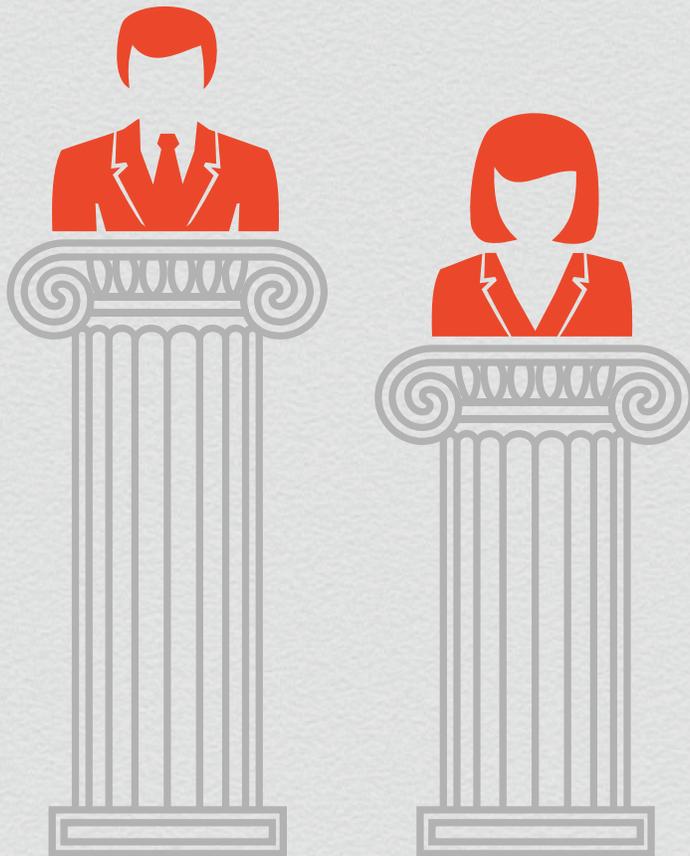


# The Gender Gap in Art Museum Directorships



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# Summary of Findings

*The purpose of the Association of Art Museum Directors is to support its members in increasing the contribution of art museums to society.*

— Excerpt from the Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD) Mission

The art within our great museums reflects and shapes our culture. As the directors of the leading visual arts institutions in North America, AAMD members have an unrivalled platform to influence the role that art plays in our society.

Though women have made great strides towards equality in society, a gender gap still exists. This gap in society is also present in our art museum directorships, and the AAMD and the National Center for Arts Research (NCAR) undertook this study to understand the gender gap and explore potential factors to help its member institutions advance towards greater equality.

Across all AAMD member museums, women hold less than 50% of directorships, and the average female director's salary lags behind that of the average male director. The overall disparities in the number of female art museum directors and in their salaries are mostly driven by the largest museums. These museums have operating budgets of more than \$15 million and represent roughly the top quarter of member museums by operating budget. At these largest museums, female directors earn 71 cents on average for every dollar earned by male directors. For the other three quarters of member museums with budgets of less than \$15 million, female directors on average earn \$1.02 for every dollar that male directors earn.

Other factors that may have influenced the salary and representation differentials noted above were examined through quantitative analysis and interviews with executive search consultants who work with art museums. The position a director held before entering his or her current position was found to have effects on average salary. If the person attained the position through internal promotion, he or she was at a salary disadvantage when compared to peers who were hired from external institutions. This observation was reinforced by the observations of the search consultants interviewed, who stated that interviewing on the open market enabled candidates to command a salary premium. Directors who had previously held a non-director job, such as deputy director or curator, were also at a salary disadvantage when compared to their peers who had previously held the top position at another institution. These observations about position prior to the current directorship are true for both men and women, but the number of women who have become directors through internal promotion is greater, and these factors may have contributed in part to the salary disparities. However, these observations are based upon a single year of data that do not tell if this is part of a gradual change towards greater equity.

The insights of the consultants interviewed enable further understanding of the historical and ongoing trends. Overall, our interviewees observed that the historical bias towards men as art museum directors has been rapidly changing over the past five to ten years. This change has been accomplished through the cultural shifts both within museums and in broader society and with the emergence of new generations of leaders. The search consultants drew attention to both institutional and individual barriers to equality, but all expressed optimism that this fast pace of change will persist and that advances will continue to be made towards equality.

