

LEADING WOMEN IN FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH

Panel Moderator: *Wendy Wintersteen*

October 18, 2019 - 9:00 a.m.

Introduction

Good morning, everyone. I hope that many of you got to join us for our breakfast keynote this morning with Under Secretary McKinney. We're going to go ahead and get started with our last day of the Borlaug Dialogue. And we're going to start with a panel focused on leadership in universities and specifically focus on women leaders in university and research settings. So I'd like to invite Professor Louise Fresco to come to the stage to introduce our panel, please.

Louise Fresco
Wageningen University & Research

Good morning, girls and boys. After all, that's what we are, isn't it? Ladies and gentlemen, while the panel is getting itself ready, let me just say a few words. I used to be rather suspicious of events where I was asked to speak as a woman leader or events that dealt with the issue of why women would be better than men or even such complicated things as quota for women. And I always felt, well, you know, things are much more complicated. This is about diversity. It's not just about women.

But in the course of the years, I've learned that paying attention to the importance of leadership, I mean, the special role that women can have in leadership is worthwhile. Actually, I do not think that men and women differ all that much when their intentions are similar. And it's in a way... Talking as a scientist, we're talking about two normal distributions in terms of characteristics. And there's quite a bit of overlap. I know men who are very sensitive to certain issues that you would normally associate with women. I also know women who are extremely masculine in the way they operate. So you can't just say that women as a group by definition are different leaders, let alone better leaders.

But in the course of the years, I've found out that, yes, there are a couple of things that, on average, are more somehow in the village or the domain of women. And they have to do with these intangible qualities, things like the warmth, the sense of companionship, the inclusiveness, the way in which hierarchies are being used or decisions are being made or consulting takes place. All that is very difficult to really measure, and it's very hard. If you look at studies, it's not always clear whether women leadership really makes a difference.

But I think in science there is a special role for women leaders, because most of the science we do today is not a solistic, individual type of activity. It's very much teamwork. And I think in terms of teamwork, women perhaps by nature, perhaps by socialization, do have a role to play to make teams work very well.

I also cannot say that universities led by women, notwithstanding some of the examples here today are more successful or better. But what I can say is that I myself in the years that I have been in some kind of a leadership position, I have really tried to be inclusive, to be a listening person, to be a person that remains successful but notwithstanding the responsibilities and the workload. And I think there is a sensitivity there that I'd like to nurture, actually, not just in young girls but also in young boys.

I think if I look today towards the next few decades, that I can imagine that our society becomes in a way a more feminized society where some of the characteristics associated traditionally with women are prized and valued more highly. And I think in many ways that is a good idea. I am not of the school who believes that, if it had been Lehman sisters, the disasters of Lehman brothers would not have taken place. But I do think that having a kind of sense of sisterhood, which includes men as well, which includes diversity in all its facets, is important for us to move forward, not move forward only in the sense of being successful scientific institutions but to move forward to do the things that really matter, that matter to women, men and children, that matter to the planet as a whole.

So I wish the panel, led by Wendy, very good luck in sharing their ideas and you to share with them your experiences. Thank you very much.

Panel Members

Wendy Wintersteen	President, Iowa State University, Member of the World Food Prize Council of Advisors
Kathryn Boor	The Ronald P. Lynch Dean, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Cornell University
Helene Dillard	Dean, College of Agricultural & Environmental Sciences – University of California, Davis
Kathryn (Kate) VandenBosch	Dean & Director, University of Wisconsin – Madison, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

Panel Moderator

Wendy Wintersteen

Member of the WFP Council of Advisors & President, Iowa State University

Well, Louise, that was a wonderful introduction to the panel. Thank you so much. Thank you for your leadership in the critical role that you play. Thank you.

So we're going to have a fun conversation this morning about women in leadership. I want to begin by saying that, as a former dean of a College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, what I found is that it's so critically important that we are able to provide models to all of our students about how they can be successful. So, whether you are a female student, a male student, one of our underrepresented students, that you can see around you in the faculty, the staff, the

leadership that there are models for you to follow' that you can see yourself in a leadership position; that you can see yourself as a faculty member in a college of agriculture and life sciences; that you can see yourself focused on the critical issues of food, agriculture and natural resources. So I think it's important that we embrace that diversity and that we give every individual an opportunity to succeed.

So today on our panel we have three excellent women leaders, deans of agriculture, and I'm going to quickly introduce each of them. Helene Dillard is the Dean of the College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences at UC Davis. And of course there's information about Helene and all of our panelists on the Web page, so you can go back and learn more about them. But just a quick note to share that she's been very well recognized by the American Phytopathological Society for especially her excellence in extension, but she's also a fellow in that society. She received the New York Farmers medal, recognizing again her great work in taking her work to the farmer, and an outstanding faculty award – so a very successful record. Please welcome Helene.

Next is Kathryn Boor, the Dean of the College of Agricultural & Life Sciences at Cornell University. She is actually the Ronald P. Lynch Dean of the College, a main position which shows the confidence that alums and friends of that college have in her leadership. She is a fellow of the American Academy of Microbiology, the International Academy of Food Science and Technology, the Institute of Food Technologist, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science – a very distinguished career. Welcome, Kathryn.

