-rate-statistics-online-surveys-aiming/. More specifically, surveys of customers and members tend to vary between 5-40% http://www.practicalsurveys.com/respondents/typicalresponserates.php.

3. We examined CV/resume/biographical statement of all LORT NIL for AD and ED positions. The coding system we used to analyze elements in their career development is attached. (Same coding categories for AD and ED analyses, See Appendix A4. *Codes for analyzing career development,* were used for coding NIL resumes.)

4. Of the 998 participants who responded to the online SDC member survey, 38% had never been an AD, and were hence considered next-in-line. They responded to questions about their aspirations for an AD role; what additional skills, if any, they would need to become an AD; whether they had ever applied to be an AD; the outcome of the most recent application; and their interpretation of the outcome. The detailed report of the SDC survey methodology and results pertaining to never ADs is incorporated into the attached SDC member's survey report. (See Appendix D. *Findings from the Stage Directors' Survey*)

5. Of the 333 participants who responded to the managers' online survey, 55% were just below that of the top managerial leader of their theater, and were hence considered next-in-line. They responded to questions about their aspirations for an ED role; what additional skills, if any, they would need in order to become an ED; whether they had ever applied to be an ED; the outcome of the most recent application; and their interpretation of the outcome. The detailed report of the managerial survey methodology and results pertaining to people "next-in-line" who have not been EDs is incorporated into the attached managers' survey report. (See Appendix E. *Findings from the Operational Managers' Survey*)

Understanding the search process

1. We interviewed four members of Boards of Trustees of LORT member-theaters and one non-LORT theater Trustee about their experiences of participating in a leadership search. The interview protocol used in these interviews is attached. (See Appendix A.2.C *Trustee interview protocol*)

2. We interviewed three principals of search firms who are frequently called on to do leadership searches for LORT. The interview protocol used in these interviews is attached. (See Appendix A.2.D *Search Firm interview protocol*).

3. The interviews with ADs, EDs, and people in the pathway to leadership also yielded information about the search process.

Additional interviews with people of color

Because of the very small numbers of people of color in leadership roles in LORT member theaters, we developed an oversample of people of color who were not part of the theaters randomly selected for interviews. This resulted in nine additional interviews (2 ADs, 5 NIL-ADs, and 2 NIL-ED). An additional question we asked of people of color was intended to help us in contacting other people of color they knew of within LORT member-theaters.

Limitations of our methods

Some of our results were obtained by surveying director-members of SDC, that is, directors with sufficient stature in the field to be directing at a level that requires SDC membership. Consequently, we cannot speak to the barriers experienced by many people who have potential but could not reach that stature. The literature we reviewed suggests that many otherwise talented individuals may not have had viable directing or producing careers due to child care or other

family responsibilities, or due to not being able to afford to live on internships that are so essential for honing one's skills, but that notoriously do not offer a living wage. Limiting the survey sample of the artistic side to stage directors also overlooked preparation for artistic leadership outside of directing. In 2013-2014, 12% of ADs in LORT member theaters came from a non-directing background, the majority of whom were or had been producers. Earlier in this report, we elaborate on producing as an important but overlooked pathway to leadership in the theater (see Chapter 5, section 5.1.1.a).

Other limitations to our findings are that candidates for operational leadership in LORT theaters can come from other arenas than the ones in which we were able to interview, survey, or have conversations. Moreover interviews and surveys are but a moment in time on one person's career path such that pre-set lists of answers to pre-designed questions cannot always capture every nuance of the story someone may wish to tell.

Finally, professionals move around, within their theaters and across the field into others, or they drop out of the field for various reasons. We had to set artificial date parameters around our sample's composition, such that we could represent an overview on one specific group –what the leadership in the field looked like at one point in time. That date was set to be June 2014 when we had spent 1 year collecting a comprehensive overview of the field.

A2. Interview protocols

A. Leader interview protocol (AD or ED)

Tell me about your role in the theater.
What does your leadership role entail?
What are you responsible for?
To whom do you report?
How long have you been in this position?
What was your previous position and where was it located?
What (1) skills, experiences, and (2) relationships did you need to develop to do your work? Please tell me how you acquired them.
Did you have someone mentoring you when you were moving into your current leadership position? What did they do to help you?
For the next generation of leaders coming up, what (1) skills, (2) experiences, and (3) relationships are important to demonstrate for moving into an AD/ED position in the world of LORT today?
How could people prepare for a leadership role such as yours in a LORT theater today?
What resources are available for people who want to become a leader in a theater?
What resources are needed for leadership preparation but are not readily available?
How can people in line for leadership signal to others they are ready for a role with more responsibility?
At your theater, whom do you consider to be people in line for an artistic leadership function? And how about for an administrative function?
Are you personally involved in their grooming for leadership?
Usually when diversity is spoken of it pertains to cultural background, gender, race, etc.:
Do you feel the current level of diversity in theater leadership is appropriate?
What would be the pros and cons of having greater diversity in theater leadership?

B. Next-in-line interview protocol

Tell me about your role in the theater:

What does your role entail?

What are you responsible for?

To whom do you report?

How long have you been in this position?

What was your previous position? Where was it located?

What position would you like to be in in 3 years?

if answer is not to climb to AD or ED level position, ask:

Would you ever aspire to the position of an [Artistic] or [Executive] Director within a theater? Why? or Why not?

What (1) skills or experiences, and (2) relationships do you feel would be important to cultivate in reaching your next position?

In particular, whom do you think can help you?

if person is **NOT** *interested in higher AD or ED level:*

Who do you think could help someone get those (1) skills, experiences, or (2) relationships to help them to the next level?

What resources are available to people who want to move up in your line of work?

if person is interested in AD/ED position:

Are there one or more people in the industry who could be influential in your progression?

Is there anyone currently mentoring you to help you gain those skills? What does that mentorship involve; What do these people do for you?

Are they inside or outside of the theater you work in currently?

Do you see your next position occurring within this theater or would it require transitioning to a position in a different theater or different arena? Why? or How easy would it be for you to move from your current theater?

Usually when diversity is spoken of it pertains to cultural background, gender, race, etc.:

Do you feel the current level of diversity in theater leadership is appropriate?

What would be the pros and cons of having greater diversity in theater leadership?

Additional question for people of color in next-in-line positions:

We have found in interviews with other people that, for a person of color, attaining a leadership position in LORT theaters might be challenging. We would like to learn from people's perspectives and career progression experiences, and are therefore looking for other people of color to interview, either at your theater or at other theaters. Would you please give me some names of people of color who you know to be interested in a leadership position, either on the artistic or the executive side of theater leadership?

C. Trustee interview protocol

Please describe how you enter into a search phase.

What factors go into finalizing a slate of candidates?

We had ADs and EDs take a survey about the qualifications that they thought were instrumental in getting them their appointment. We would like to ask you to look at the same list of qualifications and pick, per position, the top 5 qualifications that you think each position requires in order for a person to be considered a viable candidate.

What advice would you give to aspiring leaders who would like to become ADs?

What advice would you give to aspiring leaders who would like to become EDs?

Would a set of metrics against which potential candidates are evaluated make searches more transparent? What would be the qualities/skills measured if such a metric were to be developed?

There's lack of gender diversity in leadership. Does your theater have an explicit focus on hiring for diversity along gender lines?

What are the roadblocks you observe to making leadership more gender equitable?

There's lack of racial diversity in leadership. Does your theater have an explicit focus on diversity along racial lines?

What are the roadblocks you observe to making leadership more racially inclusive?

What roadblocks to greater gender and racial diversity are commonly talked about in public? Are these different from what you have observed yourself?

What can be done to make leadership more inclusive of women and people of color?

What do you think about the Rooney Rule if that were to be applied to theater? Would it change how you think a search should be done? Are there pros and cons to a type of Rooney Rule?

Are there pros and cons to changing the search process to increase diversity?

Are there important things we should know about the search process that I haven't asked about?

D. Search firm interview protocol

Please describe the steps your firm takes, starting with the first call that initiates an engagement to hire your firm for a search up to the appointment of a candidate.

What questions do you ask of the theater (and whom do you ask) to prepare a given search?

Is there ongoing coaching of candidates during the search? Who initiates these steps?

Is there coaching of search committee members?

What factors go into finalizing a slate of candidates?

We had ADs and EDs take a survey about the qualifications that they thought were instrumental in getting them their appointment. We would like to ask you to look at the same list of qualifications and pick, per position, the top 5 qualifications that you think each position requires in order for a person to be considered a viable candidate.

What do you do to keep informed of potential candidates? How widely do you cast a net (i.e. probe for their looking into founders of smaller theaters, producers, academe, other kinds of arts organizations)?

Is there ongoing scouting/cultivation of candidates w/o a specific search?

What advice would you give to aspiring leaders who would like to become ADs?

What advice would you give to aspiring leaders who would like to become EDs?

Would a set of metrics against which potential candidates are evaluated make searches more transparent? What would be the qualities/skills measured if such a metric were to be developed?

There's lack of gender diversity in leadership. Does your firm have an explicit and clear statement about diversity along gender lines?

What are the roadblocks you observe to making leadership more gender equitable?

There's lack of racial diversity in leadership. Does your firm have an explicit and clear statement about diversity along racial lines?

What are the roadblocks you observe to making leadership more racially inclusive?

What roadblocks to greater gender and racial diversity are commonly talked about in public? Are these different from what you have observed yourself?

What can be done to make leadership more inclusive of women and people of color?

What do you think about the Rooney Rule if that were to be applied to theater? Would it change how you think a search should be done? Are there pros and cons to a type of Rooney Rule?

Are there pros and cons to changing the search process to increase diversity?

Are there important things we should know about the search process that I haven't asked about?

A3. Surveys

A. Survey questions for director-members of SDC

Note: The Qualtrics platform we used to administer the online surveys allowed skip patterns. We have indicated where skip patterns were used which allowed us to distinguish between respondents who were ADs at the time they took the survey, who had been ADs in the past, and those who had never held that position.

Please note: In this survey, we use the word director to mean both director and director/choreographer.

Q How long have you been a professional director?

☐ Less than 1 year
☐ 1-5 years
☐ 6-10 years
☐ 11-15 years
☐ 16-20 years
☐ More than 20 years

Q Is your directing currently ONLY freelance?

☐ Yes
☐ No, I direct at my own theater (as well)

Q Check all positions you have ever held in which you have practiced your craft: (We consider "Artistic Director," "Executive Artistic Director," and "Producing Artistic Director" to mean the top artistic leadership position in a theater)

☐ Artistic Director
☐ Executive Artistic Director
☐ Producing Artistic Director
☐ Associate Artistic Director
☐ Associate Freelance Director
☐ Associate Producer
☐ Associate to the Artistic Director
☐ Assistant Artistic Director
☐ Director of New Play Programs
☐ Resident Director
☐ Freelance Director
☐ Other (please describe) _____

Q **Are you currently in an (Executive, Producing) Artistic Director position?**

(This question was answered only by those for whom the question was relevant.)

☐ Yes
☐ No

Q **What is your current position in the theater?**

(This question was answered only by those for whom the question was relevant.)

☐ Associate Artistic Director
☐ Associate Freelance Director
☐ Associate Producer
☐ Associate to the Artistic Director
☐ Assistant Artistic Director
☐ Director of New Play Programs
☐ Resident Director
☐ Freelance Director
☐ Other (please explain): _____

Q **Why did you leave the Artistic Director position you held before? Check all that apply:**
(answer options are automatically reordered for each participant)

(This question was answered only by those for whom the question was relevant.)

☐ The conditions of the position changed while I was at the theater
☐ The pay became inadequate
☐ The theater closed
☐ I retired
☐ I no longer felt comfortable with the staff at the theater
☐ I (my family) chose to move to another location
☐ I was not able to keep the theater running financially
☐ My contract was not renewed when it came to an end
☐ The Board chose to go in a different artistic direction than I was setting so I left
☐ I took a different job at a larger or more prestigious theater
☐ The Board chose to go in a different artistic direction than I was setting so I was let go
☐ The requirements of the position no longer accommodated my home responsibilities
☐ The burden of all tasks related to the job lead to an inability to grow as an artist, so I left
☐ I wanted to work at a university-affiliated theater
☐ I no longer wanted to work at a university-affiliated theater
☐ There wasn't a good cultural fit between me and the community the theater was located in
☐ Other (please explain): _____

Q This question asks what you perceive that OTHERS valued in your credentials and experience AT THE TIME OF YOUR APPOINTMENT to your last Artistic Director position. Check ALL factors that lead to your appointment in your last Artistic Director position: *(answer options are automatically reordered for each participant)*

(This question was answered only by those for whom the question was relevant.)

- ☐ Previous Artistic Director experience
- ☐ Associate Artistic Director experience
- ☐ Directed in many different theaters
- ☐ Founded a theater company
- ☐ Produced shows
- ☐ Received a directing award
- ☐ Received an acting award
- ☐ Received a play writing award
- ☐ Received a producing award
- ☐ Nominated for directing award
- ☐ Nominated for acting award
- ☐ Nominated for play writing award
- ☐ Nominated for producing award
- ☐ Collaborated with prominent actors or playwrights
- ☐ Guest directed on Broadway, at prominent theaters, or abroad
- ☐ Directed shows that went to Broadway or other prominent theaters
- ☐ Directed shows that toured in the US
- ☐ Directed world, national, or regional premiers
- ☐ My community-outreach experience
- ☐ Active in LORT or TCG
- ☐ Served on nominating, selection, award, or review committees
- ☐ My fundraising ability
- ☐ Well-connected with prominent theater people
- ☐ My race
- ☐ My gender
- ☐ Where I received my education/training
- ☐ My expertise in a particular genre or type of theater (e.g. new plays, Shakespeare, ...)
- ☐ My previous work experience within the hiring theater company
- ☐ A personal referral from someone within the hiring theater company
- ☐ A personal referral from a prominent theater person
- ☐ My degree / formal training
- ☐ My rapport with the board of the hiring theater
- ☐ My experience in cultivating or drawing new audiences
- ☐ My public speaking skills

If Is your current theater a ... Part of an academic institution Is Selected

- ☐ My experience getting grants

If Is your current theater a ... Part of an academic institution Is Selected

- ☐ My rapport with the provost, dean, or chair of my department

If Is your current theater a ... Part of an academic institution Is Selected

- ☐ My teaching experience at the BFA or MFA level
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

Q **What is your race or ethnic background?**

- ☐ Asian / Pacific Islander
- ☐ Black / African American
- ☐ White / Caucasian
- ☐ Hispanic / Latino(a)
- ☐ Native American / Alaskan Native
- ☐ Mixed race (biracial or multiracial)
- ☐ Other (please explain): _____

Q **What year were you appointed to your current position?**

(This question was answered only by those for whom the question was relevant.)

- ☐ 1960
- ☐ ----
- ☐ 2014

Q **What is the total budget of your current theater company?**

(This question was answered only by those for whom the question was relevant.)

- ☐ Less than $500,000
- ☐ $500,000-$999,999
- ☐ $1,000,000-$2,999,999
- ☐ $3,000,000-$4,999,999
- ☐ $5,000-000-$9,999,999
- ☐ $10,000,000 and over

Q **Is your current theater a ... Check all that apply.**

(This question was answered only by those for whom the question was relevant.)

- ☐ LORT theater
- ☐ Non-profit regional theater (not LORT)
- ☐ Community theater
- ☐ Part of an academic institution
- ☐ Other (please describe) _____

Q **When was your current theater founded?**

(This question was answered only by those for whom the question was relevant.)

- ☐ Prior to 1960
- ☐ 1960s
- ☐ 1970s
- ☐ 1980s
- ☐ 1990s
- ☐ 2000s
- ☐ After 2010

Q This question asks what you perceive that OTHERS valued in your credentials and experience AT THE TIME OF YOUR APPOINTMENT. Check ALL factors that lead to your appointment in your current Artistic Director position: *(answer options are auto-matically reordered for each participant)*

(This question was answered only by those for whom the question was relevant.)

- ☐ Previous Artistic Director experience
- ☐ Associate Artistic Director experience
- ☐ Directed in many different theaters
- ☐ Founded a theater company
- ☐ Produced shows
- ☐ Received a directing award
- ☐ Received an acting award
- ☐ Received a play writing award
- ☐ Received a producing award
- ☐ Nominated for directing award
- ☐ Nominated for acting award
- ☐ Nominated for play writing award
- ☐ Nominated for producing award
- ☐ Collaborated with prominent actors or playwrights
- ☐ Guest directed on Broadway, at prominent theaters, or abroad
- ☐ Directed shows that went to Broadway or other prominent theaters
- ☐ Directed shows that toured in the US
- ☐ Directed world, national, or regional premiers
- ☐ My community-outreach experience
- ☐ Active in LORT or TCG
- ☐ Served on nominating, selection, award, or review committees
- ☐ My fundraising ability
- ☐ Well-connected with prominent theater people
- ☐ My race
- ☐ My gender
- ☐ Where I received my education/training
- ☐ My expertise in a particular genre or type of theater (e.g. new plays, Shakespeare, ...)
- ☐ My previous work experience within the hiring theater company
- ☐ A personal referral from someone within the hiring theater company
- ☐ A personal referral from a prominent theater person
- ☐ My degree / formal training
- ☐ My rapport with the board
- ☐ My experience in cultivating or drawing new audiences
- ☐ My public speaking skills

If Is your current theater a ... Part of an academic institution Is Selected

- ☐ My experience getting grants

If Is your current theater a ... Part of an academic institution Is Selected

- ☐ My rapport with the provost, dean, or chair of my department

If Is your current theater a ... Part of an academic institution Is Selected

- ☐ My teaching experience at the BFA or MFA level
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____

Q **What were the circumstances when you applied to the position you are in now?**

(This question was answered only by those for whom the question was relevant.)