# Introduction and Context

In the past two years, there have been high-profile discussions on women's leadership prompted by events such as the publications of Sheryl Sandberg's *Lean In* and Anne-Marie Slaughter's article "Why Women Still Can't Have It All" in *The Atlantic*.<sup>1</sup> Across many sectors in the United States, women are underrepresented in leadership and receive comparably less compensation than their male counterparts. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics found that women have made advances in workforce participation and educational attainment in the last four decades but that women's pay still lags behind that of men; the median pay of women is 82% of that of men.<sup>2</sup> In government, women only held 18.5% of the seats in Congress in 2013.<sup>3</sup> Within the for-profit sector, less than 5% of Fortune 500 and Fortune 1000 companies are led by female CEOs.<sup>4</sup> At non-profits, the GuideStar 2013 Nonprofit Compensation Report cites that the median pay for female CEOs lags behind that of men across all budget categories. In addition, less than 50% of CEOs are female at non-profits with operating budget categories above \$1 million. At the largest non-profits, those with budgets of over \$50 million, women only hold 16% of CEO positions.<sup>5</sup>

Within the research on the broad set of museums (and not exclusively art museums), the work of Marjorie Schwarzer traced the history of female employees. Her book chapter "Women in the Temple: Gender and Leadership in Museums" discusses the changing role of women in leadership and discusses the historical bias towards male leadership. She found that in 2007, women across all levels earned 78% of what men in comparable roles earned, women were directors of only 47% of small and mid-sized museums, and that only 25% of the largest museums were led by a female director.<sup>6</sup> The American Alliance of Museums' (AAM) *2012 National Comparative Museum Salary Study*, which used different metrics, shows that 57.2% of directors/CEOs/presidents are female, but that the median income for females in this leadership role was 78% of the median income for male directors/CEOs/presidents.<sup>7</sup>

Our research seeks a greater understanding of how art museums fit into this picture. Through a combination of quantitative analysis and interviews, we examined the current and historical factors of the gender gap in art museum directorships. Following the research findings, we will also introduce potential resources and considerations from other industries, and finally suggest some areas for further research in the conclusion.

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1 Anne-Marie Slaughter, "Why Women Still Can't Have It All," *The Atlantic*, last modified 13 June 2012. <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2012/07/why-women-still-cant-have-it-all/309020/>

2 U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Women in the Labor Force: A Databook," *BLS Reports: Report 1040*, February 2013. <http://www.bls.gov/cps/wlf-databook-2012.pdf>

3 As of January 2014, women held only 18.5% of the seats in congress (20/100 senate, 79/435 house). "Women in the U.S. Congress 2014," *Center for American Women and Politics*, last modified January 2014. Accessed 1 February 2014: [http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/fast\\_facts/levels\\_of\\_office/documents/cong.pdf](http://www.cawp.rutgers.edu/fast_facts/levels_of_office/documents/cong.pdf)

4 "Women CEOs of the Fortune 1000," *Catalyst.org*, last modified 15 January 2014. Accessed 1 February 2014: <http://www.catalyst.org/knowledge/women-ceos-fortune-1000>

5 "Executive Compensation: Gender," *GuideStar.org*. Accessed 1 February 2014: <http://www.guidestar.org/ViewCmsImage.aspx?ContentID=5208>

6 Marjorie Schwarzer, "Women in the Temple: Gender and Leadership in Museums," in *Gender, Sexuality, and Museums*, ed. Amy K. Levin, 16-27. New York: Routledge, 2010. This chapter was a variation of the earlier article "Women in the Temple" in *Museum News*.

7 Philip M. Katz, *2012 National Comparative Museum Salary Study*, Washington, DC: American Alliance of Museums, 2012.

The authors would like to thank the following executive search consultants for their participation: James Abruzzo, Sarah James, Laurie Nash, Sally M. Sterling, Linda Sweet, and Naree Viner. We also extend thanks to AAMD members for their participation in the survey.

# Research Findings

## **SALARY AND QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS:**

*What is the current state of women in art museum directorships? What are some factors that may drive the gender gap?*

In 2013, the Association of Art Museum Directors conducted a survey of its members and received 211 responses. The data collected included the institution's operating budget, the institutional endowment, the institution director (or top official's) salary and the director's gender. Additional research was collected on each director's tenure in his or her current position and on the position held prior to his or her current directorship; previous position data was found for 193 of the 211 directors. The data has two major limitations: the salaries were self-reported and thus may not represent total compensation from all sources, and the financial data represents a single year and thus does not account for extraordinary circumstances that may affect operating budgets in shorter time-spans. Initial analysis showed budget to be a key factor that influenced salary, and endowment to be a less useful indicator due to its reduced ties to ongoing activity.<sup>8</sup> To compare across museums of various sizes, we used two key measures: absolute salary dollars and salary as a percent of operating budget. As an example of the latter metric, a salary of \$100,000 on a \$10 million budget would be 1% of operating budget.