And next we have Kate VandenBosch, Dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at the University of Wisconsin. Kate is a main fellow in the American Society of Plant Biologists. She has served in leadership roles in a number of different institutions and has quite an extraordinary record herself.

So just in case I might have missed a detail, a reminder that Helene is at UC Davis, Kathryn is at Cornell, and Kate is at the University of Wisconsin. So what we hope to do is have some geographic distribution across Colleges of Agriculture, but also these are three highly ranked Colleges of Agriculture in the United States for the excellence that they have in research, teaching and extension. So again another round of applause for our panelists.

Real quickly, I want to remind everybody that we're going to save some time for you all to ask questions of our panelists, so I hope you'll be thinking what is a question that you might have about the pathway they followed, how they achieved success. So be thinking about that as we begin our discussion right now. I see a lot of young women in the audience, so this is a great opportunity for you to have a conversation with one of these three great leaders.

But I'm going to ask each of our panelists to respond to this question: What is the biggest challenge facing women as they seek positions of leadership, especially in this world of universities and in worlds of agriculture. So, Helene, I'm just going to start with you, you are right next to me.

Helene All right, thank you, Wendy. So there's going to be three of us answering this question. I'll just say that I think one of the biggest challenges is having your voice heard. Sometimes I've felt like I wasn't really being taken as seriously as I should have been or that I don't have the big, booming voice that maybe others might have. And so there's a way that you figure out how to have your voice heard, and I think

that was kind of challenging. And sometimes you're in a conversation, and you just kind of get rolled over by other voices. And so I think I've figured out how to have people hear my voice, but it did take a little bit of time to get to that point. And so it's really a matter of having that confidence in yourself and making sure the conversation doesn't end until at least you've had your say.

Wendy Helen, I have to do a follow up and just say – so how did you figure out to make sure when you're sitting at the table that they heard what you were saying?

Helene So here's my technique. I lean in. I lean forward and get closer to the edge. I'm on the table. I'm ready to talk. It's my turn.

Wendy And I had a friend tell me, and when you sit down at that table, not only should you lean forward like Helene said, but you should also take all your stuff and spread it out on the table. Hey, take up as much space as you can, because women are often so... We're so careful about putting all of our stuff in our purse, under our chair, having our little tablet. But put all your stuff on the table.

Kathryn.

Kathryn I couldn't agree more that real estate matters, so I think that's a terrific point. I'm going to start on the other end of the spectrum and thinking about the young women in my laboratory and in the classes and so forth. And I hear so much anxiety among our young women – "I think I want to have a family. And how can I manage all of those different pieces together?" And I will tell you just quite honestly that there are times, especially once you have children, that you feel like there's not enough time to do everything as well as you would like to, so you have to come to a different way of thinking about it. But I thought I'd just tell you a really quick little story.

So as I was thinking about taking on the deanship, we had family meetings about what would change in our family. And my 15-year-old son at the time said, "Well, Mom, here's kind of how I see it." He said, "You know that in any given situation the boss is sometimes perceived as a jerk." He said, "Here's what I want you to think about, Mom." This is my 15-year-old. He says, "Do you want to be the jerk, or do you want to work for the jerk?" And the point of the story is that you can get help from your children, your family and from others to achieve all that you want to try to accomplish. And you should actually lean on them to help you.

So, Kathryn, could I just do a quick follow up?

Wendy Very seriously, do you think that at Cornell you've been successful at being able to provide what is necessary in terms of just basic services for families, like childcare? Is that something you've been successful at, or is that a struggle? We certainly see it as a struggle at Iowa State. How do we provide those kinds of services to our faculty and staff?

Kathryn So, Wendy, at Cornell we are improving, but it's such a work in progress. And in fact it's only been in recent years that we've had childcare services anywhere near campus, now really on the edge of campus. But these are areas now where we're looking at you have to opt out of parental leave, opt out of it after a child is born. So