☐ I was contacted by a Board member of the theater and asked to apply

☐ I was contacted by a search firm and asked to apply

☐ I was contacted by the Artistic Director at the theater and asked to apply

☐ I was contacted by the Managing Director at the theater and asked to apply

☐ I took the initiative to contact the search firm assigned by the theater and applied through them

☐ I applied for the position directly to the theater without going through a search firm

☐ Other, please explain: _____

Q **What year were you appointed to your current position?**

(This question was answered only by those for whom the question was relevant.)

☐ 1960

☐ ---

☐ 2014

Q **What is the total budget of your current theater company?**

(This question was answered only by those for whom the question was relevant.)

☐ Less than $500,000

☐ $500,000-$999,999

☐ $1,000,000-$2,999,999

☐ $3,000,000-$4,999,999

☐ $5,000-000-$9,999,999

☐ $10,000,000 and over

Q **Is your current theater a ... Check all that apply.**

(This question was answered only by those for whom the question was relevant.)

☐ LORT theater

☐ Non-profit regional theater (not LORT)

☐ Community theater

☐ Part of an academic institution

☐ Other (please describe) _____

Q **When was your current theater founded?**

(This question was answered only by those for whom the question was relevant.)

☐ Prior to 1960

☐ 1960s

☐ 1970s

☐ 1980s

☐ 1990s

☐ 2000s

☐ After 2010

Q Were you ever approached to apply to an Artistic Director position?

☐ Yes
☐ No

Q Who approached you:

(This question was answered only by those for whom the question was relevant.)

☐ Search firm
☐ The Artistic Director at the hiring theater
☐ The Managing Director at the hiring theater
☐ Board member of the hiring theater
☐ Personal referral from a prominent theater person

Q Have you ever applied to an Artistic Director position, even if you were not approached?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Q What was the outcome of the last application?

(This question was answered only by those for whom the question was relevant.)

☐ I didn't get an interview
☐ I got an interview but was not advanced
☐ I made the finals but did not get an offer
☐ I was offered the position, but I did not take it
☐ Other, please explain ──────────────

Q Why do you think you did not get the Artistic Director position you last applied for? Check all that apply. *(answer options are automatically reordered for each participant)*

(This question was answered only by those for whom the question was relevant.)

☐ Not enough directing experience
☐ Not enough fundraising experience
☐ Not enough experience directing in a variety of companies
☐ Not enough experience producing shows
☐ Not enough awards/nominations for directing or producing
☐ No experience on Broadway
☐ Did not have a personal connection to someone in the theater who could speak to your strengths
☐ Your gender
☐ Your race
☐ Your age
☐ Did not attend the "right" Drama Education / Training program
☐ Not enough community outreach experience
☐ Not enough experience on nominating committees
☐ Not enough personal relationships with prominent theater people
☐ Your sexual orientation

☐   Did not have the necessary educational degree

☐   Special consideration you needed because of family obligations

☐   Other (please explain): _____

Q **Why did you not take the position you were offered? Check all that apply.**
(answer options are automatically reordered for each participant)

(This question was answered only by those for whom the question was relevant.)

☐   It was not the right time for me

☐   I did not feel comfortable with the staff at the theater

☐   I (my family) did not want to or could not move/relocate at that time

☐   The theater closed by the time I was hired

☐   The conditions of the position changed by the time I was hired

☐   The pay was not adequate

☐   I (my family) developed health problems

☐   I did not feel comfortable working with the Board

☐   The requirements of the position could not accommodate my family responsibilities

☐   I was offered a more artistically fulfilling position elsewhere

☐   I was offered a higher-paying position elsewhere

☐   I was not impressed by the quality of the productions

☐   I felt that the burdens of the position would lead to an inability to grow as an artist

☐   There wasn't a good cultural fit between me and the community the theater was located in

☐   Other (please explain): _____

Q **Why have you never applied to an Artistic Director position? Check all that apply.**
(answer options are automatically reordered for each participant)

(This question was answered only by those for whom the question was relevant.)

☐   It's too early in my directing career

☐   There are no Artistic Director openings in my current location

☐   I am not interested in becoming an Artistic Director

☐   I intend to leave the theater field for another career that interests me more

☐   I intend to leave the theater field for another career where I can make more money

☐   I am more interested in a leadership role in the administrative side of theater

☐   I (or a family member) have health problems I need to attend to

☐   I want to only direct shows, not do any community outreach, Board relations, or other public speaking tasks an Artistic Director would have to do

☐   I don't think search committees want to hire someone of my race

☐   I don't like doing fundraising

☐   I need greater flexibility in my schedule due to child care needs

☐   I don't have the right mix of experience in directing, managing, and fundraising

☐   I would not be a good manager

☐   I don't think search committees want to hire someone of my gender

☐   I don't think my artistic style fits with the vision of hiring theater companies

☐   There are no realistic job openings for someone with my skills and experience

☐   I have been discouraged due to a lack of personal connections to any hiring theater companies

☐   I am happy in my current position

☐ I think other people would be more qualified for the position

☐ I don't think search committees want to hire someone of my sexual orientation

☐ I don't think search committees want to hire someone of my age

☐ Other (please explain): _____

Q What year were you appointed to your current position?

(This question was answered only by those for whom the question was relevant.)

☐ 1960

☐ ---

☐ 2014

Q What is the total budget of your current theater company?

(This question was answered only by those for whom the question was relevant.)

☐ Less than $500,000

☐ $500,000-$999,999

☐ $1,000,000-$2,999,999

☐ $3,000,000-$4,999,999

☐ $5,000-000-$9,999,999

☐ $10,000,000 and over

Q Is your current theater a ... Check all that apply.

(This question was answered only by those for whom the question was relevant.)

☐ LORT theater

☐ Non-profit regional theater (not LORT)

☐ Community theater

☐ Part of an academic institution

☐ Other (please describe) _____

Q When was your current theater founded?

(This question was answered only by those for whom the question was relevant.)

☐ Prior to 1960

☐ 1960s

☐ 1970s

☐ 1980s

☐ 1990s

☐ 2000s

☐ After 2010

Q Since your last Artistic Director position, were you ever approached to apply to an Artistic Director position again?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Q Who approached you:

(This question was answered only by those for whom the question was relevant.)

☐ Search firm
☐ The Artistic Director at the hiring theater
☐ The Managing Director at the hiring theater
☐ Board member of the hiring theater
☐ Personal referral from a prominent theater person

Q Since your last Artistic Director position, have you applied to another Artistic Director position, even if you were not approached?

☐ Yes
☐ No, I haven't, but I plan to
☐ No, I'm not going to

Q What was the outcome of the last application?

(This question was answered only by those for whom the question was relevant.)

☐ I didn't get an interview
☐ I got an interview but was not advanced
☐ I made the finals but did not get an offer
☐ I was offered the position but did not take it
☐ Other, please explain _____

Q Why do you think you did not get the Artistic Director position you last applied for? Check all that apply. *(answer options are automatically reordered for each participant)*

(This question was answered only by those for whom the question was relevant.)

☐ Not enough directing experience
☐ Not enough fundraising experience
☐ Not enough experience directing in a variety of companies
☐ Not enough experience producing shows
☐ Not enough awards/nominations for directing or producing
☐ No experience on Broadway
☐ Did not have a personal connection to someone in the theater who could speak to your strengths
☐ Your gender
☐ Your race
☐ Your age
☐ Did not attend the "right" Drama Education / Training program
☐ Not enough community outreach experience
☐ Not enough experience on nominating committees
☐ Not enough personal relationships with prominent theater people
☐ Your sexual orientation
☐ Did not have the necessary educational degree
☐ Special consideration you needed because of family obligations
☐ Other (please explain): _____

Q **Why did you not take the position you were offered? Check all that apply.**
(answer options are automatically reordered for each participant)

(This question was answered only by those for whom the question was relevant.)

- ☐ It was not the right time for me
- ☐ I did not feel comfortable with the staff at the theater
- ☐ I (my family) did not want to or could not move/relocate at that time
- ☐ The theater closed by the time I was hired
- ☐ The conditions of the position changed by the time I was hired
- ☐ The pay was not adequate
- ☐ I (my family) developed health problems
- ☐ I did not feel comfortable working with the Board
- ☐ The requirements of the position could not accommodate my family responsibilities
- ☐ I was offered a more artistically fulfilling position elsewhere
- ☐ I was offered a higher-paying position elsewhere
- ☐ I was not impressed by the quality of the productions
- ☐ I felt that the burdens of the position would lead to an inability to grow as an artist
- ☐ There wasn't a good cultural fit between me and the community the theater was located in
- ☐ Other (please explain): _____

Q **Why are you not planning on applying for another Artistic Director position? Check all that apply.** *(answer options are automatically reordered for each participant)*

(This question was answered only by those for whom the question was relevant.)

- ☐ There aren't any openings
- ☐ I don't like the responsibilities of the Artistic Director position
- ☐ I like the flexibility of not being tied to one theater
- ☐ An Artistic Director position does not give me enough flexibility to also have a family life
- ☐ I don't want to have to report to or deal with a Board
- ☐ I don't want to do any fundraising
- ☐ I retired
- ☐ I plan on going into another industry soon
- ☐ There are too many barriers to getting an Artistic Director position for someone of my gender
- ☐ There are too many barriers to getting an Artistic Director position for someone of my race
- ☐ There are too many barriers to getting an Artistic Director position for someone of my sexual orientation
- ☐ There are too many barriers to getting an Artistic Director position for someone of my age
- ☐ Other (Please explain): _____

E. Survey questions for operational Leaders

Note: The Qualtrics platform we used to administer the online surveys allowed skip patterns. We have indicated where skip patterns were used which allowed us to distinguish between respondents who were ADs at the time they took the survey, who had been ADs in the past, and those who had never held that position.

Q **1. Check the position which most closely resembles your current one.**

☐ Executive Director
☐ Managing Director
☐ General Manager
☐ Producer
☐ Chief Operating Officer
☐ Chief Financial Officer/Director of Finance
☐ Chief Administrative Officer
☐ Director of Development
☐ Director of Marketing/Communications

Q **2. How long have you had a managerial role in a theater?**

☐ less than 1 year
☐ 1
☐ ...
☐ 25
☐ more than 25 years

Q **3. Have you had a managerial role in another non-profit organization?**

☐ Yes
☐ No

Q **4. Have you ever had a managerial role in a for-profit organization?**

☐ Yes
☐ No

Q **5. What is your current title on your theater's organizational chart?**

Q **6. Is your position an interim position?**

☐ Yes
☐ No

Q **7. Will you apply to the permanent position?**

(This question was answered only by those for whom the question was relevant.)

☐ Yes
☐ No

Q **8. What is the total budget of your current theater company?**

☐ Under $1,000,000
☐ $1,000,000-$2,999,999
☐ $3,000,000-$4,999,999
☐ $5,000-000-$9,999,999
☐ $10,000,000 and over

Q **9. Is your current theater a ... Check all that apply.**

☐ LORT theater
☐ Nonprofit theater (not LORT)
☐ Community theater
☐ Commercial enterprise
☐ Part of an academic institution
☐ Other (please describe) _____

Q **10. What is the name of the program you attended and the school/institution at which it is located which you consider to be the most important in preparing you for your current position in the theater? e.g. "MFA in Directing at University of Iowa" or "TCG's Leadership U[niversity]"**

Q **11. Which two skills from this list are the hardest to acquire for people who aspire to top leadership in a theater?** *(answer options are automatically reordered for each participant)*

☐ Producing
☐ Fundraising
☐ Budgeting
☐ Cross-departmental expertise
☐ Marketing
☐ Public speaking
☐ Board relations
☐ Audience cultivation
☐ Strategic planning
☐ HR/Organizational behavior
☐ Real estate law
☐ Contract law
☐ Leadership
☐ Working with the artistic side
☐ Other, please fill in: _____

Q **12. Is your current position the highest managerial/executive position in the theater you are working in?**

☐ Yes
☐ No

Q **13. Have you ever held a position in the past that was the highest managerial/ executive position in a theater?**

☐ Yes
☐ No

Q **14. Have you thought of holding the top managerial/executive position in a theater as a realistic goal for yourself?**

(This question was answered only by those for whom the question was relevant.)

☐ Yes
☐ No

Q **15. How did you first come to this realization?**

(This question was answered only by those for whom the question was relevant.)

☐ It has always been my career goal
☐ I came to the realization myself when I compared my credentials with those getting the top position
☐ I hadn't thought about it until my boss encouraged me to think about it as an appropriate career move
☐ I hadn't thought about it until I was encouraged by a search firm
☐ I hadn't thought about it until my peers encouraged me to think about it as an appropriate career move
☐ I hadn't thought about it until a board member encouraged me
☐ I hadn't thought about it until mentors or other prominent people in the theater world encouraged to think about it as an appropriate career move

Q **16. Thinking about your most recent top managerial/executive position in a theater, what were the circumstances leading you to apply to that position?**

(This question was answered only by those for whom the question was relevant.)

☐ I am the founder of that theater
☐ I was promoted into the position from within the same theater
☐ The theater merged with another organization I was heading up
☐ I was contacted by a Board member of the theater and asked to apply
☐ I was contacted by a search firm and asked to apply
☐ I was contacted by the Artistic Director or Executive/Managing Director at the theater and asked to apply
☐ I took the initiative to contact the search firm assigned by the theater and applied through them
☐ I applied for the position directly to the theater without going through a search firm
☐ Other, please explain: _____

Q **17. Still thinking about your most recent appointment to the top managerial/executive position in a theater. This question asks what you perceive that OTHERS valued in your credentials and experience AT THE TIME OF YOUR APPOINTMENT. Check the top 5 factors that led to that appointment:** *(answer options are automatically reordered for each participant)*

(This question was answered only by those for whom the question was relevant.)

☐ Previous Executive/Managing Director experience
☐ General Manager experience

- ☐ Management role in many different theaters
- ☐ Founded a theater company
- ☐ Produced shows
- ☐ Received a producing award
- ☐ Nominated for producing award
- ☐ Collaborated with prominent actors, directors, or playwrights
- ☐ Broadway experience
- ☐ Produced shows that went to Broadway or other prominent theaters
- ☐ Produced shows that toured in the US
- ☐ Produced world, national, or regional premiers
- ☐ My community-outreach experience
- ☐ Active in LORT or TCG
- ☐ Served on nominating, selection, award, or review committees
- ☐ My fundraising ability/experience
- ☐ Well-connected with prominent theater people
- ☐ My race
- ☐ My gender
- ☐ Where I received my education/training
- ☐ My expertise managing/producing in a particular genre or type of theater (e.g. new plays, Shakespeare, ...)
- ☐ My previous work experience within the hiring theater company
- ☐ A personal referral from someone within the hiring theater company
- ☐ A personal referral from a prominent theater person
- ☐ My degree / formal training
- ☐ My rapport with the Board of the hiring theater
- ☐ My experience in cultivating or drawing new audiences
- ☐ My familiarity with the local community of donors and audience
- ☐ My public speaking skills
- ☐ My experience getting grants
- ☐ If Is your current theater a ... Check all that apply. Part of an academic institution Is Selected
- ☐ My rapport with the provost, dean, or chair of my department
- ☐ My teaching experience at the BFA or MFA level
- ☐ I was mentored by the right people early in my career
- ☐ My experience turning around an ailing institution
- ☐ My experience managing another non-profit institution of similar budget size
- ☐ My for-profit management experience
- ☐ My experience formulating and administering a marketing strategy
- ☐ My experience working with non-profit Boards
- ☐ I have broad-based experience working in different departments of theaters
- ☐ My understanding of and ability to work with artists
- ☐ Other (please specify) ————————————

Q **18. Why did you leave the position you held before when you had the top managerial/ executive level in the theater? Check all that apply:** *(answer options are automatically reordered for each participant)*

(This question was answered only by those for whom the question was relevant.)