Out of the 211 directors included in the AAMD survey, 90 directors were female; women held 42.6% of art museum directorships. On average, female directors earned 79 cents for every dollar that male directors earned.<sup>9</sup> This leadership and pay gap are further elucidated by segmenting museums into categories based on their operating budgets, as there is a large difference between a museum with a \$2 million operating budget and one with a \$50 million operating budget. Segmented by operating budget, we observe that the gender disparities are concentrated in museums with a budget over \$15 million. Below \$15 million, there is a leveling point in terms of both percentage of female directors and the differences between men's and women's salaries as a percent of operating budget (see Table 1).

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<sup>8</sup> Endowment data was only available for 76% of the museums included in the survey. The other 24% either did not have data on the endowment or did not have an institutional endowment. As a point of reference, where there was an endowment, it ranged between 2% to 940% of the operating budget.

<sup>9</sup> The same trend that female directors earn less on average is observed, though less drastically so, when using median salary (rather than mean salary): women earn 90 cents on the dollar that men earn.

**TABLE 1****Art museum director characteristics by museum operating budget**

MUSEUM OPERATING BUDGET	NUMBER OF MUSEUMS	PERCENT FEMALE DIRECTORS	AVERAGE SALARY AS PERCENT OF OPERATING BUDGET		
			ALL	MALE	FEMALE
<b>\$100 million +</b>	4	0%	0.4%	0.4%	-
<b>\$45–\$100 million</b>	6	33%	0.8%	0.9%	0.6%
<b>\$30–\$45 million</b>	6	0%	1.5%	1.5%	-
<b>\$20–\$30 million</b>	14	21%	1.6%	1.6%	1.5%
<b>\$15–\$20 million</b>	16	38%	2.2%	2.3%	2.0%
<b>\$10–\$15 million</b>	20	50%	2.3%	2.3%	2.3%
<b>\$6–\$10 million</b>	31	55%	3.1%	3.1%	3.2%
<b>\$4–\$6 million</b>	36	36%	4.1%	4.3%	4.0%
<b>\$2–\$4 million</b>	58	52%	5.5%	5.5%	5.5%
<b>\$1–\$2 million</b>	17	35%	8.3%	7.0%	9.1%
<b>Under \$1 million</b>	3	*	*	*	*

Note: (\*) not reported due to low sample size

At museums with budgets under \$15 million, women are near parity with men on holding directorships and are in fact out-earning them on average. For these museums, women hold 48% of directorships and make \$1.02 for every dollar that men make.<sup>10</sup> Within all but one sub-segment of these museums, women’s salaries as a percent of operating budget are comparable to those of men: women’s salaries as percent of budget are between 0.1 percentage points below to 0.3 percentage points above men’s. For example, in the \$4-6 million budget subcategory, women’s salaries average 4.3% of budget and men’s average 4.0%; thus, women have a 0.3 percentage point advantage over men within this subcategory.

At museums with budgets over \$15 million, there are fewer female directors than male directors, and female directors earn less on average than their male counterparts. In this segment, women hold 24% of directorships and make 71 cents for every dollar that men make. Within all sub-segments, women hold less than half of the directorships and earn less as a percent of budget and on an absolute dollar basis than their male peers.

This finding that the leadership and pay gap for women is concentrated in the largest art museums, or those with budgets over \$15 million, begs the question: What factors beyond museum budget size will help us understand the dynamics that influence hiring and pay, and are there differences in these factors across gender? Examples of these other factors include tenure, prior professional experience, race or ethnicity, geography and age.

To further understand other drivers of salary disparity, we analyzed two factors: whether the director was an internal or an external candidate during the search process and the director’s previous job title.

<sup>10</sup> When using median income, women earn 98% of what men do on average for this segment of museums with operating budgets under \$15 million.

To equalize across institutions of varying budget size, we created a new metric: variance in salary as a percent of operating budget from category average. For example, the average director in a museum with a \$10-15 million budget has a salary that is 2.3% of the operating budget. If a director at a museum in this budget category was earning a salary representing 2.1% of the institution’s operating budget, he or she would have a -0.2 percentage point variance from the category average. Using variance from category average allows us to look at trends across the budget categories.