- it's an automatic thing. A tenure extension is granted automatically; if you don't want it, you have to actually opt out. So we're developing strategies to help people manage the challenges of having a family.
- Wendy What does it mean to opt out?
- Kathryn So it means it's automatic. Once you introduce a new family member through adoption or through birth, you are automatically given an extension of your tenure clock, and you are given a parental leave. And if you wish not to take it, then you have to opt out of it.
- Wendy All right, very good. And so really having policies that are family friendly so that our female faculty have the opportunity to stay in their profession and not decide to take a different approach, so that we can grow the number of women in colleges of agriculture and life sciences. Thank you. Kate, how about you?
- Kate Well, just to pick up on that for a moment, I think that we've seen a lot of changes over the courses of our careers, being fairly senior now. And when I started, making room for a family was seen more of an issue for women. Today it's a family issue; it's everybody's issue. And I think that's an enormous change that I'm really grateful for. We also don't have as much childcare or robust leave policies as we would like, but we're making a lot of progress.
- I think another thing that's changed over the course of my career is how seriously women would be taken in their intent to be a leader. Initially there was a lot of skepticism 30 years ago or so when I was getting started. Today there's a lot more receptivity, but I do agree with Helene—you have to find a way to make your voice heard. Many women leaders are all of the style of being a servant leader or very collaborative and inclusive, which is wonderful; but you have to find the ability to also be the one who will step out in front and say, "Okay, now the discussion is done. Here is how we are going to frame the vision and move forward." And I think for me to flip from that consultative style to the standard bearer was something that I had to learn.
- Wendy Did you have any special... Do you read a book? Did you go to a conference to learn how to stand up and do that differently?
- Kate Yeah, I guess one thing that has been helpful for me in terms of speaking in front of groups is—when I was a child all the way up into adulthood, I was always a singer, you know, singing in choirs. So sometimes now I still talk too loudly because I'm hearing my voice coach from college saying, you know, "Sing to the back of the room." But besides that, I'm always looking for ways to incorporate new information, whether it's informally by networking, by reading, by participating in courses and attending meetings. I think being in the business of education, we're all lifelong learners, and this is a part of it.
- Wendy Right, very good. Well, let's go on to another question then, and actually I'm going to have everyone answer this one, too, because isn't this the fun. So, Helene, we're going to start back with you, and I'm going to ask you—what do you consider the two most important decisions that you make as a leader in your institution?

Helene I've been thinking about that. I think the two most important... I would say the two categories – but then there's lots of things within that – probably one of the most important is the hiring of new faculty. Those are big decisions. They're at least 30-year decisions. These are the people that shape the research agenda at your university. They're going to be mentoring the students. So to me that's a huge decision, and for me it comes down to – how do I support that new person? How do I get the right tools in their hands so that they can really just soar right away? And so we sort of have a mantra in the dean's office that when we hire a new faculty, the goal is to help them hit the ground running, let's figure out what they need, and let's use the money we have to serve the mission to get those faculty out there. So to me that's a big one.

And then I think the second most-important thing is all of the decisions have to be made around student support, whether it's financial aid or whether it's getting more counselors, advisors, TAs. But really our goal is to make sure every single undergraduate gets a great education and gets out in a reasonable amount of time and that they enjoy their experience at UC Davis. So we find that we're doing lots of different things to try to nurture the students, make sure that they get what they need, and a lot of those decisions kind of keep falling back to the dean's office, because you're trying to do it for the whole college. And so it's a big deal for me. I really work hard at student satisfaction and faculty satisfaction.

Wendy Kathryn, would you add anything to that?

Kathryn Certainly hiring, because hiring shapes the future trajectory and direction of the college and really illustrates your priorities in ways that otherwise might not be as clear.

But the second set of decisions, the most difficult ones, frankly, what are we not going to do anymore? Because we in academics are very, very good at starting things but perhaps not as good at ending things when the time is come, or redirecting. And so those decisions about what we're not going to do anymore are by far right up there with hiring in terms of shaping the college and the future.

Wendy Kate.

Kate Along the lines of Kathryn's point, resource allocation is always a big area. No matter how many resources you have, it won't be enough for what you could do and you want to do. And so I think it's very important for leaders to be very articulate about what guides their priorities and how are you going to make those decisions. Because people are smart, and they'll move to that endpoint and we can be focused.

The other area we haven't mentioned yet is – How do we foster a great climate for students and our employees so that they can all achieve what they want to do? The decisions that a leader makes and the way that they're visible about creating an inclusive climate are very key to how an operation works.

Wendy So Kate, again a quick follow up for you. When you think about resource allocations and you think about being in a college of agriculture, we have a lot of stakeholders out there, and how do you work with those stakeholders as you think about what

your priorities are and how you're going to allocate resources. What would you say about that, Kate?

Kate Well, what we do is all about partnerships, whether it's within or without the university, and we meet regularly with a lot of different commodity groups, professional organizations, individual practitioners and producers and alumni and donors. And so it's a constant conversation where we get a chance in the university to share our vision and then be influenced. So it's an iterative process. And, you know, out of those interactions, this is probably one of the most fulfilling parts about our roles, are the friendships that you make, the relationships that you make over years. And I've had many circumstances where I've felt — oh, no, I have a tough message to bring to these people. But when you already have a tough conversation, that's founded on a friendship and deep understanding, it happens, and it happens in a respectful and way that you can take back information as well.

Wendy As I look out in the audience, I can see some of the important leaders of Iowa's agricultural commodity boards and farmer organizations. And a few of those are women, but they're certainly not the majority. Any response from any of the panel — has it been easy to work with what might be more of a male-dominated set of stakeholder groups?

Kathryn Well, you're right. One of the areas that has been true as we look out through the commodity groups and interests across the state of New York, very often very much people who have been in that role for a long time, and they generally tend to be male. But I've found that across the board what they respect and work well with is competence. And as long as you bring to the table your knowledge and those who also have the subject matter knowledge on your team, that very quickly you reach a common understanding.

Wendy So a little bit more about how you think about your career. Would you tell us — I'll open this up to anyone here — would you tell me a significant, positive trait that you've seen, enhancing a leader's career? And oftentimes we often see a behavior or a trait that derails a leader's career. Who would like to respond to that?

