

Massachusetts Women's Leadership Index

Spring 2021 Release



DEVELOPED AND PRESENTED BY:



Institute for
Women's Leadership

Nichols College

Reflections from...



Susan West Engelkemeyer, Ph.D., *President of Nichols College*

As I approach my retirement from Nichols College, we face one of the biggest challenges seen by this institution, country, and world: the COVID-19 pandemic. At Nichols, we embrace adversity head on as an opportunity for change. Similarly, women striving for leadership roles have and continue to face both challenges and opportunities in the workforce. The Massachusetts Women's Leadership Index (MWLI) is a valuable point of reflection and this year, we saw a rise in representation, with an increased aggregate score of 45/100. But as we look to the future, much work remains. During my presidency, the Institute for Women's Leadership (IWL) was established and has committed to the empowerment and advancement of all students. As the leader of a business-focused institution, I am proud to note that half of the Nichols senior leadership team and 56% of our faculty are women. Together, we embrace the responsibility of educating the next generation of leaders towards a diverse and equitable tomorrow.



Jean Beaupré, *Lead Researcher*

It is with mixed sentiments that we proudly release the 2021 Index. Progress has certainly been made, fueled by more female CEOs, politicians, and public leaders. So although slowly, we are going in the right direction. However, most of these numbers do not yet reflect the impact of the pandemic, and we worry about both the short-term and long-term consequences for women in the workforce and leadership. The past year has seen layoffs, stalled careers, and stress for all workers, but more so for women. At the time of this publication, women's representation in the workforce is at its lowest rate since 1988. Given the many positive impacts that female leaders have on their organizations and staff, it is in the best interest of all that we maintain and strengthen our focus on developing and supporting women. The coming months and years will be critical; we at Nichols will continue to focus on preparing our students to positively impact their workplaces and on measuring progress, with our next Index to be released in 2023.



Victoria Palkon '24, *Research Intern*

As part of the Institute for Women's Leadership and the research team for this crucial index report, I have been enlightened on women's leadership here in Massachusetts and throughout America. I have noticed there has been a slight uptick in women's leadership in some sectors, but the others have remained stagnant and/or have fallen. To achieve equality in leadership, I believe we need drastic restructuring and training for those in private, public, and education sectors to undo years of gender stereotyping. Further, we need to promote the importance of having women in the workplace and especially in leadership positions. From this research, I hope the women on our campus and everywhere will gain insight and motivation to keep striving towards their goals and break through the glass ceiling.



Madison Perrotti '23, *Research Intern*

During my time so far as a female student at Nichols College, my leadership skills have been broadened and strengthened in preparation for the future. Through my experiences as an athlete, Vice President of Student Advocacy, admissions ambassador, panelist for the Institute for Women's Leadership, and in the classroom, I have been able to further develop who I am and get excited for who I will become in the workforce. Participating in the development of the Massachusetts Women's Leadership Index was an exceptional learning opportunity. This index not only provides insight into the progress we have made but also the immense amount of work still left to achieve equality. The 2021 index, taking place in the context of a pandemic, is further proof of the instability and adversity women in leadership continue to face in all sectors of our society, as well their resilience and contributions.

The Massachusetts Women's Leadership Index: 2021 Release

First issued in 2015, the Massachusetts Women's Leadership Index (MWLI) was developed by the Institute for Women's Leadership at Nichols College to assess and monitor the status of women in power in the Commonwealth. To most broadly reflect women's representation in leadership, a cross-section of key indicators was selected in political, corporate, nonprofit, and educational sectors. Female representation is measured against two comparative perspectives: how Massachusetts measures up against gender parity representation, and how Massachusetts compares to the rest of the United States. The gender wage gap was incorporated due to the importance of compensation as an indicator of power. The methodology is outlined on page 4 and may be applied to other states in order to assess both current standings and progress over time. Released every other year, the 2021 issue is the fourth index, providing both a current snapshot and a comparison to the three previous indexes.

Focused on Leadership

The goal of the MWLI is to contribute to discussions about the role of gender in organizations and society, which we do by focusing specifically on women's representation in the upper echelons of leadership. The categories included in the MWLI — corporate, nonprofit, public, and gender wage gap — represent the opportunity for power and decision-making that affect organizations and society in both the long- and short-term. Leadership is about influence, and the potential impact that leaders in these sectors can have in the Commonwealth is immense. It is for these reasons that the MWLI is specifically focused on leadership with the goal of assessing changes in women's representation in leadership over time.