When comparing directors who were promoted internally to their budget category average, we find that those promoted internally are at a 0.11 percentage point disadvantage to the average. By contrast, directors who came from other institutions have a 0.10 percentage point advantage in salary as a percent of operating budget when compared to all their peers in similar-sized institutions. Overall, the average director promoted internally is at a 0.21 percentage point disadvantage (0.11 + 0.10) to their externally-hired counterparts. This observation, that directors promoted internally earn less than their peers hired from external institutions, holds when looking at either male or female directors. For both male and female directors, internal hires are on average earning less than their category average; external hires are earning more than their category average (see Table 2). Of the 80 female directors for whom data was available, 25% were hired from within the museum. Of the 113 male directors for whom data was available, 13% were hired from within the museum. The greater percentage of female directors who are internally hired may contribute in part to the pay gap, but this is not an absolute conclusion. Further research into how the factors are related is warranted.

**TABLE 2**

**Variance in salary as percent of operating budget by type of hire (internal vs. external)**

TYPE OF HIRE	VARIANCE FROM BUDGET CATEGORY AVERAGE (PERCENTAGE POINTS)		
	ALL	MALE	FEMALE
<b>Internal</b>	-0.11%	-0.10%	-0.11%
<b>External</b>	0.10%	0.18%	-0.01%

As an additional point of reference, we examined directors’ salaries based on the directors’ previous job titles. Five main title categories were found: director/CEO, deputy director, curator (including chief curator), education and development. Of these, the first three were considered; there were not enough directors whose previous titles were in the education and development segments for meaningful analysis. Although these previous title factors are not always separable from the internal/external analysis reported on above, they do provide an interesting point of comparison.<sup>11</sup>

Directors who had previously run another institution as a director/CEO are at a 0.19 percentage point salary advantage over their budget category average. Of organizations with budgets of \$15 million and above, 60% have a director with directorship experience elsewhere, whereas that figure is 54% for museums with budgets below \$15 million. Former curators, whether internally promoted or hired externally, were near parity with the average salary for their budget group, with a small 0.06 percentage point disadvantage. Deputy directors, whether internally promoted or hired externally, were at the

<sup>11</sup> Directors who previously held a director/CEO position are external hires by definition.

greatest disadvantage, with their salaries as a percent of operating budget trailing their budget category average by 0.37 percentage points. This relative advantage (with former directors having the largest salary advantage and former deputy directors having the largest salary disadvantage) also holds when analyzing either male or female directors (see Table 3). Of the 70 female directors for whom data was available, 43% were directors at their previous institutions, 33% were curators, and 24% were deputy directors. Of the 98 male directors for whom data was available, 64% were directors at their previous institutions, 21% were curators, and 14% were deputy directors. As with the internal/external analysis above, it is difficult to state causations, but the greater percentage of men with director experience prior to their current position may contribute in part to the observed salary gap between men and women. As more women become art museum directors, they may command higher salaries at their second or third directorship, and this may lead to greater equity overall. However, the historic data is not available to understand what trends are occurring, and all data presented here captures only a single point in time.

**TABLE 3**

**Variance in salary as percent of operating budget by job title in previous position**

JOB TITLE IN PREVIOUS POSITION	VARIANCE FROM BUDGET CATEGORY AVERAGE (PERCENTAGE POINTS)		
	ALL	MALE	FEMALE
<b>Deputy Director</b>	-0.37%	-0.23%	-0.49%
<b>Curator</b>	-0.06%	-0.12%	0.00%
<b>Director</b>	0.19%	0.27%	0.02%

**INTERVIEWS WITH EXECUTIVE SEARCH CONSULTANTS WHO WORK WITH ART MUSEUMS:**

*What are historical and future trends that affect the state of women in art museum directorships? What general observations about differences in male and female candidates shed additional light on the gender gap?*

To further understand other factors that may contribute to the gender gap in art museum directorships, we spoke with six executive search consultants who work with art museums. All had at least ten years of experience recruiting in art museums, and many had experience with other related non-profit fields such as education, social services organizations, and other arts and cultural institutions. Each acknowledged the difficulty in making broad generalizations and their own reluctance to perpetuate stereotypes but recognized the value of their past experiences and observations in advancing the discussion around gender equality. The purpose of the interviews and the interviewees' intents are not to assign blame but to allow stakeholders in art museums to benefit from a wide range of executive search experiences.

Overall, consultants cited the historical basis of the gender gap while emphasizing that the gap has been narrowing over the past 5–10 years and expressed optimism that progress towards equity will continue. There was agreement from all of our interviewees that talent is not the issue, and that there are candidates with strong qualifications across both genders.

