

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



I am delighted that this dream of many years has finally been realized. Twenty years ago when I joined the faculty of the Humphrey Institute of the University of Minnesota I went in search of public policy teaching cases to include in my courses. I faced, as case writers would say, a daunting challenge. That search led me to investigate the number of cases on women, feminism, and gender and I discovered that 0.25% of cases fit the criteria; that number rose to a whopping 1% if we simply counted women protagonists, even if the case did not support a discussion of gender. After participating in more than five case teaching workshops at the Associational of Public Policy and Management and American Political Science Association conferences, and the Evans School at the University of Washington, I critically read and analyzed the 60 or so existing cases. Unfortunately, many of the cases were so flawed in their framing of women as the problem to be managed, their assumption of difference, or their use of gender stereotypes that I despaired maybe it would be better to have women completely invisible rather than to have them and gender issues present in the curriculum in such deeply flawed vehicles.¹

The trainings, however, thoroughly convinced me of the value of case teaching and writing. Cases are an effective and underutilized tool for teaching gender. They actively engage students in critical thinking and problem solving, offer lessons about organizing for social change, and reveal the history of the women's movement. Our Newcomb Scholars class uses them to develop leadership skills and foster the capacity to think organizationally from the leader's point of view, of particular value to Millennials, whom older generations see as difficult to manage.² Social change organizations, such as our community partner, the United Way Women's Leadership Council and leaders and activists can learn from cases, too. Two of the cases in this volume are about their work. They capture organizational histories, informing new members of decisions, and convey shared values and lessons learned. Because they are so educational for practitioners, professional schools use them extensively.

Through a series of faculty summer workshops and graduate classes at the University of Minnesota, we produced over 25 cases. Newcomb College Institute has now adopted the project through its Newcomb Scholars class. The cases in this volume are the best of the best—cases written by undergraduate women enrolled in the third-year course “Women Leading Change.” They narrate difficult forks in the road women's organizations such as the National Organization for Women have taken. They address gender issues from the closing of Newcomb College, to intersex athletes, to women imprisoned for killing their batterers in self defense. They interrogate how organizations structure themselves to do their work, whether providing illegal abortions or considering mergers to stay afloat. Their peers have workshopped and reviewed the cases and they have revised them multiple times. In this volume, you have cases from the first two cohorts of Newcomb Scholars, including two cases directly tied to our community partner, the United Way of Southeastern Louisiana Women's Leadership Council. They have benefitted from the editorial work of students Tanya Chen, Richard Hebert, and Kate Grover under the faculty guidance of Dr. Anna Mitchell Mahoney, Dr. Aidan Smith, and myself. By making these cases available in electronic form for free, we hope people will find them, learn from them, and use them in their classes and organizational trainings. Our hope is to support all women in finding the inspiration, the courage, and the skills to lead change.

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1 Gender, the Public Policy Enterprise and Case Teaching,” *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 23:1 (Winter 2004): 159-178. “Where are the Women in Public Policy Cases?” *Women's Policy Journal of Harvard, John F. Kennedy School of Government*, 1 (Summer 2001): 87-98. “Using the Master's Tools to Dismantle the Master's House: Can we harness the virtues of case teaching?” Commissioned essay for the *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, 20 (Spring 2001) 2:346-50. <http://tulane.edu/newcomb/sallykenney/selected-writings.cfm>

2 <http://www.bentley.edu/centers/center-for-women-and-business/millennials-workplace>.