Measurement Matters

In 1980, the first woman took the reins of an S&P 500 company, resulting in a shift from 0% to 0.2% female CEOs. At that time, women were 3.2% of the U.S. Congress and made 60.2¢ for every dollar a man earned¹. Today in 2021, we can celebrate that those statistics have increased to 5.8%, 26.4% and 82¢. Despite these gains, there is still a long way to go to reach parity. In fact, it is estimated that it will take more than a century to close gender gaps across a variety of factors.

Awareness of progress, declines, and stagnation is a critical first step. The MWLI attempts to shine a light on our own Commonwealth through ongoing assessment, in the hopes that equity can be reached sooner than predicted. Unless a problem is named and defined, we can't address it. It is our hope that we can collectively continue to focus on the necessary perspectives, programs, and policies needed for forward movement.

Findings

A variety of key indicators of leadership in Massachusetts was assessed, in business, nonprofit, and public sectors. After comparing women's representation in these leadership positions to both parity and the national averages, a composite score of 45 of 100 was calculated. This score shows progress from 36 from our first index in 2015.

Category	National	Massachusetts	2021	2019	2017	2015
Corporate leadership						
CEOs ²	5.8%	8%	2	0	1	0
Board seats ³	21.2%	24%	5	4	2	1
Executive officers ⁴	21%	16.3%	2	3	1	1
Nonprofit leadership (including education)						
CEOs ⁵	25%	26%	6	5	5	5
Board seats ⁶	36%	35%	6	6	6	6
Public leadership						
State legislature ⁷	30.8%	31%	6	5	6	6
Mayors ⁸	23%	27.7%	6	4	5	2
Police chiefs ⁹	3%	4.3%	1	0	0	1
School superintendents (public) ¹⁰	26.7%	38.4%	8	8	8	9
Gender Wage Gap ¹¹	82%	81%	3	5	5	5
TOTAL MWLI			45/100	40/100	39/100	36/100

Score calculation (based on % of women):

Parity (50%) or above: 10/10	25-29.9%: 5
45-49.9%: 9	20-24.9%: 4
40-44.9%: 8	15-19.9%: 3
35-39.9%: 7	10-14.9%: 2
30-34.9%: 6	5-9.9%: 1
	Less than 5%: 0

Pay gap calculation:

96-100%: 10
91-95.9%: 8
86-90.9%: 6
81-85.9%: 4
76-80.9%: 2
<75%: 0

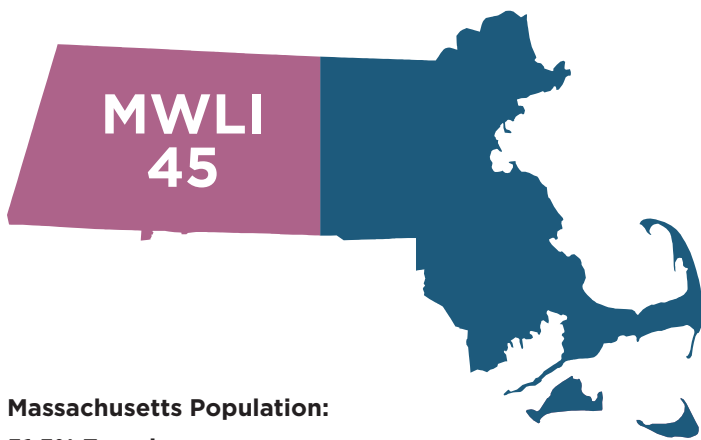
Adjustment for 1%+ above/below national average: +/-1

Maximum score in each category: 10/Minimum: 0

Methodology

The statistics above reflect women's representation in leadership positions across multiple sectors, using the most recent and credible information available. Each statistic was measured against similar statistics for men, and then compared to parity (the ultimate goal) as well as the national average. (For the purposes of this Index, parity is defined as 50% of the equivalent male statistic, a commonly used metric.) Additionally, the gender wage gap was included as a reflection of the importance of compensation as it relates to power. Definitions and details can be found in the endnotes.

Graphical Representation of Findings: Some Forward Movement



Source: uscensus.gov, as of July 2019



Corporate CEOs



Corporate Board Seats



Corporate Executive Officers



Nonprofit CEOs



Nonprofit Board Seats



State Legislature



Mayors (cities of 30k +)



Police Chiefs



School Superintendents



Gender Wage Gap



See previous page for detailed statistics.

