Re-Imagining Jewish Leadership Education Conference  
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Key Question: What can we do to increase gender parity in the Jewish sector?

Sheryl Sandberg said, “If NASA launched a person into space today, she could soar past Mars, travel all the way to Pluto, and return to Earth 10 times before women occupy half of C-suite offices.”

The issue of women in leadership (or lack thereof) has been simmering in the business and non-profit sectors - including the Jewish sector - for years. It reached a boil-over point in the defeat of Hillary Clinton; many believe gender was a contributing factor. It is time for a paradigm shift toward gender parity in Jewish organizations. We have a unique opportunity to change this dynamic in the Jewish sector and position our community as a model for how to address gender parity more broadly.

According to a report by LeanIn.org and McKinsey, women account for only 20% of staff at the senior vice president level and 20% of line roles that lead to the C-suite (based on the survey of 132 companies employing more than 4.6 million people). Likewise, in the non-profit sector, 66% of female non-profit leaders surveyed said their organization’s staff was comprised predominantly of women while 71% of respondents from large non-profits (annual revenue of $25 million or more) said their CEO is male.

The Jewish community is not faring better. While 75% of the people who work in Jewish nonprofits are women, only 12-14% of them are the leaders (Forward Salary Survey). Of the largest North American Federations, only three have hired female CEOs in recent years (and one of the women resigned). And only 10% of the 50 highest paid Jewish professionals are women (Leadership Pipelines Initiative).

Achieving gender parity is not only the right thing to do, but it is also critical to solving the complex problems facing our community and our country. Study after study proves the business case for working toward an equal balance of women and men in senior leadership roles – organizations perform better.
In the secular space, Paradigm for Parity, a coalition of CEOs, board chairs and academics are working together toward a vision of achieving full gender parity in all businesses across all levels for corporate leadership by 2030. Paradigm for Parity has created a 5-Point Roadmap, an action plan based upon extensive research and best practices, to help companies accelerate the pace of achieving gender parity. The Roadmap action steps are:

1) Minimize or Eliminate Unconscious Bias
2) Significantly Increase the Number of Women in Senior Operating Roles
3) Measure Targets at Every Level and Communicate Progress and Results Regularly
4) Base Career Progress on Business Results and Performance, Not on Presence
5) Identify Women of Potential and Give them Sponsors, as well as Mentors

The Schusterman Fellowship is Schusterman’s flagship leadership development program for high-potential leaders who are well-poised to assume C-suite roles in the coming years. Launched in 2015, and now in its third cohort, the Fellowship selects through a nomination and application process an international group of leaders for an 18-month long cohort-based and individualized leadership development experience. Key components include:

- A personalized 360-degree feedback-based leadership assessment to help leaders understand their strengths and growth edges
- A Customized Leadership Development Plan supported by a significant stipend to enable leaders to pursue leadership development opportunities that are aligned with their specific goals and needs (e.g. Executive Education programs, one-on-one deep Jewish learning, etc.)
- Leadership coaching with an executive coach over 18 sessions to help Fellows maximize their effectiveness
- A series of in-person gatherings and ongoing virtual learning opportunities
- Writing and speaking opportunities
- An Organizational Change Initiative which serves as a “stretch project” for Fellows to apply what they’ve learned while simultaneously addressing an organizational need

The first cohort included 24 Fellows; the second cohort includes 29, and the third cohort will include up to 30. Thus far, about 50% have been women. Our first formal evaluation of the program is underway.

Some of the key questions we are currently asking ourselves:
1) How is the Fellowship preparing Jewish women, in particular, for leadership in the sector?
2) What are other ways we can effectively prepare women for leadership in the Jewish sector?
3) What can we learn from Paradigm for Parity and other analogs in the for-profit and non-profit sectors?
4) How can we affect culture change in the sector so organizations attract, develop and retain women?
5) **What can we do to increase gender parity in the Jewish sector?**

Some key questions for you to consider:

1) What are you doing to successfully engage/prepare women for leadership?
2) In what ways could you sharpen your focus toward women’s leadership?
3) **What is one step you could take to increase gender parity in the Jewish sector?**

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