Kate I can. I think that one of the most important traits for a leader is resilience, because a lot of what we have to deal with is really tough. When you work with a large organization, a lot of people, you will find out things about struggles of individuals that you might rather not know or, you know, bad things happen. You have to find a way to keep going, to find the positive, and to renew and keep going.

So on the negative side, I'm going to mention two, because I'm having a hard time choosing. Failure to look after your health — you have to look after your own best interest in order to keep that resilience. But I've also seen some leaders who might be visionary in some ways who are frankly a bit of a bully and that it will not play out well in the end.

Kathryn And so from my perspective, a characteristic that's important for leadership is a learned ability to underreact when you learn some of these things that Kate was describing. Because the thing is, when someone comes in with a story, I think your first reaction in many cases — I want to fix that, and I want to fix it right now. But

what I've learned probably the hard way is that you need to hear the whole story before you make a decision and before you move forward. So you need to make sure that you collect enough data so that, when you make a decision and respond, that you're doing so in an informed and reasonable way. I think you're right about ideas or characteristics that can derail a career, but I think failure to execute once you do have all of that information is probably one of the areas that really can derail a career.

Wendy Helene.

Helene I would say in terms of the positive, I think what I've seen work very well for people is being transparent and honest. And to me those are... You can deliver some really bad news as long as you're being honest about it and you're transparent and there's no devil in the details. I think that those are some good characteristics. Where I've seen people derail, it's very similar to Kathryn, is the inability to make a decision, any decision. That, if you get caught into that, you know, "what if," you just can't do that. And I'd say the other thing I've seen is, when people don't communicate enough, then the rumors get started. And so I'd rather just hear the news than be letting the faculty, you know, make up what the news is. So I think that being a good communicator and go ahead and say what you've got to say and get it out there before the rumors is really important.

Wendy So Helene, as a dean, what do you find is the best way to communicate out into the college or even externally? What has been your most successful strategies?

Helene Yeah, you know, it's kind of odd, but I feel like I'm having better success communicating to the external audiences than the internal. It's like our faculty not reading their email or, you know, what is going on?

Wendy The answer is yes. They're not reading.

Helene They're not reading their email. But I'm always amazed at people who would say, "Well, I didn't hear about this or that." And like right now we have this... Well, we all have this requirement that – conflict of interest. Have all the faculty filled out their conflict of interest forms. And, you know, I must have said the thing, you know, 13 times, and there are still like some people that have not done it.

But I think for me, I try to communicate really, really regularly with the department chairs one-on-one and in a group setting. And then the idea is that the department chair will then communicate with faculty. And they get upset if I sort of go over them to the faculty, but I have to in some things because like conflict of interest – if I just told the chairs, "Make sure everybody does that." it's not going to happen. So I just keep sending it out to all faculty. So you have to make those decisions of, when am I going to pull the plug and go all the way out to individuals. But I try to do that.

We have our regular newsletters. It's interesting. We're now doing some analysis of our electronic newsletters. The staff open the newsletter. The students open a newsletter. The faculty don't. So at least I'm learning where they're not listening to. And we also have an all-faculty meeting, and all the young faculty, the new people come. The seasoned people don't, so it's just really hard to reach everybody.

As far as external communications, I think that's been maybe because I kind of grew up in extension at Cornell, it's easy for me to kind of communicate the external audiences. And so I know where they are. I know they'll open email, and I know what meetings to go to, to see them, and so I can communicate pretty well.

I think, though, that one thing I will say about communication, that I took a special sort of class with my communications director for the college, because there was a time period when our chancellor was going through some really serious upheavals. And students were protesting; all sorts of things were going on. And we were getting some splashback to the college, even though we weren't really all that involved in it. And so I got interesting lessons on communicating with media, communicating in crisis situations, what people need to know, how fast they need to know it. And so when we did have our turn, it did work really well to just get out there, own the message, be responsible – yes, this is a problem in our college, yes, we're working on it, and I'm sorry, etc. But it was really important, I think, for us to get out there on top of it and really own that problem and speak to it publicly.

Wendy You can never do enough communication. Kathryn or Kate, would you want to add anything to that or...

Kathryn I think what Helene says is just right. But the one thing – it's sort of an interesting thing that has been the most fun for me as I hold these monthly coffee hours where anyone can come and I'm there. And what my faculty often tell me is... They may or may not show up, but they say, "But we know we can." And so that one, simple thing – cookies and coffee for an hour a month – has been remarkably successful, even if people don't come.

Kate Well, I would also add social media to that, that we need to use every different means to communicate that we can, because people have different preferences, different patterns. But what strikes me about what Helene and Kathryn have already said, and I totally agree – even in this very technological age, maybe the most important thing we do is basically communication, whether it's with our chairs or external associates, faculty, our students, it's that. You know, you need to have the reciprocity, the eye-to-eye conversation, and that's what most builds the relationships that make communication easier.

Wendy My next question is – What are each of you doing to ensure that you continue to grow and develop as a leader? Helene, we'll come back to you again.