In general, consultants cited two major types of barriers to women's equality in art museum directorships: internal or personal factors, and external or institutional factors. Our interviewees did not emphasize both areas equally; they tended to discuss one or the other more based on their personal experiences and observations. Of the external factors, consultants discussed board and search committee composition, board member beliefs, museum size and collections focus, institutional support, training programs, and the gender split of the executive search/recruiting space itself. Of the internal factors, candidate assertiveness or confidence, negotiating skills, loyalty to current situation (family or institutional), and desire for a larger institution were the most commonly mentioned areas. However, one important dynamic that crosses both factors is generational differences; these generational changes have influenced the cultures driving decisions, the people making decisions, and the candidates and directors themselves.

Art museum boards of trustees and the designated search committees are important players in both hiring and compensation. While boards may have asked consultants for a candidate pool that is diverse with regards to both gender and ethnicity in the past, a diverse candidate pool is now expected from search consultants. Explicit requests for gender diversity have become less common, with the exception of universities or government groups. These organizations are more likely to have written diversity requests. The diversity of boards and search committees themselves has increased, though viewpoints diverged over whether boards are at gender parity. Interviewees did agree that the stereotype of male-dominated boards existed in the past and that this formed part of the historical basis underlying the gender gap. Some individual board members may be influenced by their own images of a leader being what one interviewee called “a family man” in the stereotype of the powerful male politician with a picturesque family, but this attitude is not prevalent. One interviewee discussed the natural affinity people have to other people who look like them, and the unconscious biases that can be witnessed in different board members. An opposing viewpoint from other interviewees cited museum trustees as “more sophisticated” than other non-profit trustees due to their experience on several boards and broader exposure to ideas, as well as the greater presence on boards of women with extensive professional backgrounds. The individual board histories, combined with generational and regional tendencies, likely contribute to a wide variation in how much the board's demographic diversity and diversity of beliefs affect the hiring process.

Another cultural factor mentioned by our interviewees was the differences in museum sizes and types. Museum size has largely been addressed in the data analysis above, but the discussion on museum type is less clear-cut. A few interviewees discussed the recent trends in women becoming directors of specialized museums, especially ones with a contemporary focus or university art museums. One cited that contemporary art is growing in prestige, has a more open culture, and attracts a more diverse group of scholars, presaging a more diverse population of contemporary art museum directors. The transferability of these specialized skills to the large encyclopedic museums was not widely agreed upon; one interviewee stated that these museums are specialization-blind when selecting a leader, whereas other interviewees cited the dominance of traditional European art in these same large museums.

Many interviewees named broader structural dynamics as a key influence on the changing role of women as art museum leaders. One likened the director path to the path in academia, noting that the most productive work years often coincide with child-rearing years. Another cited that the first generation of female art museum directors had to choose between not having a family and being absentee mothers. The demands on time of the top job are also cited as a barrier for both men and women, and one interviewee found museum boards to be less family-friendly than the boards of social service non-profits.

In addition, the rise of dual-income households has made the older culture of mobility less attractive; director candidates, whether male or female, often must take into consideration the spouse's income and job prospects in the new city. The prospects for dual-income households are further complicated when both spouses are in the arts. One consultant advised that boards should take combined household income and security into account when crafting compensation packages for their directors, as a move may mean risking the spouse's job. Regardless of gender, director positions are widely acknowledged as highly time-intensive, and this will play some role when candidates plan their careers.

Beyond external issues that may discourage gender diversity, there are factors that may encourage more women to become directors. Professional development and training programs, such as the Getty Leadership Institute and the Center for Curatorial Leadership, are seen as encouraging diversity through their class compositions. The composition of the recruiting space itself has also changed; one interviewee stated that search consultants for the arts used to be evenly split between men and woman, but that the majority of the field is now women. Finally, the museum field as a whole was cited as being increasingly feminized, with more women both entering museums and rising through the ranks.

External or structural issues that arise from our cultural past shape the environments in which women both develop and are promoted. If our interviewees detected bias in the way women were hired or compensated, it was generally subconscious on the part of decision-makers at all levels. These consultants were well-versed on the discussions surrounding gender in hiring, and many emphasized their role to help both candidates and boards overcome cultural biases where it still exists.

Discussing the different ways in which men and women approach decisions and discussions is a delicate subject; our interviewees were conscious of drawing out examples for the purpose of enabling reflection and not perpetuating stereotypes. The internal, or personal, ways that gender can affect decisions and discussions were again colored by each interviewee's experience and views. It is important to note that some consultants stated there are no differences, or negligible ones, between men and women in the search process. Even when seeing differences in the way many women present themselves, one stated that, "Gender doesn't matter for the best candidates." Again, the historical basis for differences was cited, and our interviewees mentioned a convergence of thinking for the younger generation of directors. This convergence over time is a combination of women adopting "traditionally" male characteristics such as ambition to lead large institutions or through men adopting "traditionally" female attitudes such as concern for family situation, whether for the spouse, aging parents or school-aged children.