- ☐ The conditions of the position changed while I was at the theater
- ☐ I got a better paying job
- ☐ The theater closed
- ☐ I retired
- ☐ I no longer felt comfortable with the staff at the theater
- ☐ I had disagreements with the Artistic Director
- ☐ I (my family) chose to move to another location
- ☐ I was not able to keep the theater running financially
- ☐ My contract was not renewed when it came to an end
- ☐ The Board chose to go in a different direction than I was setting so I left
- ☐ I took a position at a larger or more prestigious theater
- ☐ The Board chose to go in a different direction than I was setting so I was let go
- ☐ The requirements of the position no longer accommodated my home responsibilities
- ☐ The burden of all tasks related to the job lead to an inability to grow as a professional, so I left
- ☐ I wanted to work at a university-affiliated theater
- ☐ I no longer wanted to work at a university-affiliated theater
- ☐ There wasn't a good cultural fit between me and the community the theater was located in
- ☐ I had accomplished what I set out to do
- ☐ I wanted to move to a smaller theater
- ☐ My assignment was for a set period of time and came to an end
- ☐ I found a job with more opportunities to grow
- ☐ Other (please explain): _____

Q **19. What additional skill(s) would you need to gain in order to feel prepared to take t the top managerial/executive role in a theater (even if you are not interested)? Select as many as apply.** *(answer options are automatically reordered for each participant)*

(This question was answered only by those for whom the question was relevant.)

- ☐ Producing
- ☐ Fundraising
- ☐ Budgeting
- ☐ Cross-departmental expertise
- ☐ Marketing
- ☐ Public speaking
- ☐ Board relations
- ☐ Audience cultivation
- ☐ Strategic planning
- ☐ HR/Organizational behavior
- ☐ Real estate law
- ☐ Contract law
- ☐ Working with the artistic side

☐ Leadership

☐ Other, please fill in: _____

☐ None, I have held the role of Executive/Managing Director before and could take it up without additional skills

Q 20. Would you have to leave your current theater in order to be able to gain additional skills?

(This question was answered only by those for whom the question was relevant.)

☐ No, I can learn all these skills at my current theater and I have a mentor who is willing to help me

☐ No, I can learn all these skills at my current theater but I will drive the process myself without a mentor

☐ No, I intend to stay at my current theater but I will gain the skills by doing additional volunteering or paid work elsewhere

☐ Yes, I would have to leave this theater because it is too small

☐ Yes, I would have to leave this theater because I need to find a mentor to support my growth

Q 21. Were you ever approached to apply to the top managerial/executive position in a theater whether or not you had thought about it?

(This question was answered only by those for whom the question was relevant.)

☐ Yes

☐ No

Q 22. Who approached you:

(This question was answered only by those for whom the question was relevant.)

☐ Search firm

☐ The Artistic Director or Managing/Executive Director at the hiring theater

☐ Board member of the hiring theater

☐ Personal referral from a prominent theater person

☐ Other, please fill in: _____

Q 23. Have you ever applied to an Executive Director position, even if you were not approached?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Q 24. What was the outcome of the last application?

(This question was answered only by those for whom the question was relevant.)

☐ I didn't get an interview

☐ I got an interview but was not advanced

☐ I made the finals but did not get an offer

☐ I was offered the position, but I did not take it

☐ My application is currently under consideration

☐ Other, please explain _____

Q 25. Why do you think you did not get the Executive/Managing Director position you last applied for? Check the top 5 reasons. *(answer options are automatically reordered for each participant)*

(This question was answered only by those for whom the question was relevant.)

- ☐ Not enough managerial experience
- ☐ Not enough fundraising experience
- ☐ Not enough experience producing shows
- ☐ Did not have a personal connection to someone in the theater who could speak to my strengths
- ☐ My gender
- ☐ My race
- ☐ My age
- ☐ Did not attend the "right" theater management training program
- ☐ Not enough community outreach experience
- ☐ Not enough personal relationships with prominent theater people
- ☐ My sexual orientation
- ☐ Did not have the necessary educational degree
- ☐ Special consideration I needed because of family obligations
- ☐ Did not have any effective mentoring
- ☐ Not enough experience in working with a board of directors
- ☐ Not enough experience in working on contracts
- ☐ Not enough experience in working on budgeting
- ☐ Not a good fit with the Artistic Director at the hiring theater
- ☐ Viewed as not knowledgeable enough about how to cultivate the local community as donors and audience
- ☐ Not enough experience with managing facilities and real estate
- ☐ Not enough experience with ticketing or patron services
- ☐ Not enough experience with marketing
- ☐ Not a good fit with the Board of the hiring institution
- ☐ Didn't give a good interview
- ☐ Not enough experience with HR/organizational behavior
- ☐ Not enough experience with real estate law
- ☐ Not enough experience with contract law
- ☐ Not enough experience with strategic planning
- ☐ Too much competition for too few positions at that level
- ☐ Other (please explain): _____

Q 26. Why did you not take the position you were offered? Check all that apply. *(answer options are automatically reordered for each participant)*

(This question was answered only by those for whom the question was relevant.)

- ☐ It was not the right time for me
- ☐ I did not feel comfortable with the staff at the theater
- ☐ I (my family) did not want to or could not move/relocate at that time
- ☐ The theater closed by the time I was hired
- ☐ The conditions of the position changed by the time I was hired

☐ The pay was not adequate

☐ I (my family) developed health problems

☐ I did not feel comfortable working with the Board

☐ The requirements of the position could not accommodate my family responsibilities

☐ I was offered a more fulfilling position elsewhere

☐ I was offered a higher-paying position elsewhere

☐ I was not impressed by the quality of the productions

☐ I felt that the burdens of the position would lead to an inability to grow as a professional

☐ There wasn't a good cultural fit between me and the community the theater was located in

☐ I did not feel comfortable working with the Artistic Director

☐ Other (please explain): _____

Q 27 Why have you never applied to an Executive/Managing Director position?
Check all that apply. *(answer options are automatically reordered for each participant)*

(This question was answered only by those for whom the question was relevant.)

☐ It's too early in my managerial career

☐ There are no Executive/Managing Director openings in my current location

☐ I am not interested in becoming an Executive/Managing Director

☐ I intend to leave the theater field for another career that interests me more

☐ I intend to leave the theater field for another career where I can make more money

☐ I am more interested in a leadership role in the artistic side of theater

☐ I (or a family member) have health problems I need to attend to

☐ I don't think search committees want to hire someone of my race

☐ I don't like doing fundraising

☐ I need greater flexibility in my schedule due to child care needs

☐ I don't have the right mix of experience in finance, managing, and fundraising

☐ I don't think search committees want to hire someone of my gender

☐ There are no realistic job openings for someone with my skills and experience

☐ I have been discouraged due to a lack of personal connections to any hiring theater companies

☐ I am happy in my current position

☐ I think other people would be more qualified for the position

☐ I don't think search committees want to hire someone of my sexual orientation

☐ I don't think search committees want to hire someone of my age

☐ I haven't had any effective mentoring to get me prepared for the role

☐ There have been no openings in theaters I'd want to work in

☐ Other (please explain): _____

Q 28 What is your gender?

☐ Male

☐ Female

☐ Other

Q **29 What is your age ?**

☐ 20
☐ …..
☐ 80
☐ Over 80

Q **30 What is your race/ethnic background? Check all that apply:**

☐ Asian
☐ Black
☐ Hispanic/Latino/a
☐ Middle Eastern
☐ Mixed race
☐ Native American
☐ White

Q **31. What is the highest educational degree you hold?**

☐ BA / BFA / BS
☐ MA / MFA / MS
☐ MBA
☐ MFA / MBA combination
☐ PhD
☐ Other _____

Q **32, Thank you for your time filling out this survey!**

A4. Codes for analyzing career development, applied to CVs or bios from websites

- 1st year as leader of theater

- Age (in decade if not available exactly)

- Age at first leadership

- Arts Administration background

- Aspirations for leadership

- Awards

- Broadway experience

- Budget level current theater

- Budget level previous theater/organization

- Community focus/outreach programs

- Current position

- Design/Tech background
- Development experience
- Directing experience at non-LORT theaters
- Directing experience at LORT theaters
- Education level
  - MA but not MFA
  - MBA
  - Mentions NOT having advanced degree
  - MFA
  - Returned to school from workforce
- Experience at LORT in previous position
- Finance background
- Founding experience
- Fundraising aversion
- Fundraising experience
- Gender
- General Manager background
- Grew theater (subscription, audience, fundraising, etc.)
- Internship experience
- Job title
- Marketing experience
- Minority-focused initiatives
- Previous position
- Producing experience
- Production experience
- Race
- Residency experience
- School attended (highest degree known)
- Stage management background
- Start year of current position
- TCG or LORT service
- Turned around ailing institution
- World premier

A5. Codes applied to theaters

- Budget category (TCG groups)
- Highest LORT Stage Category (A, B, C, D)
- Location
- Selected for interviews (random assignment per budget)
- University affiliation
- Year founded

Background/expertise of ADs and EDs in our sample

AD backgrounds	Male (n=59)	Female (n=15)
Director only	71%	66%
Producer only	11%	6%
Director/Producer	11%	13%
Director/Dramaturge	5%	13%
Other	0%	6%

Overview of AD primary background per budget category*	Budget 3 Theaters (n=11)	Budget 4 Theaters (n= 10)	Budget 5 Theaters (n=30)	Budget 6 Theaters (n=23)
Director only (n=52)	7	7	22	16
Producer only (n=8)	1	1	2	4
Director/producer (n=9)	2	2	3	2
Director/Dramaturge (n=4)	0	0	3	1
Other (n=1)	1	0	0	0

*TCG-assigned budget categories

ED backgrounds*	Male (n=46)	Female (n=28)
Development	4%	14%
Finance	8%	10%
Arts Management	47%	37%
Marketing	18%	20%
Producing	11%	3%
Production	8%	14%
Founder	0	3%

* One unknown background

Overview of ED primary background per budget category*	Budget 3 Theaters (n=11)	Budget 4 Theaters (n= 10)	Budget 5 Theaters (n=30)	Budget 6 Theaters (n=23)
Development	1	1	1	3
Finance	1	0	4	2
Arts Management	3	4	14	11
Marketing	3	3	6	2
Producing	2	0	2	2
Production	1	1	2	4
Founder	0	1	0	0

* TCG-assigned budget categories; One unknown background.

Reports of skills needed for leadership

This is an overview of the skills that ADs and EDs listed in response to our question: "For the next generation of leaders coming up, what (1) skills, (2) experiences, and (3) relationships are important to demonstrate for moving into an AD/ED position in the world of LORT <u>today</u>?" We collected all answers and coded them for recurring themes. Those themes are presented below, accompanied by one example of what is meant by the name of the theme.

- **have an audience focus**

> You have - seriously, you have to be into being a public person, and dealing with the public, and embracing the public, and challenging the public, and arguing with the public, and supporting them. You have to be up for that. Because there is a lot of it, man.

- **seek exposure to boards of trustees**

> I think it's really important, um, for anyone who wants a leadership position, to not only deal the board of their organization, but to, to sit on boards themselves, I think that's pivotal, really pivotal.

- **seek wide/broad experience**

> I'm a firm believer that you have to have done the most entry level tasks to move into the management of the entry - to move to leadership. I think what we do is an ancient and enduring art form because it is made by hand and I think there is basically a paucity in the field right now of emerging leaders who actually came up in theaters. Did you spend time on crew? Did you spend time in the props shop? Did you spend time in the costume shop? Did you spend time in the ensemble, not just the lead. The kind of practical "I've done this, I've made this, I have this DNA," yeah, you can bypass it and there's fantastic success stories of people who have jumped from the for-profit sector or other not-for-profit endeavors into the cultural not-for-profit and had great success. It's a different kind of success. And I think the more you do - and not sampling, not "I'm going to slum and do four days with the paint crew" - but the more you, back to where I started, you have a three-sixty participation in the field, I think the more successful you are and perhaps, more important, the more compassionate a manager you are likely to be and the more truly visionary a leader you're likely to be.

- **keep learning and adapt to the times**

> It's not just about getting results. It's not just about meeting quantifiable objectives. Leadership is about understanding the environment that you're in. And so I think that's one skill. A self-learning capacity. And I often opt people out of progression when I don't see that skill in them.

- **get schooling AND experience on-the-ground**

> And I actually, I didn't used to feel this way but I do now think a that graduate degree is really helpful. From a good program. [names programs] It's a small one but at least you get hands-on experience. There's a value to apprenticeship in this field. Actually learning at somebody else's knees is very helpful. But what I find recently, in the last few years because I work with a lot of students out of [school] is that understanding the vocabulary of business, understanding presentation style, and knowing how to manipulate data to mine information is an increasingly important skill and it's something that wasn't when I first started.

> I think preparing somebody at very early career can be a bit of a barren exercise because there's, because when you're in these jobs, uh, it is so much about leveraging relationships, artistic and otherwise, that you have amongst colleagues in the field. It's very hard to do that, coming out of school when you graduate or jobs in any way, um, uh, you know I work in a field that has a deep respect for those that have, uh, it's an apprenticeship game, it's a journeymen game, right we learn by being there this is how we learn and grow, there isn't a way to do that out of school, no way.

- **find internship experience**

> I've been an advocate for this in public forms, so this is not a surprise, for long-term mentorship programs, 2 or 3 year programs, not 6-month programs. There is a real need to bring people internally into large organizations so that they can become inevitable candidates when positions open up. There are, there is a real need for people to be able to have experience within institutions otherwise they will never be hired by institutions.

- **should have innate leadership qualities**

> as you move up the chain, you need to show that you can make, that you are willing to make decisions, just somebody who is willing to say, this not that, is still a lot of people we don't have. And you know there's just not those that put themselves out in that way, and that's fine, not everybody needs to be that way, but to rise to a director level position, rise to an executive position, you need to be able to make decisions. You know you need to be decisive. And you do need to have that strategic vision and the ability to articulate it. Um, and you need, absolutely need, to have a positive attitude

- **look for good mentors**

> And I would immediately just say get yourself in a mentoring program, and apply for as many programs that if you can, that pay for a residency for you to observe or shadow, you know, someone whose work you admire, and there's just more of that stuff going on now.... it's important to get people in power to open the doors for you, so you can walk through.

- **build and maintain relationships**

> There is something to be said for, as I said, who you play in the sandbox with

- **become proficient in specific AD or ED tasks**

everybody said to me, "well, what are you going to do about all the fundraising responsibilities?" and "you're going to be spending all your time..." And I said to, and at the time I think it was a good axiom, that if I got the job it was a privilege to be able to be designated as a speaker, as a citizen. I'm a citizen that's been given a pulpit to talk about art. To talk about the place of art in our lives and about the possibilities that art provides to everyone to reimagine the whole world. And I think that's an essential and vital and maybe the most important function of our consciousness. And I feel like that's the only way I can get energy to do some of the more onerous tasks. When you really don't want to talk to so-and-so, you really don't have enough energy left in the tank to give that other speech, you really don't want to - but you have to. You have to keep remembering that it's a privilege

Findings from the Stage Directors' Survey

First released in March 2015

American Conservatory Theater (A.C.T.) has partnered with researchers at the Wellesley Centers for Women (WCW) to launch a study on gender equity in leadership opportunities in the non-profit resident American theater.

In one premiere segment of the nonprofit theater in the US, the League of Resident Theaters (LORT), women currently hold 19% of artistic director positions, and have never held more than 27% of leadership positions, either as artistic or executive directors. In a field in which "representation" is important to the stories presented to the public, the persistent underrepresentation of female leadership is puzzling and problematic.

This project grew out of the recognition that while A.C.T. has two women in leadership positions, this is the exception and not the norm. We have become increasingly concerned that there may not be enough women poised to take up the reins, and that there is no data to explain why. Using the status of women in LORT theaters' leadership as a starting point, this project will explore what can be done to increase the participation of women at the higher reaches of the arts in America as artistic and executive directors.

The Women's Leadership in Resident Theaters Study brings together information from multiple sources (current artistic and executive directors in LORT theaters and people next-in-line to these positions) through personal interviews, and an examination of their resumes, interviews with board members who have served on recent artistic director or executive director searches, and principals of search firms to answer these questions:

      1. Why are there so few women in artistic and executive director positions?
      2. What can be done to achieve greater diversity in theater leadership?

We augmented the focus on LORT with a broader look at the pipeline for artistic directors in the U.S. Since the majority of artistic directors in LORT have a background in directing, we conducted an anonymous survey among director members of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society (SDC). In this report we provide a summary of the survey of director members of SDC.

The current climate of diversity in the theater

This study on gender equity in the nonprofit theater was launched at a particular time in the public consciousness of the need for greater diversity in theater leadership. There is a widespread belief in the theater world that while there were very few women in top leadership in the past, the situation for women has improved. There is less agreement on how much more it needs to improve and how important it is to take concrete steps to promote more women to leadership. In our interviews with ADs and EDs, we found a variety of opinions on whether there is a need for greater gender

equity in theater leadership. Some people mentioned the few, very illustrious female leaders who have left a mark on the theater world as well as the few women who are current top stars, basically highlighting the token successes. Many also brought up favorable comparisons with the past, when women's representation was much worse. Still others pointed to the dearth of minorities in theater leadership to emphasize that that is where the real need for diversity lies. These three lines of reasoning – tokenism, it's not as bad as it used to be, and others have it worse – obscure the very real glass ceiling that continues to operate. One of our interviewees, a minority male leader, cogently defined the issue facing women:

> So at every level of LORT, this is fascinating, at every level, every single level of LORT work, at the intern level, at part-time staff, and at full-time staff, at management level, at supervisor level, and director level, you have more than 50% women in every single one of those bands. And you go to executive leadership and it's 27% and the needle hasn't moved in a quarter century. That's a picture of a glass ceiling.