Helene Okay. I would say I read a lot, and I'm finding that staying current on what's going on around the world is really important. And so it's not just reading the leadership books and things like that but just getting a real understanding of the context in which we're trying to run these universities in. I think that's really important. And then I do take opportunities that come along for any kind of special training for deans or this and that. And I did a very fun one, learning how to do development work for deans. And again there's little tidbits of things that you pick up along the way. I also feel that it's kind of important to just watch those above you and around you. And there are good role models out there, and so I do try to pick up on – why is Wendy successful? Why is Kathryn? What are they doing? And make sure that I'm aware of – can I incorporate those things into my personality?

Kathryn And so those are terrific, and I try to do several of those same, but I'd say in a more generic way I very consciously try to push myself well out of my comfort zone on a regular basis. And I find that when I'm right there on the edge of what I feel comfortable doing, that's when I'm learning the most. And that can be in any category. It can be in the science category. It can be in the leadership category. It can be sitting in front of you because you're all scary kind of category. But pushing yourself, I think, is really key.

Kate I think they've covered it pretty well. I don't know that I have a lot to add on this one.

Q&A

Wendy Well, at this point, I'd like to look out in the audience and see – what are your questions for our panelists? Could we have individuals come forward with their questions? I see a few people getting up. Excellent. Could we start over here?

Q My name is Ed Runge at Texas A&M, and I've had the pretty good fortune of running the Monsanto Beachell-Borlaug scholars program. One of the things we learned very quickly was that no one teaches leadership at the PhD program. And we then instituted a course, "Leadership Communication Self-Confidence – How do you push yourself to get to where you want to go." And I think that's lacking in most places.

Wendy Thank you for that comment. We appreciate that feedback. Great. Should we go back over here? Great.

Q Thank you so much for coming. As a young lady in the academia, I really appreciate your insight. I'm interested to know some of your strategies for building a culture of care in inclusion, not only for gender but as just kind of inclusion of all different types of people within your college – students, staff, faculty.

Wendy Kate, do you want to take that one?

Kate Sure, part of the culture at our campus is that we have a shared governance, so we have a lot of participation from all the different employee groups and student groups as well. And in the college we have a committee on diversity and inclusion, and they every year put together a list of goals that they have. And one of them in the recent years has been what we have Lunch and Learn Sessions, so informal lunchtime sessions where people can come together around a topic. It might be inclusion in teaching. It might be dealing with Title 9 issues or a whole host of things. And that's an informal way for people to get together that's been very effective.

We also are instituting this departmental planning where we have a number of goals we want each department to address. And one of them is to improve or strengthen the climate in their department, and we're not specifying how they should do that but that they need to have a goal, at least one goal. And so again it's a collaborative process to decide – what is our goal? What are we going to do to further our progress towards that goal?

Wendy Can we go on to the next question? Great, over here.

Q I am Vickie from Mission San José High School, and my question is just – Women are often perceived as like not so nice things when they are more forceful. So how do you come across any situations like that? And if so, how do you deal with such situations?

Wendy Who would like to take that?

Helene You know, you're right. We're often perceived. There is a word that's used, but I think that if you do it in a respectful way and if you hold your ground, and you have to be very good at communicating why you're being forceful about something. I think people respect that. And we're all going to run into that at some point in our lives, whether we're in leadership or not. You might have to advocate for your kid in school, so I mean it's just something that you learn to do in a tasteful, respectful manner. And then you just let the chips fall where they do.

Kathryn I think it's so critically important to develop a selective thick skin, and it's critically important to try not to take things personally. It has nothing to do with who you are when you hear things like this – it's a reaction to the situation, and you need to remember that and you need to know it's about who you are.

Kate Yeah, I think you have to behave with integrity. You have to be authentic for who you are and letting the chips fall where they may is a good guideline. You're not going to please everybody, and you can't be upset if so is upset with you for something they perceive when you know you're well-grounded in a good decision.

Wendy Great, excellent. Back over here then.

Q I'm Connie, and I'm with an agtech venture capital fund, and so I focus a lot on trying to make sure that we're getting enough women kind of starting things in positions of leadership. And I know that actually all of your universities have some pretty interesting kind of entrepreneurial leadership kind of things going on. I see a lot. Time and time again there's just more men starting things than there are women, and I think there's a lot of kind of generalizations that go into that. But I'm curious what kind of you guys are working on along those lines.

Wendy A great comment. Again, Kathryn.

Kathryn So we've developed an entrepreneurship program on campus that starts on campus, and then once there's money involved, it can move off campus. And we've recently been recognized as number 2 in the country with female unicorns, so in other words those who are already bringing in a great deal of money. And so we provide tremendous support. We have young women who are creating their own cosmetics, starting in their dorm rooms and moving to companies and so forth. So it's really I think about creating an ecosystem for that kind of activity and then providing the support to make it happen. And we're seeing young women involved in a very deep way. It's exciting.