There was broad although not unanimous agreement that women tended to opt out of participation in director searches at greater rates than men. The reasons behind opting out for both genders are many: the museum's location and prestige, loyalty to the current situation (typically either family or institution), and ability to envision himself/herself in the role. If our interviewees detected attitudes that continue to differ for women, it was around areas such as comfort in their current positions, loyalty to work in progress at their institutions, a questioning of whether a bigger museum is better and some reluctance to take on a bigger role or a bigger institution. Various terms were used to describe the differences in attitudes: appetite, ambition, desire and confidence. Some shifts in culture, such as the rise of deputy director positions and formal training programs, may help the men and women who have different approaches, but consultants again declared it difficult to generalize about either gender.

Within the search process, there were diverging views on whether women interview and negotiate differently from their male counterparts. About half of our interviewees said there are generally no

differences between how men and women interview. The dissenting half spoke about the differences in types of language used by men and women as well as the amount of confidence projected. For example, women were said to speak more in terms of tasks (and thus to sound more like deputy directors); in general, women were also more cautious in discussing the museum for which they were interviewing. On the other side, men were generally said to speak in terms of broad visions, to be more prepared with key metrics, and to be less cautious about making assumptions about their potential organization. Regarding confidence, the executive search consultants shared stories on both sides – of women who did not project enough confidence to convince the board that they were capable leaders, to women who did project confidence but were seen by some board members as “too aggressive.” One interviewee discussed this paradox for women: the need to be seen as a strong leader but the simultaneous need to be aware of how others may perceive the leadership projections of a woman in a different light from that of a man.

Beyond interviewing, there was general agreement that the quality and type of references provided were equal across both male and female candidates. Within negotiations, two consultants stated that women used to be less prepared when it came to negotiating but that this trend has changed such that men and women negotiate with the same information as women now do better research and preparation. However, the majority of consultants observed that women negotiate differently from men in terms of preparation, tone, and approach, and these differences can be detrimental to women’s salaries. In general, women were seen as less likely to negotiate, less prepared, and less creative in proposing different types of compensation packages. Our interviewees noted that men were more likely to have talked to their peers before negotiating, that men generally asked for more money than did women at both initial negotiation and contract renewal times, and that men were less likely to trust that the board committee knows fair market compensation. In addition, one consultant observed that women tended to ask more questions around compensation related to security, such as health benefits and retirement, whereas men were more likely to propose riskier performance-based bonuses. One explanation offered on why men and women candidates negotiate differently was based on relationships: men tended to view compensation negotiations as a rite of passage, whereas women tended to want to begin their board relationships on a positive note, and this sensitivity led to less negotiating during the search process. Our interviewees also offered up potential solutions, ranging from asking for more help from the recruiter or an independent compensation consultant to discussing compensation and negotiations more openly with peers. In addition, candidates who were already sitting directors had more leverage based on their current compensation packages; as candidates gain more experience both as directors and in negotiations, they become better advocates for themselves and their institutions.

Throughout the interviews, the search consultants mentioned the overall cultural trends that influence both art museum environments and the mindsets of key stakeholders. Our interviewees believe that these generational shifts have narrowed the gap and will continue to advance equity within art museums. The historical gender gap is on the decline, and they expect to see more female directors working alongside their male peers to ensure that the art museums they shepherd continue to thrive.

**42.6%** of AAMD art museum directors are women



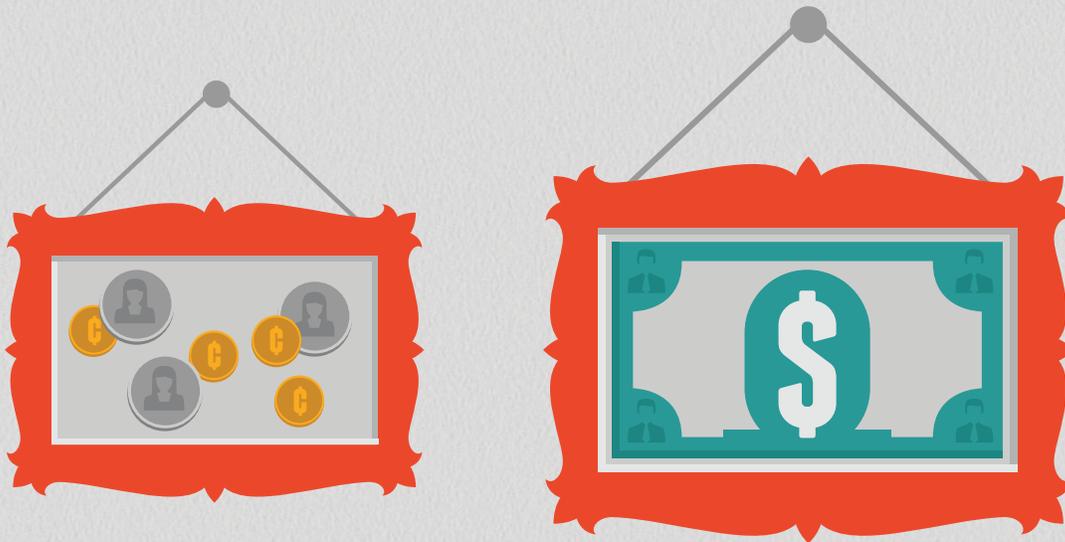
**48%** of CEOs at non-profits with budgets above \$1 m are women