The two service organizations, League of Resident Theaters (LORT) and Theatre Communications Group (TCG), have focused their diversity initiatives primarily on increasing the representation of minorities in theater leadership, while not ignoring the scarcity of women in these positions. The primary focus being placed on minority representation has implied the existence of a situation where concerns for women's representation appear to be in competition for the representation of minorities, whereas in reality there needs to be progress made on all fronts. Moreover, in an "either women or minorities" false juxtaposition, the plight of minority women, the most under-represented group in nonprofit theater leadership, is rendered invisible.

Being mindful of the public discourse on diversity, our study has sought to learn about the experiences of both women and minorities as they seek leadership roles, in a manner that does not ignore the situation of women of color.

A word on the research methodology

The preliminary findings we share with you have been gleaned from an anonymous survey of the director members of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society (SDC). We focused on director members of SDC because they constitute a significant segment of the pool from which artistic directors for theaters are selected. The survey was designed to understand directors' perspectives on their experiences of achieving an artistic director (AD) position from those who currently or in the past served as ADs (named "current AD" and "past AD" from here on). Directors who were not ADs ("never AD") were asked about whether they had ever applied to an AD position, the outcome of the application, and their understanding of that outcome. Directors who had not applied to become an AD were asked about the reasons for their decision to remain a director. Early on in the survey, respondents' answers subdivided them into those three groups (current, past, and never ADs), and subsequent questions were tailored to their status. The survey questions and the various response options were developed with input from theater professionals and vetted through several iterations of pilot testing. Response options also often included an "other," so that respondents could write in an answer that better reflected their situation than the pre-formulated options. Response options were presented in *random order*, different for each respondent, so that there would be no artificial "priming" effect of the reasons' ordering on the respondents' answers.

The survey was launched online through an emailed invitation to an anonymous survey from Laura Penn, the executive director of SDC. Responses were automatically returned to WCW to be processed and analyzed.

During the summer of 2014 SDC shared with WCW the email addresses of 2,479 of members who were directors or director choreographers (henceforth referred to as directors). Out of this pool, 53 emails failed, leaving a working sample of 2,426. The survey was launched on September 4, 2014 and closed on November 4, 2014. The survey achieved a 43% response rate, which is very high when compared with national averages.[17] Survey respondents were largely similar to the SDC membership, with female members slightly more likely to have taken the survey, which is consistent with national gender trends on responding to surveys (women directors comprised 38% of the survey respondents, compared to comprising 34% of SDC membership). Of the members who took the survey, 13% indicated they identified as a racial/ethnic minority in response to a question; it is not possible to tell if this proportion is higher or lower than the actual composition of the SDC membership as the organization does not collect members' race/ethnicity information. About five percent of the survey respondents chose not to answer the race/ethnicity question. In the results we report below, we give the base number (reported as "n" in the tables) of valid answers on which the percentages are based. The base numbers vary slightly because a few respondents did not answer some of the questions.

The sample

On average, the white male respondents were older, had worked in the theater longer, and, if they were currently in an AD position, worked in theaters with higher annual budgets. The gender and race/ethnicity characteristics of the survey respondents in Figure D.1 reflect the existing demographics of artistic leadership in the theater world. The majority of current and past ADs are white men, followed by white women.

Figure D.1. Sex and race/ethnicity characteristics of directors who responded to the survey
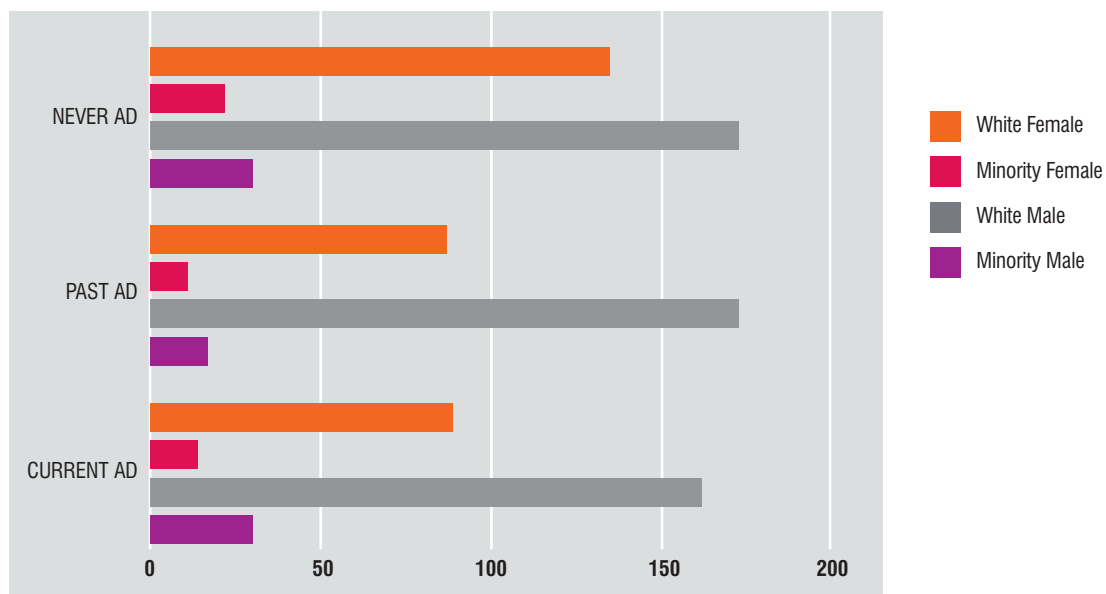
17 The average response rate for email surveys is around 25 percent (see http://fluidsurveys.com/university/response-rate-statistics-online-surveys-aiming/). More specifically, surveys of customers and members tend to vary between 5-40% response rates (see http://www.practicalsurveys.com/respondents/typicalresponserates.php).

The representation of minorities among past and current ADs is quite low. Whereas 819 directors reported their race/ethnicity as white, only 124 respondents reported a minority race/ethnicity. Figure 1 shows the gender and race/ethnicity composition of the SDC membership's status vis á vis being an artistic director. In Table D.1, we report a more detailed look at the sample to compare AD status across gender and race/ethnicity.

Table D.1. Gender by race/ethnicity comparisons of AD status

AD status	Female		Male	
	White	Minority	White	Minority
	n = 311	n = 47	n = 508	n = 77
Never AD	43%	47%	34%	39%
Past AD	28%	23%	34%	22%
Current AD	29%	30%	32%	39%

This table makes it possible to compare the AD status of different demographic groups. Among white women respondents, 43% have never been ADs; among minority women the percentage is even higher at 47%. Of note is the slightly higher percentage of current ADs who are minority men. Of the 77 minority male directors who took the survey, 39% reported that they currently hold an AD position; the corresponding figure for the 47 minority female directors is 30%. The larger percentage among minority men may be a reflection of the theater world increasingly paying more attention to the underrepresentation of minorities in leadership. It does not appear that the attention paid to achieving greater racial/ethnic diversity has improved female minority directors' status.

Current ADs' perceptions of what credentials others valued in them

Current ADs were asked about their perception of what others valued in their credentials and experience at the time of appointment to their last AD position. The top 10 credentials that emerged from their responses are presented in Table D.2.

Table D.2. Top 10 credentials past and current ADs reported as reasons they were appointed to the AD position, across gender and race/ethnicity

Top 10 credentials selected	Female		Male	
	White	Minority	White	Minority
	n = 176	n = 25	n = 335	n = 47
Founded a theater company	52%	60%	46%	57%
My degree/formal training	49%	32%	52%	57%
My expertise in particular genre or type of theater	45%	52%	41%	49%
Previous work experience within hiring theater	39%	24%	33%	34%
Directed in many different theaters	38%	40%	54%	62%
My public speaking skills	36%	24%	42%	49%
Experience cultivating or drawing new audiences	31%	44%	32%	45%
Produced shows	30%	40%	36%	47%
My community-outreach experience	23%	40%	26%	47%
Directed world, national, or regional premieres	27%	24%	35%	32%

There was remarkable agreement in all gender and race groups as to which ones are the important credentials out of a list of close to 40. Having founded the theater they were the AD of was one of the most frequently reported responses by all subgroups. Indeed, having been a founder was the most frequently reported credential for women. With a few exceptions, white and minority men's responses were more similar to each other than to answers given by white and minority women. The male ADs were similar in selecting their degree/formal training, having directed in many different theaters, and having directed premiers as credentials others valued in them. The exceptions are in the realm of drawing new audiences and community outreach, which were highlighted by minority men and minority women as important credentials.

We also examined the current ADs' reports of the circumstances of their appointment to their most recent AD position. As can be seen in Table D.3, the most frequently given reason is having founded the theater of which they are the AD by all gender and race/ethnicity groupings. In addition, there was a gender-related pattern in this response, which echoed the rankings of credentials presented in Table D.2. Women were more likely to be an AD if they founded their theater. This is particularly true of minority women: 58% of the 12 minority female ADs had founded their theater. Twelve is not a large number on which to base strong conclusions but, nonetheless, it appears that the surest way a minority female director will fill an AD position is to found the theater she will lead.

Table D.3. Current ADs' reports of the circumstances of their appointment to their position, across gender and race/ethnicity

Circumstances of current ADs' appointments	Female		Male	
	White	Minority	White	Minority
	n = 72	n = 12	n = 137	n = 28
I am the founder	44%	58%	31%	29%
Applied to position directly through the theater	11%	8%	18%	21%
Contacted by AD/ED of the theater	14%	0%	17%	14%
Contacted by search firm to apply	6%	8%	11%	14%
Contacted by a board member of the theater	8%	17%	13%	11%

Directors who never held an AD position were asked if they had ever applied to become an AD. If they had, we asked what was the outcome of the application; if they hadn't, we wanted to know why they chose not to apply. Approximately a third of the "never AD" directors had applied for AD positions. Responses from the different groups did not vary from each other in a meaningful way. Among the "never AD" group who had applied, of note is that 23% of the 13 minority directors reported that their application was "in process" at the time of the survey. Only 13 is a small number for drawing conclusions, but 23% of minority directors reporting that their application is currently being processed is consistent with the field paying particular attention to diversifying theater leadership by race/ethnicity.

Of the directors in the "never AD" group who had applied to become an AD but did not get the job, the reasons they cited for this outcome highlight directors' perception of what hiring committees value and which credentials they personally lacked. The most frequently reported reasons are presented in Table D.4 but, as a small number of people were asked this question, we can only make comparisons across gender, not race/ethnicity (there were only four minority female and four minority male directors in this category). Not having enough fundraising experience was the most frequently endorsed reason for not being hired as an AD, which was reported by close to half of the sample. More female directors (39%) attributed not having had enough experience producing shows compared to 21% of the male directors who gave this answer to explain why they were not hired, which is the only gender difference that approached statistical significance. The other differences that we see in the responses of the two gender groups could have come about by chance. Taken together, however, female directors gave responses that seem to imply lack of experience and, related to it, lack of exposure resulting in not having an effective network of people who could speak to their strengths.

Table D.4. Comparison of female and male directors' top five reasons for not succeeding in getting the AD job they applied for

Top five reasons for not getting the AD job applied for	Female	Male
	n = 36	n = 56
Not enough fundraising experience	53%	41%
Not enough experience producing shows	39%	21%
No personal connection to someone in the theater who could speak to my strengths	39%	27%
Not enough experience directing in different companies	25%	14%
Not enough personal relations with theater people	19%	25%
No Broadway experience	17%	20%

We see in Table D.4 that lack of fundraising experience is the most frequently given reason by never ADs for not being hired. This response contradicts the relatively low importance attached to fundraising ability that ADs reported among the credentials they perceived others valued in them when they were appointed to their current or past AD position. In fact, fundraising ability fell in the lower half of the 40 reasons that current and past ADs could select (see Table D.2 for their top 10). It is possible that having never been an AD, applicants do not have a clear sense of this credential's relative importance when it is presented among many other credentials, or overestimate how proficient one should be in fundraising before taking a top leadership job. In Table D.5, we see that among never ADs fundraising was a frequently mentioned reason for not seeking an AD position. Interestingly, not liking fundraising was a reason more frequently mentioned by both male and female white directors, 35% and 33%, respectively, while it was not a major consideration holding back either male or female minority directors.

Table D.5. Comparison of "never ADs" on reasons why they did not apply for an AD position, across gender and race/ethnicity

Reasons for not applying for AD position	Female		Male	
	White	Minority	White	Minority
	n = 98	n = 16	n = 113	n = 23
Happy in current position	31%	19%	33%	35%
I don't like fundraising	35%	13%	31%	18%
Too early in my directing career	28%	38%	26%	30%
I don't have the right mix of experience	33%	25%	17%	44%
No effective mentoring to prepare for the role	28%	31%	18%	22%
I only want to direct	27%	6%	16%	26%
No openings for someone with my skills or experience	21%	6%	20%	17%

In Table D.5 we provide gender and race comparisons of reasons never ADs chose not to apply for an AD position. The responses of minority female directors differ from those of other groups. They are the *least* likely to report not liking fundraising, only wanting to direct, not finding open-

ings for someone with their skills, and being happy with their current position as reasons for not applying. The most frequent reasons minority female directors gave for not applying is that the timing is not right; it is too early in their career. There were only 16 minority female directors who answered this question about the reasons for not applying for an AD position and 16 is not a large enough number for firm conclusions. Even so, it appears that this small group of minority female directors has the motivation and likely will be ready to take positions of leadership quite soon. In contrast to minority female directors, 35% of minority male directors reported being happy with their current position (a reason they shared with white male and white female directors) but 44% of them also believed they do not have the right mix of experience.

Finally, directors in the "never AD" group were asked if they had ever been *approached* by others to apply for an AD position and if "yes," who approached them. Among minority directors who had been approached by others to apply search firms were most frequently selected (mentioned by 38% of minority directors, compared to 24% of white directors). This is particularly true of minority female directors. This finding is again consistent with the theater world's attention to diversifying theater leadership by race/ethnicity, in this case illustrated by the efforts search firms are currently making to put especially female minority directors in the pool of applicants they pass on for consideration. We don't have a sufficiently large number of minority male and female directors to detect if search firms reaching out to minority directors as potential applicants is equally effective for both male and female minority directors being hired.

The "never ADs" who have applied to AD positions constitute the potential pipeline to artistic leadership. The greater frequencies with which minority never-ADs mentioned being contacted by search firms compared to the much lower percentages of *current* ADs contacted by search firms (see Table D.3) suggest that recruitment processes may be changing. It appears that search firms are contacting more minority directors to apply for AD positions than has been the case for the crop of current ADs who have been in their leadership position for between 10-15 years on average.

Is moving a constraint for women directors in becoming an artistic director?

It has been long speculated that women do not seek jobs if the new job would require them to relocate their family. The survey asked questions about geographic mobility in three different ways.

1. "Never ADs" who had been offered an AD position were asked to explain why they did not take the job. There are very few people who didn't take an AD job they were offered—only two men and three women. The men (all two of them) checked off "I/my family could not relocate," while only one of the three women checked this response. One can't draw conclusions based on only five people's responses but the findings certainly don't support the view that women don't want to/can't relocate.

2. We also asked people who had never applied for an AD position to check all the reasons why. There were 136 men and 115 women who had never applied. Overall, "No openings in current location" ranked ninth out of 22 possible reasons directors gave to explain why they never applied to an AD position. This reason was checked by 19% of the men and 18% of the women: being restricted to a given geographic location was not a big reason overall and men and women did not differ on reporting this reason.

3. We asked ADs who had left their position, "Why did you leave the AD position you held before?" A total of 199 men and 102 women had left an AD position. Of this group, 18% of the men and 14% of the women said "I/my family moved." This was the fifth most frequently given response among women and the third among men. The most frequently given reason by both women and men (25% and 26%, respectively) was "I left because the burden of the AD position led to an inability to grow as an artist," which has nothing to do with geographic mobility.

Results of these three ways of asking about geographic mobility do not support the view that women directors cannot or do not want to relocate their families. It appears pretty clear that this group of women directors do not report restricting their options due to geographic considerations. However, it is possible that others (people who make decisions about hiring directors or developing lists of candidates for AD positions, and AD selection committees) believe women will not relocate and therefore do not consider them as viable candidates. Also we need to keep in mind that the directors who took the survey were dues-paying members of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society, which represents an elite group of successful directors. The responses may not include the views of women and men whose struggle to manage work in the theater with family obligations derailed their careers.

Preliminary conclusions

Minorities and women are underrepresented in the AD position relative to white men. Overall, many more women (white and minority) directors than men report that they are ADs of the theater they founded, suggesting that being *selected* by search committees has not been a frequent route to the top for them. When explaining why they did not get the job when they applied for an AD position or explaining why didn't apply, both white women and minority women gave reasons that suggest lack of support leading to lack of exposure and experience. They did not, however, report a reluctance to move because of family obligations. Women directors reported that they lacked effective mentoring and experience in directing in a variety of theaters or in producing shows. Minority directors reported the time being too early in their career and, particularly minority men, reported not having the right mix of experience, suggesting that they are aware of what they need to do to get ready for the position. Interestingly, while many white directors reported disliking fundraising as the chief reason they did not seek the AD position, fundraising was not a big reason for not seeking an AD position for minority directors, particularly minority women.