- Kate You know, I would say we have to remember we're undergoing a big demographic shift. So if you would be looking at people who are mid-career and older who might be the people most likely to be launching companies at this point out of academia, there will be more men, but we have a bigger fraction of women students and post-docs. And so we have a wave that's coming. In our university, our tech transfer group has an entrepreneurial ambassador program and looking at people in their 20s and 30s that we have really good representation across genders.
- Wendy Anything to add Helene?
- Helene Nothing really to add. We also have an entrepreneurship program, and we've got a program called The Big Bang, and the last winner got \$10,000, and it was a female. So it's coming.
- Wendy Great. We'll go back over here.
- Q Hi. Thank you so much for coming. Audrey, from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. So the Obama administration released USDA numbers that showed disparities in land ownership, and specifically a single demographic owns much of the United States agricultural land, and that is like white males specifically, because of factors like slavery and historical barriers to land ownership. So what can we do and what can you do in order to support women in that agricultural field and specifically women of color? Thank you.
- Wendy Thank you. Would you like to start Helene. California.
- Helene Yeah, that's a really good question. I think what we're starting to see more are sort of the professional and commodity organizations embracing more women, and we're starting to see a lot more female ranchers in California and also a lot more female farmers starting off with small organic farms that tends to be their demographic right now, at least in California. And I think what I'm seeing is support mechanisms for them by creating their own Cattlewomen's Association instead the Cattlemen. And so they'll meet with the men, but they have their own group and some things that they discuss about female ownership of land and then how to keep that land. But it is a difficult problem, and as far as minority farmers where we're seeing the most help is coming from the USDA on that. But it is we're still in progress.
- Wendy Anything else to add?
- Kate I would. I would say in Wisconsin where I'm from, it's still the case that 95 or more percent of our farms are family farms, but they're different from the family farms of old. They're bigger farms. They're multigenerational. They involve couples and partners, and farming today requires so much, so many different kinds of expertise that you really need a lot of capacity that needs more than one individual. So what I see is, when you have perhaps two generations, parents and their kids and their spouses, all of them are involved and have a unique niche. So sometimes they're on a dairy farm, perhaps a daughter is going to be in charge of the heifers or the calf rearing. Her mother might be in charge of marketing or some of the business aspects. But everybody has their own unique roles. It's much more of a partnership.

Kathryn In New York State, our fastest-growing demographic are women farmers, and they're small scale for the most part, but change is coming.

Wendy We'll go back over here.

Q I'm at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln and really similar to the last question on entrepreneurship, I'm working on a women's initiative, and I have noticed a lot of imposter syndrome, not only with our women but also with our men. And I was wondering if you three have had experiences with this and had tricks to overcome that in starting businesses.

Wendy So the imposter syndrome, something we talk about on campuses more and more, and some of our very bright students feel like they truly are not who people think they are, that they aren't talented enough, that they don't have the smarts that it takes to be successful in the classroom or outside of the classroom. And this is really a debilitating syndrome for our students when they start to feel like that. So any comments about the imposter syndrome?

Helene I guess what I would say is that we've been trying to work on that in many ways, not just thinking about on the entrepreneurship side but just for all of our students. And I think one of the things I feel is that this generation may have not experienced failure. You know, as we always dive in as parents and make sure everything is okay. And so what we're trying to do is maybe give examples of little hiccups, and it doesn't mean that you're an imposter; it meant that you just had a hiccup here. It set you back, but you get up and you persevere. You've got to be resilient.

And so one of my things is like helping these students get their sea legs and realize that sailing isn't smooth all the time. You get underneath the Golden Gate Bridge, and there's some big wakes there. So really trying to help people understand that success is not a smooth path and that there's going to be some hiccups in the road. And so we've been working really, really hard with that. I haven't had a successful coffee with the faculty, but I have very successful coffees with my students. And one of the questions they ask me is – Did you get straight A's and was everything easy going through all of this education? And so with a badge of honor, I can tell them I got a C+ in organic chem. And they are totally flabbergasted by that, and I'm just like, you know, this is being human. You have these forks in the road; you have roadblocks, and you can either hurdle it or stop in front of it. And I said, "I want everybody in this room to jump over that hurdle." And so we have these really good conversations, and I think that maybe that's part of that female mother thing coming out, and you're just kind of going – you're not going to fail, I'm not going to let you fail. You're going to be just fine.

Wendy Or failure is okay, occasionally.

Yeah. But it is you learn. As an entrepreneur you can expect to fail – right? And then you step up and you try again and then you learn from that failure, to your point. So that's part of the road.

Kathryn One way that we're working on it very directly is in what we're calling the Active Learning Initiative, what we've learned through our research in teaching in

pedagogy is that where we see these differentials in performance in class. Often the folks who are as a group performing at a lower level actually are performing at a lower level not because they're not as smart, not because they're not as talented – because they lack confidence. And so we have learned that if we present the material ahead of time and then work on it in class, have discussions, build the confidence among groups that traditionally underperform in these classes, we can actually move their performance up to be the same as... Actually the entire class's performance improves. And then the confidence that these young people gain in talking about science and talking with each other in revealing their vulnerabilities about what they know and what they don't know, where they're comfortable, where they're not comfortable, has a halo effect in terms of their confidence. We've only been doing this for a few years, so I can't tell you if it continues for years post-graduation. But I'm optimistic.