**5%** of Fortune 500 and Fortune 1000 companies are led by women

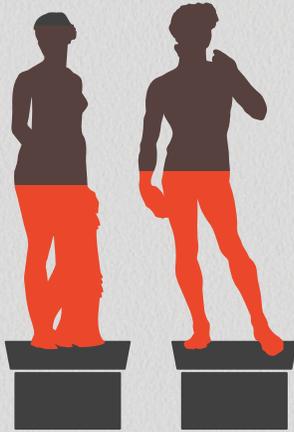


Female art museum directors earn **79¢** for every **dollar** earned by male art museum directors

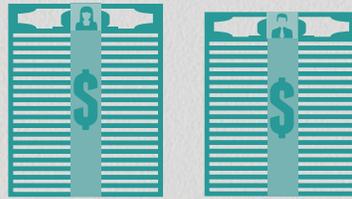




Women art museum directors are at or near parity with men at AAMD museums with **budgets under \$15 million**



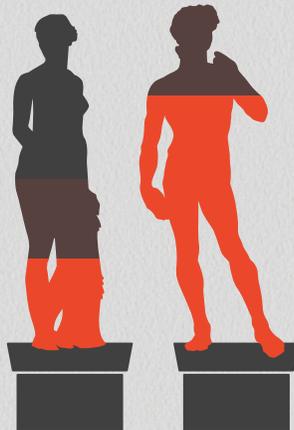
Women hold **48%** of art museum director positions



Female art museum directors earn **\$1.02** for every dollar earned by male art museum directors



Women lag behind men in positions held at AAMD museums with **budgets over \$15 million**



Women hold **24%** of art museum director positions



Female art museum directors earn **71¢** for every dollar earned by male art museum directors

# Considerations From Other Industries

As discussed in the introduction, the gender gap is not limited to art museums. While this study focuses on potential factors in art museums, we would be remiss if we did not offer a brief discussion on the activities of other industries and organizations to address gender inequality. What follows is a broad, though not comprehensive, overview of some actions and resources from other industries.

Flexible work policies, especially during the child-rearing years, have been advanced by some companies as a way to attract and retain top talent regardless of gender. A Catalyst study of “high potentials,” or MBA graduates, found that they valued options such as flexible scheduling, telecommuting options, and compressed work weeks. Women were found to value flexible work options more than men did, but the reported usage of flexible options is roughly equivalent between the sexes. Men tended to choose options with greater face time, whereas women were more likely to choose telecommuting options with less face time. The relationship of face time to performance is debated, but the study found that women without access to flexible work options were almost twice as likely to lower their aspirations when compared to women with access to these flexible options.<sup>12</sup> While a broad flexible work policy may not be feasible within an art museum, it may help to look towards other examples of decentralized policy-making. One example is that of Yale University, where each department is encouraged to adopt their own policies and managers have the ability to customize their supervisee’s schedules subject to certain restrictions.<sup>13</sup> Though flexible work policies may not be as directly applicable to the work of directors, they can be important in enabling earlier-career staff members to “stay on track” regardless of their personal situations.

Another approach to closing the gender gap is increasing professional development opportunities for individual women. The executive search consultants interviewed pointed to training programs such as the Center for Curatorial Leadership and to discussions such as those at the annual conferences of industry or professional associations. An example of training explicitly targeted at developing female leaders is the Association of American Medical College’s professional development seminars targeted at early-career female faculty and mid-career female faculty. Additional resources include committees of these professional associations, such as the American Alliance of Museum’s Diversity Committee (AAM DIVCOM) that addresses issues around different kinds of diversity.