The results suggest that the theater world's attention to diversifying artistic leadership by race/ethnicity is beginning to have an impact in that proportionally many more minority new applicants to an AD position reported being contacted by search firms and said that their application is "in process." However, the attention paid to recruiting minority directors appears to operate successfully mostly for men. Minority female directors are the least well represented group among ADs. The majority of female minority directors who have made it to the AD position have done so by founding their own theater. The separate focus on minority female directors in the analyses reported here point out that there is a highly motivated, small cadre of female directors who appear poised to move in the direction of applying.

What can be done to enhance gender equity and racial ethnic diversity in theater Leadership?

Both LORT and TCG, by declaring it a priority, have achieved a measure of success in moving toward greater racial/ethnic diversity in artistic leadership, particularly for minority men. Seeing that their attention to race/ethnicity can produce results, it is a good time to broaden the focus to include women in their priorities.

Programs designed to strengthen the pipeline to achieve gender equity can address the experience/exposure gap reported by women directors. The experience/exposure gap suggests the need for more established people in the theater world to champion women (both white women and minority women) as directors, producers, and bring them up to the attention of search committees. Mentors can have an important role to play in this regard.

Expanding theater audiences is an important focus for the survival of theater. Minority directors mention their credential in connecting with new audiences and expanding community outreach as important factors in the decision to hire them as ADs. All search committees can place a high value on these credentials.

Fundraising ability needs to be demystified as a credential. Is it a necessary but not sufficient criterion for being selected as an AD? Are some directors unnecessarily keeping themselves out of the potential AD pool because they do not have a clear understanding of fundraising?

Moreover, to the extent that fundraising is a key credential for being selected into an AD position, search committees can become aware of the general positive approach minority directors have toward fundraising in their appraisal of candidates.

Finally, the information we report has been gleaned from directors who constitute the applicants or potential applicants for AD jobs (some of them are or have been ADs, some have tried, and some have not shown an interested in the job). What we lack is information on what search committees look for when selecting a candidate. Interviews with board members who have served on search committees will be our next step in moving forward on this project.

Findings from the Operational Managers' Survey

First released in March 2016

American Conservatory Theater (A.C.T.) has partnered with researchers at the Wellesley Centers for Women (WCW) to launch a study on gender equity in leadership opportunities in the non-profit resident American theater.

In one prominent segment of the nonprofit theater in the US, the League of Resident Theaters (LORT), women held 19% of artistic director/CEO positions in theaters with a single leader, and 21% of artistic director and 36% of executive director positions in theaters with dual leadership roles during the 2013-2014 season when we started our research. In a field in which "representation" is important to the stories presented to the public, the persistent underrepresentation of female leadership is puzzling and problematic.

This project grew out of the recognition that while A.C.T. had two women in leadership positions, this is the exception and not the norm. Using the status of women in LORT theaters' leadership as a starting point, this project explores what can be done to increase the participation of women at the higher reaches of the arts in America as artistic and executive directors.

The Women's Leadership in Resident Theaters Study brings together information from multiple sources through personal interviews, confidential surveys, and an examination of the resumes of current artistic and executive directors in LORT theaters and people next-in-line to these positions; interviews with Board members who have served on recent artistic director or executive director searches; and principals of search firms to answer these questions:

> 1. Why are there so few women in artistic and executive director positions?
> 2. What can be done to achieve greater diversity in theater leadership?

This report presents the results of a confidential online survey with people on the managerial side of the theater designed to complement information gathered through interviews, online sources, and a survey of the artistic leadership of theater.

A survey of upper management on the operational side of theaters

While our primary focus is on careers on the operational side of LORT theaters leading to executive/managing director positions (variously titled Executive Director or Managing Director, in this report abbreviated as ED), the reality is that people can be hired for these positions from the outside as well as promoted from within. For that reason, we augmented the emphasis on LORT with a broader look at the pipeline for executive directors. With the help of Theatre Communications Group (TCG) we acquired the email addresses of executive/managing directors and those we consider "next-in-line" in U.S. theaters with a budget over $1M, and sent them a confidential survey for understanding their career paths as management professionals. This survey of

the managerial side of theaters parallels the confidential survey of director members of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society (SDC) designed to develop greater understanding of how directors navigate the path to artistic leadership.[18] The purpose of both surveys is to understand perspectives about attaining the top leadership position in their theater. Those who currently or in the past served in the top position were asked about their preparation for the leadership position and what among their skills and experiences they saw as most instrumental in being selected to the top position. Respondents who had not held the top position in a theater were asked about whether they had ever applied for the top position, the outcome of the application, and their understanding of that outcome. Respondents who had not applied for the top position were asked about the reasons for their decision not to seek it.

Survey methodology

We used the Qualtrics platform for an online survey. Survey questions were developed with input from experts in the theater field, and response options were vetted through several iterations of pilot testing. Some response options also included "other" for respondents to write in an answer that better reflected their situation than the pre-formulated options. The Qualtrics platform allowed response options to be presented in underlined random order, different for each respondent, to eliminate a "priming" effect of the options' ordering on the respondents' answers. The online survey was open for one month.

A word about statistics

We examined whether the difference between percentages of men and women in various demographic and occupational groups is what would be expected by chance alone or if there are statistically significant differences, using a chi square statistic. The chi square statistic is sensitive to the number of people under examination, such that the larger the number of people in the groups being examined, the more likely it is that a relatively small difference between the groups will be statistically significant.

For example, in Table E.1 below, among 116 respondents who reported being a current ED, 46% of them being men and 28% of them being women is not statistically different. On the other hand, in the slightly larger group of 128 executive/managing directors, 50% of them being men and 31% women is a statistically significant difference, which we report with a chi square statistic of 13.34. The three asterisks that accompany 13.34 in the table indicate the probability that a difference this size, namely 19 percentage points difference, is likely to occur by chance once in 1,000 times that different samples are examined (commonly expressed as a p value referring to probability, $p<.001$). In other words, it is highly unlikely to be a difference that occurred by chance. A p value of $<.05$ indicates the difference is likely to occur by chance less than 5% of the time that samples are examined; that value gets one asterisk. A p value of $<.01$ gets two asterisks (likely to occur by chance less than 1% of the time), which follows the standard practice in research reports to indicate levels of probability. In the tables we present, we made the decision to *only* report those chi square statistics which show significant differences so that we could keep the tables included in this report as uncluttered as possible.

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18 A background in directing is not the only route to becoming an artistic director. However, 88% of the 2013 LORT artistic directors have a background in directing, which makes it the most frequent route to artistic leadership. In the full report of this research, we elaborate on other backgrounds of this sample.

Survey population

The target population was people in the top managerial position at their theater and those who are potentially next-in-line to the top managerial position. This next-in-line group includes all general managers, chief administrative officers, chief operating officers, directors of development, and directors of marketing/communications, which our examination of the resumes of executive directors had shown to be the previous positions held by the majority of those who were eventually promoted to the top managerial leadership position. We requested from TCG emails for top managers and people in the next-in-line positions in theaters with a budget over $1M. Because our main focus is on LORT leadership, we augmented the 639 emails TCG gave us (of which about half were already for people employed by LORT theaters) with emails of an additional 56 next-in-line managers at LORT theaters not present on the TCG list. The final list consisted of 695 email addresses. Of these, 39 bounced back as unusable, leaving a total of 656 working emails. Total response rate was 52%, which is exceptionally high for an online survey.[19] In the analyses reported below we used information obtained from 333 respondents, deleting five respondents whose theater's budget size was below $1M and two because their survey had too much missing data.

Sixty percent of respondents were female, nearly identical to the original TCG email list where 61% were female. A little over half of the sample (54%) currently worked at a LORT theater. Respondents' position titles are listed in Table E.1. Budget sizes of theaters ranged from $1M to over $10M, with 34% in the $1-$3M range, 36% in the $3M-$10M, and 29% in the $10M+ range. There were no differences between male and female respondents in terms of the size of the budget of their theater.

Table E.1. Demographics of the sample

Characteristic	All	Male	Female	Chi-square2
Leadership position	n = 3271	n = 132	n = 195	
Currently in highest managerial position (Current ED)	116 (35%)	46%	28%	
Held highest managerial position in past but not current (Past ED)	28 (8%)	7%	10%	
Has never held highest managerial position (Never ED)	183 (55%)	47%	62%	
Position title (based on "position" variable)	n = 3321	n = 133	n = 200	
Executive/Managing director	128 (38%)	50%	31%	13.34***
General manager	50 (15%)	16%	15%	
Producer	3 (1%)	2%	1%	
Chief operating officer	2 (1%)	1%	1%	
Chief financial officer/director of finance	26 (8%)	8%	8%	
Chief administrative officer	2 (1)	1%	1%	
Director of development	62 (19%)	7%	27%	20.53***
Director of marketing/communications	59 (18%)	17%	19%	

19 The average response rate for email surveys is around 25 percent (see http://fluidsurveys.com/university/response-rate-statistics-online-surveys-aiming/). For surveys of membership groups, and this survey can be considered a membership survey, response rates vary between 5-40% (see http://www.practicalsurveys.com/respondents/typicalresponserates.php).

Budget	3291			
$1,000,000-$2,999,999	113	33%	35%	
$3,000,000-$4,999,999	50	15%	15%	
$5,000-000-$9,999,999	71	20%	22%	
$10,000,000 and over	95	32%	27%	
Theater	3111			
LORT Theater	178	58%	42%	
Nonprofit theater (not LORT)	133	57%	43%	
Education	3201			
High School	11 (3%)			
BA/BFA/BS	172 (52%)			
Beyond BA	137 (41%)			
Average years of tenure as manager	11.31	13.06	10.15	3.06**

1 The "n" (number of respondents for a particular group) varies by topic or question depending on how many people replied to the question(s).

2 See the section, above, "A word about statistics" for more background about chi square values.

** p<.01; *** p<.001.

The sample was overwhelmingly white, 94%; the remaining 6% of the sample identified as Asian (1%), Black (1%), Latino/a (1%), or Biracial (3%). The very lopsided racial composition made it statistically impossible to do analyses comparing white and minority respondents' answers.

Age-wise, 29% of respondents were in their 50s, 28% in their 40s, and 23% in their 30s; 10% reported being over 60. On average, respondents had been in a managerial role for about 11 years (13 for males, 10 for females), signifying that the audience of this survey had an impressive level of experience in the field. Table E.1 provides an overview of the demographics of the survey takers.

Preparing for the ED position

1. Hardest skills to acquire for ED leadership
The survey included several questions about respondents' perception of the career path to leadership. We asked everyone what two skills from a list of 14 they considered to be the hardest to acquire for people who aspire to a top leadership role.

In Table E.2a we report on the hardest skills to acquire as reported by the total sample as well as for men and women separately. There was general agreement between women and men on which skills are harder to acquire to attain the leadership position and six skills rose to the top: Board relations was the one most frequently reported, followed by leadership skills, fundraising, strategic planning, HR/organizational behavior, and cross-departmental expertise. The other possible skill options that we had listed (working with artistic side, contract law, audience cultivation, budgeting, real estate law, producing, public speaking, marketing) fell below 10% and are therefore not reported here in detail.

Table E.2a. Skills considered the hardest to acquire for those aspiring to top operational leadership, by gender

Skills considered hardest to acquire	All	Male	Female	Chi-square
	n = 324	n =131	n = 193	
Board relations	28%	31%	25%	
Leadership	27%	36%	21%	8.71**
Fundraising	27%	32%	23%	
Strategic planning	26%	19%	31%	5.63*
HR/Organizational behavior	24%	18%	28%	4.53*
Cross-departmental expertise	21%	18%	23%	

*p<.05; ** p<.01.

Gender differences. Three skills showed significant differences between men and women. More men rated leadership skills to be hard to attain than did women. This finding contradicts widely shared stereotypes regarding gender differences in leadership potential.[20] One interpretation is that the belief that men are "naturally" better suited to leadership is merely a stereotype. Another interpretation is that some men are aware of this stereotype which privileges the male advantage leading them to report that the leadership skill they themselves possess is very hard to attain. Regardless of which interpretation may be correct, it behooves theater organizations to offer workshops on the type of leadership one needs to attain to successfully run the operations of a theater company.

More women reported strategic planning and HR/Organizational behavior skills to be hard to attain when preparing for executive leadership in a theater than did men. These two skills also have a gender stereotype component. In the corporate world, strategic planning is typically viewed as a masculine endeavor while HR/organizational behavior has typically been women's domain. More women than men may need to have strategic planning demystified as planning for the future in the context of an organization's mission and values. Regarding HR and organizational behavior, more women claiming that these are skills hard to acquire than did men may be a reflection of women's understanding that these skills may be dismissed as unimportant but women know how essential they are to the successful operation of a theater, particularly in the context of an increasingly litigious work culture.

Leadership-status differences. In another set of analyses, we looked beyond gender to examine if having had leadership experience made a difference in people's answers. We compared answers of those who were currently or previously in leadership positions with those who had never held the top position. In Table E.2b we report that comparison.

The results show that those with leadership experience view Board relations to be the hardest skill to acquire and significantly more of them think this is a hard skill than do people who have never held the ED role. It may be that, only when one is in a position to interact with a Board frequently, which is a key component of the ED job description, does one become more fully aware of the difficulty in learning this skill. In many theaters interactions with the Board of Trustees are handled exclusively by

20 See Erkut & Winds of Change Foundation (2001) on the masculine bias in what people implicitly assume about leadership.

those in the top position. This finding calls for a careful examination of who interacts with Boards and for ensuring that this interaction is sufficiently integrated into the mentoring experience of those aspiring to leadership. Indeed, exposure to and interaction with Boards can serve as an asset for those in next-in-line positions who aspire to reach the top position.

Table E.2b. Skills considered the hardest to acquire for those aspiring to top operational leadership, by leadership status

Skills considered hardest to acquire	Current or Past ED	Never ED	
	n = 152	n = 172	Chi-Square
Board relations	35%	21%	7.87**
Leadership	29%	26%	
Fundraising	31%	23%	
Strategic planning	18%	33%	9.03**
HR/Organizational behavior	26%	22%	
Cross-departmental expertise	15%	27%	6.49*

*p<.05, **p<.01.

A second significant difference is that for never-leaders, strategic planning seems a hard skill to acquire, echoing many women's responses. Experienced leaders, however, do not view it as difficult to acquire. It could be that once a leader has gone through the process of strategic planning, which one is likely to do in that position, the mystery, suggested by the name of the activity — *strategic* — dissipates and the process seems more like any other planning.

A final significant difference between current or past leaders and never leaders is the need for cross-departmental exposure. One respondent even exclaimed on the survey, with this unsolicited comment: "The range of essential skills on this list is an indication of the challenges faced by theaters. It's not realistic to expect one person to have multifaceted knowledge/experience in all of them!" We delved more deeply into the cross-departmental exposure issue to see which particular subgroup(s) among never-EDs selected this option more frequently: they were 33% of the directors of marketing/communications, 29% of those with the managing director title who are *not* the top operational leader of their theater, 27% of directors of development, and 26% of general managers. A challenge for never-leaders may be how to attain cross-departmental exposure while carrying out their roles within their current departments. This finding confirms what we had heard about the importance of getting real, on-the-ground experience in each department from the EDs we interviewed when we asked them about how the next generation should prepare for leadership roles in which they are expected to oversee all departments.

The implication of these findings is that any coaching, mentoring, or formal workshops for aspiring EDs should include Board exposure, demystify strategic planning, and provide opportunities for attaining cross-departmental expertise. Regarding cross departmental expertise, EDs have a role to play in promoting communication across departmental divisions as a business strategy that will also help aspiring leaders gain insights into what their counterparts in other departments are doing. This is particularly important in larger theaters whose departments often operate as separate silos.

Ambition differences. Next we focused on the subsample who had never been an ED to examine if managers who *aspired* to become EDs differed from those who did not want to hold the top position (see Table E.2c). Aspiring managers are the respondents who answered 'yes' to the question "Have you ever applied to an Executive Director position." For the aspiring group, we can assume that their answers were — at least to some degree — influenced by their own experiences in working to gain skills in order to move closer toward their ambition.

Although the numbers of respondents within the subgroups become small, we had enough statistical power to compare men and women within these groups. Men and women who did not aspire to leadership did not differ significantly in their answers to what skills are hardest to acquire. However, there was a significant difference between men and women who did aspire to top leadership. Fewer women considered Board relations to be hard to master than did men, while more women considered HR/Organizational behavior-related skills hard to attain than did the men by a large margin.