Making Progress, but Facing an Uncertain Future

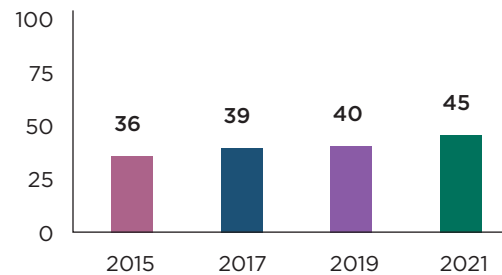
This year, we were pleased to see an increase in our overall index from 40 to 45, reflecting that there are more female leaders than in 2019. In particular, more women are serving as CEOs, in elected political positions, and although still a small number, police chiefs. So progress has been made, albeit perhaps slower than some would like.

Although there is reason to be hopeful, the circumstances of the last year cause concern. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the entire world population, but women have specifically borne a heavy burden. In the U.S., women lost more jobs than men in 2020, numbering more than five million.¹² They are also spending more time on unpaid work, including household chores like cooking and home schooling their children studying remotely.¹³ Even those still fully in the workplace have faced burnout; remote professionals are working more hours than ever.¹⁴ The impact on working mothers has been especially acute. According to a recent McKinsey study, the majority of mothers report spending more hours on household duties, with 40% saying at least three additional hours each day. As a result, more than one in five working women with children under 10 are considering leaving the workforce altogether.¹⁵ And troublingly, women of color have been disproportionately impacted, with higher rates of unemployment and illness.¹⁶

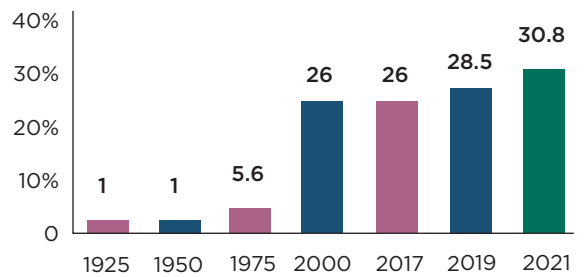
At the same time, women's leadership has been incredibly valuable over the past year. Countries with female leaders have shown better COVID outcomes. And at a time when employee engagement is so critical, female bosses tend to have more engaged staff.¹⁷ Although hope is on the horizon with the expanding access to vaccines, there is significant concern about the post-pandemic effects on women's ascension and aspiration to leadership positions. The longer-term outcome of having so many women lose their jobs, stall their careers, or opt-out all together is uncertain. As the world slowly emerges from the pandemic, we believe special attention should be placed on getting women back in the workforce, contributing, developing, and maximizing their impact. Suggestions include increased workplace flexibility, focus on mental wellness, realistic expectations, and proactive leadership development programs.

From our end, we at Nichols College and the Institute for Women's Leadership will continue our mission of preparing the leaders of tomorrow, including helping them develop an appreciation for the diverse workforce they will soon join. We will also continue our focus on assessment with our next Index in 2023, which we hope will again positively contribute to the conversation around gender and leadership. We encourage your feedback and ideas. Contact iwl@nichols.edu or 508-213-2443.

MWLI, 2015-2021

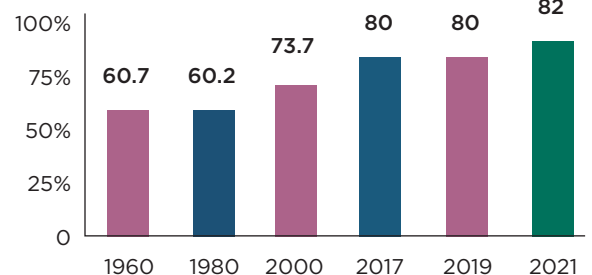


Women in MA Legislature, 1925-present (in percentages)



Source: cawp.rutgers.edu and www.mawomenscaucus.com

Gender Wage Gap in U.S., 1960-present (in percentages)



Source: nwl.org/resources/wage-gap-over-time

Endnotes

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About Nichols

Founded in 1815, Nichols College is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges and by the International Assembly for Collegiate Business Education. Within a supportive community, Nichols transforms today's students into tomorrow's leaders through a dynamic, career-focused business and professional education.

About the IWL

The Institute for Women's Leadership (IWL) at Nichols College was founded in 2013 under the direction of President Susan West Engelkemeyer and the Board of Trustees. Developing



Rachel Ferreira,
Director of the IWL

intelligent, ethical leaders of tomorrow has long been the driving purpose of Nichols College. The IWL is now an integral part of that goal, in recognition of the unique leadership potential that exists within each of our female students. Through campus initiatives, industry partnerships, research analysis, and thought leadership, the Institute for Women's Leadership at Nichols College focuses on the issues and challenges impacting women in business, with goals of developing the leadership potential of female students, and serving as a resource and authoritative voice on women's leadership for the community at large.

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