Within organizations, formalized mentoring programs are also being used to develop human capital. While these are not typically exclusive to women, they do offer benefits for increasing leadership across a diverse group of employees. One program, Sodexo’s Spirit of Mentoring, was cited by DiversityInc as a best practice due to its structural excellence, ongoing measurement and feedback loops to ensure that it continues to produce outside benefits for its participants.<sup>14</sup> Although mentoring is beneficial, scholar

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12 Anna Beninger, Nancy M. Carter, “The Great Debate: Flexibility vs. Face Time- Busting the Myths Behind Flexible Work Arrangements,” *Catalyst.org*, last modified 8 July 2013. Accessed 1 February 2014: <http://www.catalyst.org/knowledge/great-debate-flexibility-vs-face-time-busting-myths-behind-flexible-work-arrangements>

13 Mary Lou Santovec, “Creating Flexible Work Policies: One Size Does NOT Fit All,” *Women in Higher Education*, 22(8), 1-2, August 2013. Accessed 1 February 2014: <http://www.wihe.com/viewBlog.jsp?set=Blog&id=42592>

14 “Case Study: Sodexo’s Mentoring Program,” *DiversityInc.com*. Accessed 1 February 2014: <http://www.diversityinc.com/mentoring/case-study-sodexo-mentoring-program/>

and founder of think tank Center for Talent Innovation, Sylvia Ann Hewlett contends that mentorship alone is not enough to help women advance; her group has conducted research that shows that having a sponsor, or “a powerfully positioned champion,” measurably affects career advancement.<sup>15</sup>

Research and debate continue around how to close the gender gap. Organizations researching, advocating and offering tools to advance change play an important role. These include Catalyst, the Institute for Women’s Policy Research, the National Women’s Studies Association, LeanIn.org, and UltraViolet. The advancement of women’s equality is further advanced by ongoing surveys and reporting within an industry, such as the National Association of Women Lawyer’s *National Survey on Retention and Promotion of Women in Law Firms*. The efforts by these types of groups are crucial to stimulating further thought and actions by individuals and organizations to advance gender equality.

## Limitations, Future Research, and Conclusion

This research represents an initial foray into gender, pay, and the position of art museum director. By limiting scope, we have been able to delve deeply into a few key areas. Our research has raised other potential areas for further study. For example, this paper only considered pre-director positions in a limited way, but questions remain around whether a gender gap exists in the talent pipeline. If so, women may be starting off with disadvantages, whether through not being positioned to become directors or through salary, or both; even if they become directors, they may find themselves constantly struggling to keep up due to the initial disadvantages. Both quantitative and qualitative research on collections focus and board and search committee composition would also be informative.<sup>16</sup> Further research may be done on characteristics of directors themselves, such as age, tenure and frequency of institution or role changes. Future research will want to examine total compensation rather than salary alone. A more complex understanding of gender equity may emerge when taking into account bonuses, retirement plans, and other forms of compensation. Finally, it is also important to consider other kinds of diversity, such as race and ethnicity.

Within art museums, a cultural change towards greater women’s equality has been occurring and has been led by the first generations of women directors. However, inequities still exist for both women and other diverse groups. By opening opportunities to a larger and more diverse set of potential leaders, art

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15 Sylvia Ann Hewlett, “Mentors Are Good. Sponsors Are Better.,” *The New York Time*, last modified 13 January 2013. Accessed 1 February 2014: <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/14/jobs/sponsors-seen-as-crucial-for-womens-career-advancement.html>

16 One recent study of note is “Diversity on Cultural Boards: Implications for Organizational Value and Impact” written by Francie Ostrower under an NEA Research: Art Works grant program. The main focus is on racial and ethnic diversity, but it is noted that boards of arts and cultural organizations tend to have higher percentages of women than do other non-profit boards. It should be noted that the data set used to analyze boards was from 2005. Francie Ostrower, “Diversity on Cultural Boards: Implications for Organizational Value and Impact.” Paper presented as part of the NEA Research: Art Works Panel (Chair, Melissa M. Menzer) at the Annual Meeting of the Association for Research on Nonprofit Organizations and Voluntary Action, Hartford, CT, November 2013. See text at: <http://arts.gov/sites/default/files/Research-Art-Works-UTX-Austin.pdf>

museums will realize the benefits of drawing upon a larger number of exceptional leaders with diverse experiences and perspectives. All stakeholders (including board members, executive search consultants, sitting directors, and other museum staff with leadership aspirations) have a crucial role to play in ensuring that museums can continue to deliver upon the promises of their missions for generations to come.