That more female aspiring managers do not consider Board relations hard to acquire may be a reflection of the female respondents' jobs in the theater: many more women who answered the survey were directors of development (27% of the women compared to 7% of the men) and directors of development *do* frequently interact with Board members and get to understand that Board relations is about relationship building, which development directors need to excel at. The second gender difference is more perplexing. Why would so many more women who aspire to leadership believe that HR/Organizational behavior, a traditionally female specialty, is difficult to learn? We speculate, based on off-hand comments made by a few female leaders we interviewed, that the next frontier in preparation for an ED job is being able to handle the litigious challenges in hiring and firing. It may be that more women are aware of the potential for lawsuits in doing HR work. One of the EDs of the LORT sample told us: "I think that issues of HR [and] organizational behavior are more complicated than they used to be. And because the world is more litigious, HR is an undervalued skillset right now but it is actually one that can really trip you up if you don't understand it."

Table E.2c. Gender differences in which skills are considered hardest to acquire for someone aspiring to the top, by leadership aspiration.

Skills considered hardest to acquire	Never Leaders Who Aspire to Leadership n = 94		Chi-Square	Never Leaders Who Do Not Aspire to Leadership n = 78		Chi-Square†
	Men n = 36	Women n = 58		Men n = 23	Women n = 55	
Board relations	31%	12%	4.90*	26%	22%	
Leadership	31%	24%		35%	20%	
Fundraising	25%	21%		30%	22%	
Strategic planning	33%	35%		26%	35%	
HR/Organizational behavior	6%	36%	11.29**	22%	18%	
Cross-departmental expertise	19%	31%		26%	27%	
Working with the artistic side	6%	7%		4%	16%	
Contract law	11%	19%		0%	7%	

*p<.05; **p<.01.

† None of the percentages reported in the two previous columns are statistically different from each other.

(2) EDs' perceptions of skills/experiences which lead to an appointment to the top role
From current and past leaders we wanted to know which five elements of their career profile they considered were the factors that led to their last leadership appointment. We provided a list of about 40 possible answers with an option to fill in an "other." The following table represents which elements male and female managers rated highest.

Table E.3: Top factors that led to the appointment to a current or past top ED position

Top factors that led to appointment	All	Male	Female	
	n = 149	n = 72	n = 77	Chi Square
My fundraising ability/experience	40%	35%	44%	
My understanding and ability to work with artists	39%	43%	35%	
Previous Executive/Managing Director experience	34%	43%	26%	4.82*
I have broad-based experience working with different departments of theaters	27%	22%	31%	
Familiarity with local community of donors and audience	24%	18%	30%	
My rapport with Board of hiring theater	24%	28%	21%	
My previous work experience within hiring theater	21%	24%	18%	
My experience working with non-profit Boards	21%	17%	25%	
I was mentored by the right people early in my career	19%	14%	23%	
General Manager experience	17%	21%	14%	
My experience formulating and administering a marketing strategy	17%	11%	23%	3.89*
Personal referral from someone within hiring theater	17%	15%	18%	

*p<.05.

Overall, more past and current EDs reported their fundraising ability to be the most important qualification that got them to be appointed to the top job. Fundraising is followed closely by ability to work with artists, and, in third position, by previous executive director experience. We examined whether there might be a cohort effect in the top three qualifications that emerged such that maybe the current ED's answers are different from those who were EDs in the past. When we compared the responses of the past EDs with those of the current EDs, no significant differences emerged. We conclude that these three qualifications are key experiences managers aspiring to top leadership should consider cultivating when preparing for the top job.

Among men, having had a previous executive or managing director position at a theater is rated much higher than among women, one of the few significant differences between genders. We do not know whether more men moved into their current or last position at the top of a theater after having held a similar leadership job when compared to women because we did not ask about each respondent's previous positions. We do know that men had worked in theater management somewhat longer than women (13 years vs. 10 years for women, see Table E.1). Given the preponderance of male EDs currently and in the past, it is likely that more men in the sample had been EDs. Consequently, it is likely that they perceived past ED experience to be one of the top reasons they were appointed. It is likely that fewer women gave this reason a top ranking because historically fewer women held ED positions than men. The other significant gender difference was more

female EDs claiming expertise in marketing as a key qualification than did male EDs. Because we did not ask about each respondent's previous positions, we do not know if more female EDs happened to have been marketing directors than male EDs. Perhaps many female EDs in the sample had a background in marketing.

Another question we asked in the survey is also relevant here. We wanted to know about the circumstances of having been appointed an ED. Possible answers included: I am founder; I was promoted into the position from within; I was contacted by the Board of the hiring theater and asked to apply; I was contacted by a search firm and asked to apply; I was contacted by the AD or ED of the hiring theater and asked to apply; I contacted the search firm and applied through them; I applied directly to the theater. More women than men responded that they were the founder of the theater they were leading, a significant difference between the genders (4% among men, 15% among women; chi square = 4.82, $p<.05$). This finding is similar to what we found on the artistic side: more women reported becoming an AD of the theater they founded than did men. Here, we need to acknowledge that while "founding" a theater is a frequent route to becoming its AD, founding is not a frequent route to the ED position —founders represent only 9% of the total sample. Most EDs (an equal proportion of men and women, 24% and 23% respectively) report being appointed after they were contacted by an AD or ED of a theater and asked to apply. The second most selected route to an appointment was promotion from within the theater (reported by a total of 19% of top managers, 22% among men and 16% among women but this gender difference was not statistically significant and could have occurred by chance).

Thinking about getting to the top

From those who were not in the top leadership position in their theater, we wanted to find out if holding the top position was their ambition, and how they had formulated this ambition as part of their career planning. Table E.4 represents our findings on this topic.

Table E.4. Career path planning for those not currently in an ED role

Career path planning	All	Men	Women
	n = 174	n = 59	n = 115
Have you thought of holding the top managerial/executive position in a theater as a realistic goal for yourself?	54%	61%	50%
If yes, how did you first come to this realization?	n = 91	n = 35	n = 56
It has always been my career goal	35%	40%	32%
Came to realization when comparing my credentials to those who were getting top position	32%	26%	36%
Hadn't thought about it until my boss encouraged me to think about it as an appropriate career move	4%	3%	5%
Hadn't thought about until I was encouraged by search firm	7%	9%	5%
Hadn't thought about it until my peers encouraged me	11%	9%	13%
Hadn't thought about it until a Board member encouraged me	2%	0%	4%
Hadn't thought about it until mentors or other prominent people in theater encouraged me	9%	14%	5%

There were *no* statistically significant differences between men and women who answered these questions. Slightly more men had thought of wanting to hold the top leadership position, but this difference could have come about by chance. The lack of significant gender differences contradicts the often-quoted blanket-statement that "women don't want to be in a top leadership position" as an explanation for why there are so few women who make it to the top.[21] As we can see, the ambition is certainly there.

1. Developing the skills
We asked those currently not in the top position which skills they would need to acquire *for themselves* in order to gain the top leadership position and feel prepared for the role (see Table E.5). This question is different from the above one which focused on what was considered the most difficult skill to attain for *anyone* aspiring to the top and which was asked from all respondents. Here, respondents are only those who are *not currently* in top managerial positions talking about what they themselves are missing in their profile. Most of this group of respondents had not held a previous ED position, which is clear from their answer to the last option.

Among men, fundraising is the one skill they feel they lack in order to take the top position: slightly half of them say they lack fundraising skills, a significant difference from women who feel more comfortable with fundraising, most likely, again, because a larger number of women in the sample are in development positions. More women than men indicated a need to gain producing experience, a competency related to the artistic activities of a theater. More women also expressed a need for more experience working with the artistic side. It may be that more women than men think it is important to be better informed and competent in the central mission of a theater. It may also be that the women in the sample who aspire to becoming an ED are in managerial positions that are removed from the artistic activities of the theater and recognize it as a shortcoming in their preparation to the top.

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21 Sherwin (2014) has noted that one of the often stated reasons for explaining women's scarcity in top leadership is the belief that women don't want the role. While there is some empirical evidence from Bain & Company in Australia that significantly more women than men gave higher priority to a work-life balance relative to career advancement, and Goldin and Katz (2010) write that many professional women prefer to work part-time in the US to have a more balanced home life, in our sample of theater professionals, there was no statistical difference between men and women in wanting to reach the top position in a theater.

Table E.5. Skills to learn in order to feel prepared

Skills to learn	All	Male	Female	Chi Square
	n = 197	n = 67	n = 130	
Fundraising	42%	54%	35%	6.13*
Contract law	36%	30%	39%	
Board relations	30%	31%	29%	
Producing	28%	18%	33%	5.05*
HR/Organizational behavior	26%	19%	29%	
Real estate law	24%	18%	28%	
Strategic planning	21%	19%	22%	
Budgeting	18%	15%	19%	
Working with the artistic side	17%	8%	22%	6.82**
Cross-departmental expertise	16%	10%	19%	
Audience cultivation	15%	15%	15%	
Leadership	14%	19%	11%	
Marketing	13%	9%	15%	
Public speaking	13%	10%	14%	
None, I have held the role of Executive/Managing Director before and could take it up without additional skills	7%	10%	5%	

*p<.05. **p<.01.

It is instructive to compare Tables E.5 and E.2c. In Table E.2c is the list of skills that are the hardest to learn for *anyone* reported by those who are not currently or have never been in the highest leadership position. In Table E.5 is the list of skills that the same group of "never EDs" believe they *themselves* need to learn in order to feel prepared for the highest position. In Table E.5 we see a wider distribution across items (i.e., there are several more items that are selected by more than 10% of the respondents). This is especially the case among women, where 8 skills are selected by 20% or more of the subsample (among men, only 3). It appears that there are more women than men who believe they have a lot to learn. We don't know from the results of this survey whether women respondents are, indeed, less well prepared to take the top position. However, this attitude is consistent with widespread notion that "women (and minorities) need to be twice as good to be seen as good enough."[22] Additionally, this notion can make some women strive toward perfectionism to be seen as "good enough," and can lead many women to be insecure about their accomplishments. All of these reasons could be at the root of this finding.

Finally, we asked if the never-leaders would have to leave their current theater in order to be able to gain the skills they needed. Of the 175 who replied to this question, 27% said, no, they could learn all the skills they needed at their current theater and had a mentor willing to help them. More respondents however, 41%, said that they would have to drive the process without a mentor, but would still remain at their theater. About a quarter of the respondents (23%) indicated that

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22 See Erkut & Winds of Change Foundation (2001) and Friedman and Miles (2006).

they would have to leave their theater, either because it was too small (7%) or because they needed a mentor and wouldn't find one at their current location (16%). The remaining 9% also intended to stay at their current theaters but would gain the skills they need by volunteering elsewhere. The most frequent, response, 41% reporting that they would have to develop their career at their theater without benefit of a mentor suggests the absence of mentoring in many theaters.

Education and training. We asked all respondents to name a program they attended that they considered the best preparation for their current position. This was an open-ended question answered by 81% of the respondents and allowed people to write in any answer. Around 40% (131 respondents, 38% of all female respondents and 41% of all male respondents, which is not a statistically different response) indicated that an advanced degree (Masters or equivalent) had been the most instrumental in their preparation for their current position. Additionally, 20 survey takers (8%) listed having worked toward a certificate or finished an internship, leadership institute, or fellowship program as the most formative education experience for their career progression. A substantial portion of the respondents, however, used this question as an opportunity to indicate that on-the-job training was, in their view, their best preparation (67, or 20% of the total sample).

2. Getting the attention to be able to make it to the top position

We asked never-leaders whether they had ever been approached to apply for a top position; 34% of those who responded (58 out of 170) said yes, equally distributed between men and women. When we asked who had approached them, search firms took the top vote, with 40% of those replying selecting this option. Being approached by an artistic or executive director at the hiring theater was the second most frequently chosen option by 33% of those who had ever been approached to apply for a top position.

Only 17% of never-leaders had ever applied for a top position. Among those, the largest group reported having made it to the final round (25%) but not getting an offer. There were no gender differences for these groups. The top reason reported by candidates who had applied for an ED position but failed to attain it was not having enough fundraising experience (reported by 63%, equally among men and women). All other reasons that were selected for failing to attain the top position were selected by very few people, and also showed no gender differences.

3. Not wanting the top position

Although the majority of those in the never-leader group expressed the ambition for the top role, there is a substantial number of respondents who have never applied to be ED because they are happy in their current position (44% of the 142 who say they have never applied for a higher role) or they are not interested in the ED role at a theater (42%). Among the top reasons for not having applied are considering it to be too early in one's managerial career (27%) and not having the right mix of experience (24%). There were no gender differences for these numbers.

The scarcity of people of color

There were not enough people of color taking the survey for us to do analyses by race. The extreme scarcity of people of color on the operational side of the theater speaks to an overwhelming weakness in the field which needs immediate attention. Both LORT and TCG (and others, for example individual theaters) have taken concrete steps to bring minority candidates into training programs that prepare them to be effective operational leaders in the theater world. Several voices in our interview sample put out calls for theaters to work in elementary and high schools and create an

awareness of the varied opportunities for young people in theater and present the theater as a viable industry for employment. For example, one male ED told us: "It's not just acting. There are jobs to be had. And I'm really looking forward to that part of it as it evolves. ... I want to be the one who's at the high school explaining to the kids, you know, 'You could do this and you could find your—if you have a passion for theater but a head for numbers, there's a real place for you here.' " However, even with efforts in that direction, it will remain important to provide a living wage for those who enter the theater field where unpaid or low paid internships have been a modus operandi for many decades. Increased educational expenses and cost of living, especially in urban areas where theaters tend to be located, make unpaid or low-paid internships an unattainable privilege for many.

Conclusion

The results of the survey of managers on the operational side of the theater has shown that (1) a substantial proportion of the people in the pipeline are interested in becoming an ED and women in the pipeline are as ambitious as men; and (2) the necessary skills and experiences for holding the top position are Board relations, leadership skills, fundraising, strategic planning, HR/organizational behavior, and cross-departmental expertise. These skills are also among the skills people in the pipeline who aspire to top leadership believe they need to feel ready to become an ED. These skills can be the focus of workshops or trainings to be offered by LORT and/or TCG to strengthen the pipeline. Mentors should find out from their protégés if one or more of these skills are a challenge for them and provide necessary supports. It appears that people aspiring for leadership will benefit particularly from opportunities to interact with members of the Board of Trustees, having strategic planning and fundraising demystified, seeing concrete examples of what leadership entails when managing the operations of a theater, becoming acquainted with the work of departments other than their own, and becoming aware of the legal challenges entailed in doing HR work in an increasingly litigious environment. One leader used the phrase "a fundraising bootcamp" for the field's potential offering to ED-candidates that lets these candidates be exposed not only the nuances of fundraising but to do so in close collaboration with Trustees, addressing two important and difficult-to-learn skills for leadership.

The results also suggest that more women than men in the pipeline believe they have a lot to learn to feel prepared to become an ED. We don't know from the results of this survey whether women respondents are in reality less well prepared to take the top position. However, this attitude is consistent with widespread notion that "women (and minorities) need to be twice as good to be seen as good enough." It behooves mentors supporting the career development of female managers to dispel this notion if it exists in their protégé and more importantly for search committees not to expect more from women than they do from men.

An interesting result is the *absence* of reports of family responsibilities hindering one's career aspirations. We interpret this in the context of the characteristics of the sample. Survey takers were EDs and high level managers in theaters with budgets above $1,000,000. We cannot conclude that on their way up to their current positions they did not struggle with balancing family responsibilities with their work obligations, nor that juggling both responsibilities is not currently difficult for them but not difficult enough to have to leave their jobs. What we lack in the sample are people who did have to leave because of family responsibilities or who never made it into the pipeline because the theater world does not easily accommodate family responsibilities.