Kate You know, I think imposter syndrome is incredibly prevalent. It's widespread. And even though we talk about it in that vocabulary now, it's not a new thing but it's been with us. And the upside of that is that people who feel this way have a strong drive. They want to excel. They want to do well. They're aware of their limitations. And those are all good qualities. And I think the idea of being afraid to fail is something that you have to surmount, because as Wendy said, you can learn an awful lot from failure. And there's no one that's successful that never failed. So it's what you learn.

I have to tell a little anecdote. When I had accepted my first faculty job, I had a dream that came to me. Probably everybody's had the one, the anxiety dream where all of a sudden you're having to sit for a final exam but you never attended the classes for. Have you had that one? So, and this was some time ago. So I signed the letter and I faxed it away, and the very next night I had a dream that I was having to stand in front of a class of 300 students and teach it when I had never even prepared the syllabus. It was just like it was completely flipped on its head. But the truth is, almost every day I have to do something I'm not prepared to do. And almost every day it turns out just fine. It just turns out just fine, because you're building on the experience that you have.

Wendy Wonderful, great. Okay, back over here.

Q My name is Ann from Kenya, and I have a question. When women are seeking elective position, they seem to be judged harshly according to their social status. So if a woman is not married, she's considered to be hard-headed. And so it's said if she's not able to manage a family, how is she going to manage her big leadership position? If that is compared to a man, a man is said, "You know, he's just a single, eligible bachelor." So what's your comment on that?

Wendy Who would like that?

Kathryn Well, I think it's going to be that you'll never pull gender completely out of evaluative comments, statements or thoughts. And I think again it's about demonstrating confidence as we move forward and the ability to manage multiple things. But you are right.

Wendy Back over here.

Q Hi. My name's Lauren —. I'm a high school science teacher in Chicago Public Schools. High school seniors have a lot of worries going into universities, and I have students that attend some of your universities. But the one that concerns me the most is my students of color. A lot of times they talk about their concerns on campus in terms of racism and sexism and not being thought of as serious students. And I just wonder... I know you spoke to inclusiveness a little bit. But if you have any particular strategies that you use to help students of color at your universities?

Wendy Sure. Helene.

Helene I'll just say one of our strategies has been to try to get more of our faculty of color to work with those students of color and sort of just be there and let those students know who they are. So we do sort of an orientation that's kind of a welcoming to all students. And then we'll also make sure that those students that are in particular majors know who those faculty of color are. Because we definitely have those issues where some of the students have this..., they don't feel like they belong, and they feel like, you know, I'm the only one in my class. And again it behooves us to have a welcoming environment at the university. So we work with very closely with that, and then we also try to make sure all of our students know where to go to get help. And we try to emphasize that yes, you're brilliant, and you got into this university, but everybody else is brilliant, and they got into the university. You might need to talk to the TA a little bit more. You might need to go to the... There's help areas where the STEM areas, and so again we just try to make sure that everybody knows where the resources are. But I do find that I get a lot of students of color that want to come chat with me, and we've had some pretty significant incidences on campus that have really disturbed people. And so again we just try and get out there and what's the message. We have our principles of community. We're trying to really abide by those. Not everybody is on board yet, but we're working on that, so we're really trying to be as welcoming as we can.

Kate I would add, you know, student organizations are really important. In fact, just to extend your question, I get questions from a lot of students, especially those who come from small towns and rural areas — How am I gonna survive on this campus with 45,000 students? And the point that we always make is — Well, number one, I don't care what you're interested in, you're going to find likeminded people. And also this is a big city of a lot of villages, and you can find community. And I think that's also for how you identify if you're LBGTQ, if you're a student of color, there's a family for you, and you can be part of it. You know, I do that myself as a woman dean. I get together with other women deans on my campus, and that's not where I spend all my time, but that's an important refuge and strength for me.

Kathryn So one program that we've started at Cornell that's exciting is called Intra-Group Dialog, and these are small classes, no more than about 20. And in these classes students are trained to discuss difficult situations, so that they'll be split and each will have to take a position. It's not a debate class, but it's learning how to listen to someone else's point of view that you don't want to hear and then how to respond back to them that you've understood what they're saying. And we introduced this