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List of LORT member-theaters in 2013

ACT Theatre
Actors Theatre of Louisville
Alabama Shakespeare Festival
Alley Theatre
Alliance Theatre
American Conservatory Theater
American Repertory Theater
Arden Theatre Company
Arena Stage
Arizona Theatre Company
Arkansas Repertory Theatre
Asolo Repertory Theatre
Barter Theatre
Berkeley Repertory Theatre
Capital Repertory Theatre
Center Stage
Center Theatre Group
Cincinnati Playhouse in the Park
City Theatre Company
Clarence Brown Theatre Company
The Cleveland Play House
Court Theatre
Dallas Theater Center
Delaware Theatre Company
Denver Center Theatre Company
Florida Studio Theatre
Ford's Theatre
Geffen Playhouse
George Street Playhouse
Georgia Shakespeare
Geva Theatre Center
Goodman Theatre
Goodspeed Musicals
Great Lakes Theater Festival
Guthrie Theater
Hartford Stage
Huntington Theatre Company
Indiana Repertory Theatre
Kansas City Repertory Theatre
La Jolla Playhouse
Laguna Playhouse

Lincoln Center Theater
Long Wharf Theatre
Maltz Jupiter Theatre
Manhattan Theatre Club
Marin Theatre Company
McCarter Theatre
Merrimack Repertory Theatre
Milwaukee Repertory Theatre
Northlight Theatre
The Old Globe
Pasadena Playhouse
People's Light and Theatre Company
Philadelphia Theatre Company
Pittsburgh Public Theatre
PlayMakers Repertory Company
Portland Center Stage
Portland Stage Company
Repertory Theatre of St. Louis
Roundabout Theatre Company
Round House Theatre
San Jose Repertory Theatre
Seattle Repertory Theatre
Shakespeare Theatre Company
Signature Theatre
South Coast Repertory
Syracuse Stage
Theatre for a New Audience
TheatreWorks
Trinity Repertory Company
Two River Theatre Company
Virginia Stage Company
The Wilma Theatre
Yale Repertory Theatre

Online resources reviewed

Table 2.1. Reviewed online literature

Authors	Title/Topic of Research	Year	Link
Byrd, R.	Writing the changing world	2015	http://lafpi.com/2015/07/dramatists-guild-national-conference-writechange-the-count/
Chicago Storefront Summit	A report from the Gender Equity Task Force	2010	http://www.womenarts.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Chicago-Gender-Equity-Report.pdf
Evans, S.	Women push for equality on and off stage	2014	http://www.americantheatre.org/2014/09/17/women-push-for-equality-on-and-off-stage/
Evans, S.	The gender parity count ticks up— slightly	2015	http://www.americantheatre.org/2015/07/20/the-gender-parity-count-ticks-up-slightly/
Evans, S.	The unsung gender-parity warriors	2015	http://www.americantheatre.org/2015/09/21/the-unsung-gender-parity-warriors/
Goetschius, E.	Holding up the numbers: Female directors	2013	http://www.egoetschius.com/2013/03/20/holding-up-the-numbers-female-directors/
ICWP (International Center for Women Playwrights)	50/50 in 2020 – Parity for Women Theater Artists	2009	http://www.womenplaywrights.org/resources/Documents/50.50%20in%202020.pdf
Jonas, S.	The other canon: 10 centuries of plays by women	2015	http://www.americantheatre.org/2015/09/21/the-other-canon-10-centuries-of-plays-by-women/
Jonas, S. & Bennett, S.	Report on the status of women	2002	http://www.womenarts.org/nysca-report-2002/
Jordan, J.	A faint-hearted feminist	2013	https://medium.com/@juliaj1717/a-faint-hearted-feminist-1fb49b9591f7#.svmoltikp
LA FPI	The study	2011	http://lafpi.com/the-study/
MacArthur, M.	Achieving equity in Canadian theatre	2015	http://www.eit.playwrightsguild.ca/achieving-equity-canadian-theatre
McGovern, P.	Who designs in LORT theatres by gender	2015	http://howlround.com/who-designs-in-lort-theatres-by-gender
McGovern, P.	Who designs and directs at LORT theatres by gender	2016	http://howlround.com/who-designs-and-directs-in-lort-theatres-by-gender-phase-two
Sands, E.G.	Rethinking gender bias in theatre	2009	http://www.nytimes.com/2009/06/24/theater/24play.html?_r=0
Sands, E.G.	Opening the curtain on playwright gender	2009	http://graphics8.nytimes.com/packages/pdf/theater/Openingthecurtain.pdf
Shamas, L.	The numbers problems and why it matters	2013	http://lafpi.com/2013/10/the-numbers-problem-and-why-it-matters/

Authors	Title/Topic of Research	Year	Link
Shamas, L.	Women Playwrights: Who is Keeping Count?	2014	http://howlround.com/women-playwrights-who-is-keeping-count
Steketee, M. W. & Binus, J.	Women hired off-Broadway: 2010-2014	2014	https://patrickharmon100.files.wordpress.com/2014/09/lptw-women-hired-off-broadway-august-2014-2014-8-6.pdf
Steketee, M. W. & Binus, J.	Women hired off-Broadway: 2010-2015	2015	http://theatrewomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Women-Count-2015-Report.pdf
Suilebhan, G.	DC theater demographics: The 2012-13 Season	2013	http://www.suilebhan.com/advocacy/dc-theater-demographic-analyses/dc-theater-demographics-the-2012-13-season/
Suilebhan, G.	DC theater demographics: The 2013-14 season	2014	http://www.suilebhan.com/advocacy/dc-theater-demographic-analyses/dc-theater-demographics-the-2013-14-season/
Suilebhan, G.	DC theater demographics: The 2014-15 season	2015	http://www.suilebhan.com/advocacy/dc-theater-demographic-analyses/dc-theater-demographics-the-2014-15-season/
Suilebhan, G.	DC theater demographics: The 2015-16 season	2016	http://www.suilebhan.com/dc-theater-demographics-the-2015-16-season/
The Gender Parity Task Force, Stage-Source.	A spotlight on gender parity in the New England theater community	2014	https://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.stagesource.org/resource/resmgr/GENDER_PARITY_TASK_FORCE/A_SPOTLIGHT_ON_GENDER_PARITY.pdf
The Gender Parity Task Force, Stage-Source.	Gender Parity Task Force	2016	http://www.stagesource.org/?page=DIGParityTaskForce
The Gender Parity Task Force, Stage-Source. (written by Julie Hennrikus)	StageSource's Gender Parity Task Force	2015	http://howlround.com/stagesource-s-gender-parity-task-force
Tonic Theatre, Advance Project.	Talented women in the theatre industry were prevented from rising to the top	2014	http://www.tonictheatre-advance.co.uk/about/
Tran, D.	The 2015–16 Season in Gender: Who's on Top?	2015	http://www.americantheatre.org/2015/09/21/the-2015-16-season-in-gender-whos-on-top/
Weak, V.	Not even	2015	http://www.womenarts.org/not-even/not-even-introduction/
Wilner, S., & Jordan, J.	Discrimination and the female playwright	2009	http://www.giarts.org/article/discrimination-and-female-playwright
WomenArts. New York's Women in the Arts & Media Coalition and Equity in Theatre	7 Steps for Achieving Gender Parity in the Theatre	2015	http://www.americantheatre.org/2015/06/09/7-steps-for-achieving-gender-parity-in-the-theatre/

Ongoing advocacy

…and ACTION!

Women have been "leaning in" to change their inclusion at high level leadership posts in the theater for decades. Their action has focused in gathering data ("counts"), blogging, engaging in conversations in groups of varying sizes, holding conferences, giving awards for inclusion, and certainly not giving up.

Though the numbers vary by region and theater and depend on the specific methodology, they all point to the same thing: women are significantly under-represented in the theater at many levels, especially in leadership. The numbers that have been gathered have begun to spark action. Indeed, many are working to achieve gender parity in the theater, raising awareness of gender inequality, increasing visibility of women playwrights, and facilitating conversations that lead to action steps. This report is but one drop in that stream of action initiatives. Before we present below a short overview of particular initiatives, we need to acknowledge that the field is dynamic, numbers shift, initiatives take hold or slow down, and people move from organizations. Therefore, what we present is a snapshot only, situated in this present time.

Several efforts are raising the visibility of lack of gender parity in theater (Evans, 2015). 50/50 in 2020 is an initiative of the League of Professional Theater Women, New Perspective Theater, and Women's Project, with a mission to achieve gender parity for professional women theater artists by 2020 (http://theatrewomen.org/programs/5050-in-2020-parity-for-women-theatre-artists/). According to Melody Brooks, one of the founders, 50/50 by 2020 has created national visibility for the inequity of women theater artists, and has created a platform for women and groups to pool information and strategies. Works By Women, which has developed into its own organization, promotes productions that have at least 50% women among the director, play-wright, and designers. The 50/50 movement also generated an enormous interest in learning about, reclaiming, and proclaiming the 1000-year history of women in theater. This has led to a number of specific projects via member theater companies and associations.

Porsche McGovern has been compiling important data on the male-to-female ratio of scenic, lighting, costume, and sound designers working in regional theater productions, which show that outside of the costume shop, design is a largely male domain (McGovern, 2015). In 2016 she expanded her research to include directors and artistic directors. Her results, extremely relevant to the focus of this study, show that over the last three seasons, female artistic directors have hired almost double the number of female directors as did male ADs.

McGovern's research has been published in HowlRound, ArtsEmerson's curated "commons" for the theater community. HowlRound has also been active in advocating for inclusive leadership by hosting blogs and conversations on gender parity.

Groups are taking simultaneous action across the country. The LA Female Playwrights Initiative was spawned by the 50/50 movement. This Los Angeles-based group dedicated to ensuring female playwrights are fairly represented conducts its own counts, holds events, and raises

the visibility of women playwrights. A group of women in theater (Zakiyyah Alexander, Bekah Brunstetter, Sheila Callaghan, Carla Ching, Annah Feinberg, Sarah Gubbins, Laura Jacqmin, Joy Meads, Kelly Miller, Meg Miroshnik, Daria Polatin, Tanya Saracho, and Marisa Wegrzyn) calling themselves the Kilroys, put out "the list," a list of top recommended plays by female and trans playwrights, as determined by an annual industry survey. "The list" is a tool for those committed to gender parity, making it easy to find plays by women (see http://thekilroys.org/list-2016/). One strength of the list, according to Mike Lew (2014), is its communal curation. That is, it does not depend on one person's potentially biased perspective, but incorporates input from many sources.

The Lilly Awards (founded by Julia Jordan, Marsha Norman and Theresa Rebeck, and named for Lillian Hellman) were created to celebrate the role of women in theater and promote gender parity at all levels of production. They have a Spring awards ceremony, offer a family-friendly Summer Colony initiative, and initiated "the Count," which will be an annual count of "who is being produced" in American theaters (thelillyawards.org).

Martha Richards, Founding Executive Director of WomenArts, continues to be a strong advocate for gender parity in theater. Founded in 1995, the organization now provides news and information to women artists all over the world, for example through Support Women Artists Now "SWAN" Day, an annual international grassroots celebration of women artists held every March. The organization strives to not only speak out about gender parity, but also raise the visibility of female artists (see Tasker, 2013). In a blog series on gender parity sponsored by HowlRound, recently Richards presented her idea of "The 100 Women Plan:" fundraising for $10 million to employ 100 women to dedicate their time and resources on working toward gender parity in the arts. In the same blog series, Yvette Heyliger suggested imposing a legislative mandate on city, state, or federal funding to allocate an "equitable portion of that funding to women artists, or risk losing government funding." Christine Young added her quest for involving theater educators in casting more women as actors, teaching them as playwrights, and including them among theater staff at college programs. This ongoing blog series and the contributing writers act as catalysts for connection and change ideas for the theater community.

Some are gathering together to develop action steps. WomenArts (2015), New York's Women in the Arts & Media Coalition, and Equity in Theatre (a coalition of nine Canadian organizations) convened an international summit on gender parity in theater in April 2015 to consolidate efforts to fix gender discrimination in theater. Twenty-one gender parity activists gathered in Toronto to review the current research, share strategies, and discuss ways to transform the existing efforts into a paradigm-shifting international movement. These activists outlined seven actions steps: 1) build alliances with other social justice groups, 2) work with women in other art forms, 3) teach plays by women, 4) encourage production of plays by female playwrights, 5) meet individually with artistic directors, 6) work with the unions, and 7) use legislative approaches (Richards, 2015).

Stemming from their own data collection, StageSource Diversity/Inclusion/Gender Parity Task Force similarly put together a report based on three meetings of the task force in the Boston area aimed at creating action steps for change related to diversity, inclusion, and gender parity. The report identifies issues onstage, back stage, in the offices, boardrooms, and audiences (Hennrikus, 2012, 2015).

Finally, Statera Foundation (www.staterafoundation.org/), deriving its name from the Latin word for balance, is a new nonprofit advocacy organization founded to serve women in the theater by expanding employment options, improving salary, and removing barriers to growth and achieve-

ment through mentorship, internship, research, outreach, networking, and support. The foundation held its second national conference on gender parity in theater in October 2016. Statera conducts research on gender and pay equity, and aims to connect hiring theaters with women who are looking to be hired and advocate for better family-work balance.

This list does not represent a complete overview. Voices are getting stronger and multiply every day. Social media are helping to proliferate the variety of data to attract attention to the issue. We intend for this report to join the call for further action toward a level playing field for leadership in LORT member-theaters and beyond.

Topics of two conference discussions

We were privileged to be invited to attend two conferences in 2016 with theater professionals to present our findings and enter conversations around strategies for change. Below are report-backs of issues that emerged from discussions that followed our presentation of the research. They are reproduced here in "raw" form, with only minor copy editing.

Conference 1: Theatre Communications Group Conference, June 2016, Washington DC

During small group discussions, theater professionals discussed pre-assigned topics that were connected to diversity in theater, which are presented below in short description. The small groups' task was to make recommendations on how to increase diversity along various avenues.

a. Mentorship

- Seek and offer peer-mentoring within your cohort

- Meet with every new employee to find what their aspirations are; have an open door policy for new people and help them make connections

- Mentor for work-life balance: watch your language (for example when talking about people who are taking care of others in their family) and guide how conversations around the topic are held

- Look outside of theater at like-minded organizations; lose your bubble

- Champion others and talk about mentoring opportunities with other possible mentors

- Say out loud that you are willing to mentor others and verbalize the steps toward leadership within the organization

b. Diversity in Programming

- Start diversity in programming, add shows that keep people coming and don't just do it sporadically

- Start patrons young; work through the education department to keep them coming

- Start "Niche Nights," e.g. bike to the theater

- Contextualize a play so that every audience feels drawn in even if the play is "too different" for one's "standard audience"

- Make programming a holistic process: include Board, rehearsal, staff, and audience into the process

- Work against the assumption that work by women or people of color needs more development time

- If plays by women and people of color are produced, ensure the same support and marketing for those plays as for "mainstream" ones

- Bring more artists to the table and be transparent about how a season comes together (based on the Oregon Shakespeare Model)

- Devise an online database within the theater to show who is reading what and study the diversity of those plays

- Lead by doing: worry less about the bottom line when promoting diversity in programming

- Lean in to work with those who we don't know and who have less experience to provide room for growth

- Cast outsiders, don't presume that "white equals universal" if no race is described

c. Diversity in leadership

- Revisualize leadership as not being a pyramid

- Think of shared leadership or an hourglass structure where the top and the bottom have equal "power", and include 360 degree leadership model where one can lead up, lead across, and lead down in an organization (Maxwell, 2005).

- Examine your value system with respect to what is expected/valued in a leader

d. Diversity in staff

- Women and people of color should direct outside of their own narrative

- Direct mentorship and internship to early-career and mid-career professionals

- Ensure diversity in freelance opportunities

- Show a willingness to hire those whom we don't know to fulfill the theater's mission

- Make time to get to know others during a busy day

- Introduce a Kilroy award for staff/leadership diversity (see http://thekilroys.org/list-2015/; see Appendix H for more on the Kilroys)

- Start a database in which those who came in second or third as candidates for leadership are promoted as promising leaders for the field

e. Board relations

- Balance the Board paying attention to age, gender, and race

- Balance the choice of a Board member between what they can give and the social capital they bring

- Ensure the Board knows the high responsibility it has in hiring

- Don't let a Board "settle" when selecting a leader: if a slate of candidates is presented that includes no diversity, start over until there are multiple, diverse options to choose from

Conference 2: American Conservatory Theater Women's Leadership Project Conference, August 2016, San Francisco

A conference was organized by the American Conservatory Theater which brought together over 100 professionals from around the country to discuss the findings of this research and brainstorm next steps for the field.

Several topics were discussed in small group sessions. Below are snapshots of their content.

a. Childcare/Work-life Balance

- Define lack of childcare as an institutional, structural rather than a personal problem

- Having children should not be seen as needing an accommodation but a necessary component of the human condition;

- Current work culture views parenting as standing in the way of efficiency

- The cultural paradigm is only slowly changing to include the "other parent" beyond just the one mother as responsible for family life

- Discuss the cost of childcare vs. wages in the art world: Any childcare provision will need to include scaled fees and subsidies

- Create alternative modes of employment that support work-life balance. The work structure can be more flexible/efficient than working in a particular time and place. Especially large theater companies are stuck in a more restricted model that limits employees' choices to balance their responsibilities at work and at home.

- Having people with children in an organization also creates an allowance for others who do not have their own family to balance out their work/ life better, and seek more wellness for themselves.

- Trust employees that they will get their job done, whether they do or don't have children. Don't put the question on the table about whether a person would return to their job after having a child, whether their commitment is unwavering after a child. Create a space that is liberating for women and men who care for others. Support and transparency are important.

- Societal priorities on childcare, child rearing can make a difference (e.g. other countries give longer time off after birth, provide free childcare, etc.)

- Explicitly stated support will create a welcoming environment, both in terms of childcare and providing space for work-life balance. Create an access point for each artist that one engages with on work-life balance and need of childcare.