- across the entire entering freshman class this fall, and time will tell if that's helping us help people with respectful conversations and seeing different points of view.
- Wendy Thank you. So back over here.
- Q Hi. Frances — from Clemson University. So I think it's really amazing that we're able to have this dialog, and to think 30 years ago this panel probably wouldn't even exist. But looking towards the future, how do we move from being women leaders or minority leaders to just leaders? How do we get rid of that title in front of what we're trying to do?
- Wendy You know, I would just quickly respond and say it always is about leadership by all of our leaders. I think what we hope to do in this panel here is have an opportunity for especially young women to be able to ask questions of older women, in my case anyway. But it is about leadership by everyone. Any other responses here?
- Helene I would say that with time you won't notice, it won't be obvious. Maybe right now maybe it's a little bit obvious.
- Kathryn Evolution.
- Kate We're still in the era of firsts. You're the first woman president at Iowa State.
- Wendy At Iowa State.
- Kate And that won't be true for much longer.
- Wendy Yeah, very good. Okay, back over here.
- Q Hi. My name is Rebecca Hall. I am a graduate student at the University of Minnesota, and my question is – How is the best way to handle situations in which you feel that male colleagues are receiving credit for your ideas?
- Kathryn Wow, that resonates.
- Wendy Go ahead.
- Kate One way is teamwork. You know, you can speak up and say, "Hey, I said that first." Sounds kind of shrill and petulant, but you can also be a good colleague and say, "You know, Kathryn raised this idea last month, and I think that we're now just getting a lot of groundswell around the idea that she originated." Great strategy.
- Wendy That's strategy. Back over here.
- Q Hi. Aleisha — Harley, Harvard University. I wanted to return to the tenure clock discussion at the beginning. A paper came out in September of this year in American Economic Review that showed that the gender-neutral tenure clock-stopping policies in economics at least had actually had a sort of adverse effect. They had actually increased the rate of male tenure and decreased the rate of female tenure, because men would use the time that they got off to publish papers, while generally women actually went to care for a child. So I'm wondering if you have looked at this and

how you're thinking about gender-neutral tenure clock policies in light of that evidence.

Kathryn Oh, yes, we have looked at this. This was a conversation at the deans' meeting just two weeks ago—Were you there?—around the table. So what we're doing at this point is we are requiring everyone who takes the time off, even though again you have to opt out of it, to actually sign an affirmation that in fact they're involved with childcare. Now, there's no teeth or enforcement to that, but it's about the recognition that that's what this is about. And we are talking about it. We're going to continue to look at it. I don't have a good solution for you right now, other than the fact that, you know, so...

Wendy Right over here.

Q So recognizing that gender and diversity is still a pretty sensitive subject, when someone sees lack of diversity on a committee or something like that, how do you recommend that you would address that to someone who's forming that committee? How do you advocate for people when you're not in the leadership position, to be more inclusive in those roles?

Helene I guess I'll take that one. We actually require everyone on the search committee to go through a bias training, that it's all required or you cannot be on the search committee. And then all search committees are screened up through the dean and up to the vice provost. So if I see it, I can call it, and if they see it, they'll call it. So no committee gets by without somebody asking the question, and we will just change the committee.

Wendy And if you're not in that kind of situation where there is a set of standards and required steps, I think it's important that you're willing again to be part of the community that reaches out to your mentor that might be able to have more authority in the conversation that you might feel comfortable in. But it's important to speak up and find the right way to do it where you're comfortable and where positive change can occur.

Q I'm from Nigeria, and I am in school. My question is—By the expression, we may lead the food and agricultural research, do you also mean that women should be working in the farm with men?

Wendy So the question is—Should women also be working on farms with men?

Q Yes.

Wendy Yes, and I think we would say yes to that. Just a moment ago Kate talked about the fact that certainly in the United States farming operations are run often by a couple. The men and women work together. That would be our standard in the United States.

Q Well, what I see... Like once I [inaudible] to experience is—mostly I've seen men doing the farm. Most women, not all but most women, can't do what they do on the

- farm. And also if even if they were to do what men do on the farm, how would they manage the natural responsibilities with working at the farm with the man?
- Kate Do you mean balancing like family responsibilities with the farm responsibilities? Is that the question?
- Q No. My question is – If women want to work on the farm, first I say that men, it takes men to run the farm. Most women cannot do it, because..., so men still sowing the sod for 5 hours, harvesting fruits. I can't... I'm not saying women can't do it, but from what I've seen, most women don't have the same capacity to do what some men do. So my question is – If they are able to do what they do, would they, how would they manage the natural responsibilities?
- Wendy So I think that again in the United States we would say, regardless of gender, you have the opportunity to pursue whatever you would like to in your career. And we certainly have women farmers in Iowa that are doing every physical job on the farm that a man would do. We have other women that play another type of role in that farming operation. But we are very much about a sense of family and community where everybody has an opportunity.
- You know, now I'm so sorry for the rest of our individuals in the line. We've run out of time. We've got a red sign up here in front. But wasn't this a wonderful conversation? Thank you all.

Ambassador Quinn

I'm so glad you said that and not me, so it didn't look like a man coming up. But this has been a fabulous and true dialog, and I can't tell you, particularly all these young women raising questions. Your leadership in all of this, it is just an inspired idea. President Wintersteen now a member of our Council of Advisors. Thank you so much for doing that. Deans, thank you so much. Dean VandenBosch, you and I have to do some business, because I thought when we were at the White House together a couple of years ago I mentioned to you that I wanted to put a plaque up where Renenbaum's Drug Store used to be, because the Green Revolution was born in Madison, Wisconsin, in 1953 when Norman Borlaug and M.S. Swaminathan (Swaminathan was a post-doc) at a genetics conference. Went and had coffee together, and look what it led to. So thank you all again so very, very much for a wonderful panel.