- Existing models: onsite childcare centers (e.g., Paramount Studios); drop-off babysitting center for auditioning actors (e.g., Pearl Studios); audience-focused babysitting (e.g., Marin Theatre Co. once a month); Board-sponsored /foundation-sponsored child-care for one person; subsidizing child care for guest artists (Marin Theatre Co.);

- Possible model: Childcare center shared by various institutions

b. Philanthropy of the 21st Century

- Replace the offer of "cachet" for being on a Board with a feeling of having a role in bringing about social change

- We need to encourage "risk capital" among funders, i.e. invite funders to be part of the social change that is needed

- We need to re-negotiate or even refuse funding if the organization that is donating it does not align with the mission of the theater or with the need to diversify and focus on inclusion/equity

- Funders can require action/progress on issues, as opposed to keeping "business as usual"; shift funding to outcome and measurement

- Arts institutions may be losing funders because the funders want to see change faster than the arts organizations are able to provide it

- We need Community Boards that help make decisions on space-sharing funding (letting smaller organizations use larger organizations' space) and grant-sharing from larger organizations to smaller organization ("accepted with condition" grants that feed smaller organizations who generally do not get larger grants), bringing all organizations on the same level

- We need measureable accountability that money given to diversity/equity/inclusion initiatives does indeed fund the change

- There are models of resource sharing available, for example in the academic world, which has initiatives of sharing research to solve larger questions

- In other countries, government has a responsibility to support the arts; that needs to also happen in the US

c. Leadership, Boards, and Advocacy

- Female attendees shared how they came to their position of leadership

  - By being asked, following mentors

  - By stepping up in a time of crisis, taking a risk; female leadership is often sought/allowed in times of crisis

  - Through the drive of "wanting" leadership

  - By creating a culture of sharing, even in the background, behind another leader

- By giving themselves agency in one space where they can be leader, while playing a second-place role in another space

- By being forced out of one position and creating a new business to stay employed

- By feeling the mandate to lead and keeping the artist community empowered

- Discussion of styles of leadership

  - Listen, contribute, be generous

  - Create space where everyone in the organization feels empowered and involved in important decisions

  - Servant leadership

  - Situational leadership, i.e. leadership in one situation may need to be different from leadership in a totally different situation

- What is fundraising, and how Board members and those who fundraise are connected

  - Fundraising has been "mystified" and is given as reason for not going for top job. Or, do women mystify this skill themselves, by not asking for help and by not calling their relationships building skills fundraising? Or, do Boards not trust that women will be able to seal the deal and follow up with the relationships in the same way that a man would coming from the corporate model?

  - Fundraising is based on a story that the theater shares with its community and how the theater can grow with this community. Worthwhile to ask/ponder what would be lost if the theater ceased to exist in the community?

  - Need to expand fundraising goals beyond the "product" into overhead, career development, work-life balance, etc.

  - Can we disconnect alcohol from philanthropy?

  - Can constructive conversations with staff be included in Board duties?

- Need for a matrix of competencies that Boards can use when hiring for leadership

  - Need to define what the "job" is to get to the key competencies.

  - Competencies need to be defined publicly, so that various people can envision they actually master those skills.

  - Skills need to be labeled such that people understand they are not unattainable, rather they are based on every-day skills many women already command. They may just not name them in the same words. For example, leveraging relationships to get certain tasks done (for free) can be called leadership skills.

  - Mentors of the field need to take on coaching to explain the main competencies of leadership, especially fundraising, but also other leadership skills, so that others who initially think they don't have mastery of those skills, can realize they do, even intrinsically. Board members can volunteer their particular expertise and train others.

- Women need to also take the risk and apply even if they haven't performed every skill on the job description. It is key to maintain all relationships one has built, especially with people who taught you a skill. If they know what you are up to currently, they can recommend you for a higher-level position, even outside their own industry. Also, they can reassure you that "you will figure it out" because they have confidence you can do the job. Failure can be strengthening, and a mark of a successful leader to be able to turn a failure around.

- How a leadership "lens" that operates both in the for-profit and nonprofit influences placements, and how Boards need to be educated on this (i.e. implicit bias about who can be trusted to be a leader)

- Different interviewing styles of men and women. For example many women apologize too much, talk about what they cannot do, volunteer stories about their mistakes, or do not ask to be considered for membership on Boards.

- Succession and development. Model on corporate world. Board member is assigned to senior staff for relationship building and mentoring.

- How a leader who knows the barriers to the field can make decisions on how to overcome the barriers. People in other positions within a theater also have power to make change.

- Ambition. Show that you really want the job.

- Can visiting artists attend Board meetings? Can Boards sponsor internships?

- How can Boards be involved in succession planning? In audience development and engagement?

- Less traditional models of leadership (e.g., black feminist theory) call for non-hierarchical leadership where each person and their expertise are acknowledged and deeply inclusive leadership where the histories and aesthetics brought by the whole community are included. Some of these models call for working for joy instead of working for a product, and want to raise questions about what constitutes "quality". Flexibility and surprise are key elements for success.

- Data-driven approach to leadership includes looking at what has been studied in leadership. For example, highlighting stereotypes in hiring practices during a process of hiring actually ends up re-enforcing the stereotypes. However, highlighting that one can break through the schema of a "typical leader" during that hiring process brings about change in the practices.

- Each person has an element of power; rather than focusing on the lack of power or obstacles, an individual can exercise the power she has in a productive way to bring about change. That is a way of imagining one's own success.

- Through coalition building one can reframe one's own goals and strengths as aligning with the goals of the larger group, which makes those goals more acceptable for the group and more attainable for the individual.

- We can find creative ways of changing the current leadership paradigm and shift it toward including others: for example, let a group of decision makers participate in listing their favorite female playwrights or ways that they themselves have overcome stereotypical treatment, to buy their active engagement in creating a new paradigm.

- Strategies of what works and doesn't work

- Coalition-building, identifying strengths; for people of color, especially, strategizing with people who have more social privilege but who see the same structural barriers, to make sure everyone is heard at the table. However, too much coalition building can sometimes stand in the way of ultimately taking responsibility for the end result. Women should make sure they own the end result, make tough calls etc., as much as they collaborate on the process.

- Realizing that people around the table may read you differently than you think; learn to play to various audiences in order to be heard. Learn to present yourself to be essential at the table, to own your position of power. This presentation includes tone, inflection, deference, and how we carry ourselves.

- For people of color, presentation of self is different; people react differently to them. There is a cost to calling out or publicly mentioning that one is being treated unfairly.

- Self-reflection is important as a leadership quality. Look at your motives.

- Mentorship can help finding your true north, slow down and think.

d. Mentorship

- Mentorship differs from internship as one is based on a personality match while the other is skill-focused; for an internship, work is often project-focused and leads to letters of recommendation and negotiations of work opportunities.

- Mentorship for aspiring leaders is most useful for widening one's circle, especially for women

- Mentorship includes many variations:

  - Life partnership, a person who is always available

  - Gentle and brutally honest

  - Support for a variety of relationships with others

  - A resource for advice, for example, advice on what opens a door for opportunity

  - A collaboration with someone who wants to be there, offers opportunity, acts as an advocate, shows options, respects and models for mentee, shares experiences, and allows for mistakes

  - Helps you with your presentation as a professional, for example, teaches you how to talk about open, blank spaces in your career path

  - Can be a wide range of people from various sources at various institutions

- If there is clarity in purpose, the mentoring can be targeted toward that purpose, and then fade

- Can come from old and new networks

- Some people resist mentoring others out of fear of vulnerability, of being exposed as an "imposter," out of the need to feel perfect (i.e. afraid of negative feedback on own work), fear that the mentee will take over, feel it is too demanding.

- Sometimes "drive-by" mentorship can exist without the higher demands and still be useful.

- Peer mentorship is useful, especially for and with middle-aged professionals; they can help each other have longevity, make change, or sustain their pathway.

- When searching for a mentor, have specific/concrete questions to ask; do research, see the work, find the symbiotic aesthetic.

- Always report back so the mentor knows your accomplishments.

- Quick ways to connect with possible mentors:

  - observe someone, recognize them, say something nice

  - build a coalition

  - read the newspaper so you can talk about the world

  - consider paying the mentor (can talk to donor/funder about funding the relationship)

  - join a class

  - attend meetings and connect before and after

  - Leadership U (TCG)

  - be a reader at auditions

  - ask for help

e. Skills building

- What is needed in leadership training?

  - How to deal with pushback

  - How to have authority

  - How to not undermine my own confidence

  - How to keep organized

  - How to motivate the disaffected

  - Strategic planning

  - How to not think that you don't know anything

- Unpacking social location—understanding how power differences play out in social interactions, who gets opportunities

- How to address micro aggression/bias

- Learning that vulnerability can be an asset

- When to take risks

- Better skills for helping others

- Better understanding of how theater is moving into a digital world

- How to set boundaries

- How to navigate the cocktail hour ("walk in as if you are the host" was one person's advice)

- Art of social interaction

- Building partnerships

- Public speaking

- Interviewing skills

- Navigating the search process

- Resume skills

- Proposal writing

- Fundraising

- Project management

- Research development

- Business skills

- Learning to toot your own horn

- Maintaining long term relationships

- Networking up

- Being an asset and being viewed as one

- Working with people who want more power

- Consensus building

- Pointing out sexism/discrimination

- Not using words like "small" or "just"; work on vocabulary that is powerful, policing ourselves on it

- Board member retention

- Constructive conversations with staff

- Alcohol ethics

- How to gain trust from Board members

- Audience engagement/development

- Form our own search firms

- Succession planning

- Cohort building

- Becoming more flexible in that there is more than one way to do something

- Bring the artistic back into the board meetings

- How to be a strategist

- Diplomacy

- Empathy

- Effective writing skills for the right audience

- How to use social media effectively in the theater world

- How to not only go to rich people for fundraising

  - Explore other funding

  - Go back to the community

  - Explore where fundraising comes from

  - Take power back from "rich people"

- How to improve a deficit vs. building upon what exists

- How to talk about strengths vs. what can be improved during an interview

- Stop code switching for leadership: How to remain authentic, true to yourself, without having to accommodate every powerful person.

- Can skills like charisma be taught? Team building?

- How do women of color take leadership? If the structure of the workplace does not change, how can that person be successful? How is her voice valued? Is she taken seriously?

- Advice to early career professionals: ask questions, don't keep what you don't know on the down low (i.e., don't be afraid of what you don't know, you can learn it); learn budgeting; know that professional development needs to continually be done

f. Visioning Tomorrow

- How can women participate in making change tomorrow?

- How can field remain sustainable?

- Where can we provide points of leadership within an organization?

- How can we go from being angry about injustice to visioning what is better to making change? - How can we get help in each point of that process?

- How can we move from thinking about theater to thinking about the world? Should we just adopt the current structure of leadership/theater and work within it, or should we change it?

- How do we speak about ethics, values in our culture at large (non-religious)?

- Where are the art pieces that speak to these issues that we can perform?

- What is the audience/community of the future? What does fundraising look like with them? What does storytelling look like with them?

- Where will power lie tomorrow? Board, corporations, politicians, ... can artists change that? Can those structures be successful in our institutions? And what are the social values that come with those structures?

- Where is arts education? How can it be repaired?

- Who defines value?

- What is the role of government, funding in this visioning tomorrow?

- How do we include intersectionality in our conversations?

- How can leaders enact generosity? What would it look like?

- What can the feminine in you bring to the table such that collective change is irresistible?

- Which elements of female leadership stand out: adaptability, leading from behind, leading by consensus/inclusion, seeing the whole and real you and mentoring that, leading with sensitivity?

- How can we keep the feminine as part of leadership?

- How can women leaders prevent mentoring the next generation into our fears?

- How can we envision a tomorrow that is not binary between men and women?

- Theaters' staff should reflect the community they serve.

- Funders are starting to insist on business models (i.e. you need deep pockets behind you next to ticket sales and grants in order for us to fund you); privatization of public good (theater) is not positive.

After the afternoon breakout sessions, a joint session was convened to report back overarching questions for further dialogue in the field:

- What is female vs male in leadership and can these characteristics be redefined such that women can be fully themselves as leaders?

- How can fundraising be re-envisioned and moved from reliance on the 1% to inclusion of the 99%?

- How can we include in these conversations around change all the relevant players: boards, men, search firms, etc.? How can the conversation be kept wide enough?

- How can the arts survive as a field of employment? Will we need to change and augment fundraising, include government more deeply? What is the sustainable model?

- How can artists survive as human beings? How can we address work-life balance beyond child/family care?

- How can we support, grow, sustain various forms of mentorship which includes all generations and all levels of experience?

Questions attendees left with at the end of the convening are reported below. As these questions were collected from several small groups, there is some repetition.

- How will white women take leadership in dismantling institutional racism?

- How do I make communities understand that fundraising is essential to the revival of this art?

- With deadlines and time constraints...how can I create space to have these kinds of conversations in my next project?? How do I inspire others on a team to be interested in making time for this kind of real talk?

- How do we bring men into these conversations?

- How do I take everything I learned and apply it to the ever-changing world of fundraising in San Francisco?

- Who's going to/should make the list of competencies for the top jobs (AD/ED)?

- The "pipeline" into professional positions starts in Graduate Schools. Address how the Masters' Degree programs have been biased toward men applicants?

- Why can women found/birth a movement like the non-profit theater field, which they did—early founders of LORT included many women, but not maintain a voice and authority?

- How can we get the men at the top to this (or similar) conference? How can they feel responsible to implement change?

- Is there a way to create a sustainable community of female theater artists to continue to explore these questions and support one another's growth?

- How do we bring board members into these conversations?

- How do I make sure that many women working in the theater who do not have a public voice get paid a living wage for what they do?

- How do we elicit more generously from funders?

- How do we address "-ism's" when we see them?

- How do we mentor audiences to demand more diversity in leadership?

- How do we address unconscious bias in ourselves, and in those who hold leadership positions and therefore the power?

- Why do we obsessively find new plays but not new people i.e. childcare??

- How can we approach male dominated leadership and demand what we deserve in terms of career growth without being written off as difficult or entitled?

- What distinguishes me as a woman leader?

- Do we commit to changing the existing structure, or reject it and build a new one?

- In leadership searches, should we be grooming/sponsoring teens...or allow for an open place so others who might not be considered could apply?

- Are theater ADs/EDs and founders willing to let go of the current norms of funding to usher in unfamiliar possibilities for the future?

- What are leadership traits we value that remain unspoken? Can we identify them and make space for other styles of leadership?

- What is a safe space for skills-building?

- What can we do at the local/individual level to shift conversations or expectations, especially where we meet resistance?

- What aspects of my gender are assets of leadership?

- What steps can we take to bring men into this conversation?

- How are we changing the trajectory so there is more than one pathway to leadership for women? (Founders-Associate AD)

- What are the values attracted to correct funding models? (Business culture) How to re-center our mission?

- Effective ways of dealing with backlash

- How do I utilize what is feminine about me and manifest that in my leadership?

- In such a challenging economic moment, how do we support young women leaders? How can we make new paths that they will be ready to occupy in 10-15 years?

- What kind of artistic work best aligns with my skill set? How do I access mentors to groom me as an actor and theater leader? How do I really get what I want?

- Is there an actual value to skill building? Do the LORT leaders actually have these skills? Will it make a difference to getting the job?

- What can we do to change the status quo?

- Achieving work/life balance without the focus on child care (i.e. women who don't have kids but want a life outside of work!)

- How to convince search committees to move beyond their comfort zone.

- How can we utilize/promote the assets we develop and demonstrate in our NIL jobs [viewed as deficits by Board] and promote these assets proudly to convince Boards to hire us for leadership positions?

- How do we find female mentors when there are so few available?

- How to lead gatekeepers to recognize/value different models of leadership-consensus building-collaboration.

- How do we stay connected past today to grow as artists and leaders?

- How can I share and model these conversations with women at my theater? (take this home)

- How do we involve the people who have the power in this conversation? Can we get them to authentically support change?

- What would need to happen with a theater's board of directors to increase funding for diverse programming? Where and how do we find individuals who will carry and advocate for their cause? How can we start <u>today</u>?

- How can we change the paradigm to value "women's skills" instead of assuming that we must teach women to be more like men in order to be successful?

- How do we take these conversations and questions, and turn them into actions and plans?

- One thing I heard that I will take with me? 1. How can older women be employed to share our resources? 2. How can we ensure that artists get a job with the new legislation?

- How might we engage emerging arts leader networks in this conversation as we shape the future?

- How to fix the search firms

- Formal authority- want to learn more about this (and its opposite)

- If one of the requirements of true mentorship is helping to expand a mentees network, then how do we provide access to people not yet "in the door" who may want to break into theater?

- What would a theater led primarily by women look and feel like in the future?

- Can we set up a forum for the women who came today to mentor younger participants from the conference?

- How do we teach our youth that it's okay- more than okay- to ask for help, or opinions, or guidance? And then, that it's okay to be wrong?

- How do we build a shared holding and sharing space for our common knowledge and questions to create support going forward?

- Can we form our own search firm?

- To the female coworker who can do no wrong/never accept blame/ OR use the excuse "that's not my area of expertise"- How can we motivate them to break out of that mindset?

- How do we keep this conversation alive beyond the conference?

- How do we get men to code switch?

- How do we educate board members/end bias in the interview process? How do we address cultural misogyny?

- How do we dismantle the internal structures in ourselves that perpetuate inequity?

Addressing these, and other, questions will require concerted efforts and funding. Our recommendation is that service organizations, for example TCG, collaborate with their membership to obtain the necessary foundation support to gather data on these topics and then promote the findings that are gleaned from their data to help the field progress into the 21st Century.

A.C.T. Women's Leadership Conference

Photo credit: Stefan Cohen