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## Women Rule

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## Women Rule the Ivies

By **BIANCA QUILANTAN** | 01/27/2023 11:29 AM EST

*Good morning, rulers! I'm guest-hosting Women Rule today, where we're talking about crashing through the glass ceiling in higher ed. Thanks to Sophie Gardner for helping to put this newsletter together!*

Higher education's most well-known and selective institutions will be mostly led by women this year.

Six of the Ivy League's eight private research universities are slated to have female presidents this fall: Harvard University, Brown University, Columbia University, Cornell University, University of Pennsylvania and Dartmouth College. It's the first time the group of elite colleges will have women at the helm of six of eight campuses, nearly 30 years after Judith Rodin became the first woman to lead an Ivy League school in 1994.

**It's a year of firsts for the Ivy League:** Claudine Gay, the dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, will be Harvard University's first Black leader. Nemat "Minouche" Shafik, president of the London School of Economics, will be Columbia University's first female president. Sian Leah Beilock, president of Barnard College, was tapped to be the first woman to lead Dartmouth College in its more than 250-year history.

Beilock, Gay and Shafik are stepping into their roles during a pivotal time for women and students of color in higher education. Colleges across the country have been navigating how best to support students following the Supreme Court's dismantling of abortion rights last summer. And Gay will be leading Harvard this summer after the Supreme Court decides the fate of using race in college admissions in a case where Harvard is a defendant.

Beilock is also taking the helm following Dartmouth's 50th anniversary of allowing women to attend the college. (Though founded in 1769, Dartmouth only began admitting women in 1972; Columbia was the last Ivy to admit women, opening its doors to them in 1983.)

"I imagine a lot of people will ask me what it means to be Dartmouth's first female president, and for some, they might think that I should not talk about that, I should just talk about being a president," Beilock said in a video statement to Dartmouth's community. "But my research as a psychologist, and my colleagues have really shown that having multiple identities — I am a researcher, I am a president, I am a teacher, I'm a mother — all of those things actually impact what we bring to the table."

But don't let the prominence of women leaders in the Ivy League mask the reality of college leadership across the country. The gender power gap in higher education persists.

Rodin, who was president of Penn from 1994 to 2004, led her campus when women and minorities leading colleges was a scarcity — about 12 percent of the presidents at 3,200 colleges were women at the time.

Women have outnumbered men on college campuses since the 1970s, according to a report from the Women's Power Gap Initiative, created by the Eos Foundation in 2018, and the American Association of University Women.

Yet, women made up only 22 percent of presidents leading the top 130 research institutions in 2022. Women of color were nearly absent in those top roles at about 5 percent.

"Women of color represent the fastest growing segment of the college population in the United States," researchers said. "Yet, scan the faces of those who wield power at our most

prestigious universities, and you're still likely to see the all-too familiar image of another white man."

The higher education power gap is not a "pipeline" issue, as many like to put it. Women have received the majority of PhDs, a preferred qualification to lead a college, for more than a decade, and nearly 40 percent of all academic deans and provosts are women -- positions from which about 75 percent of all presidents are drawn.

Beilock was once an assistant professor, decades before being tapped to lead Dartmouth. In an interview with Women Rule, Beilock said it's promising to see academics taking on top leadership roles at universities because understanding what it means to be a faculty member, to teach students and to interact with staff, is a key part of leading at university. (Women Rule also reached out to Gay and Shafik, but their university spokespeople said they won't be available until they start their roles in July.)

When asked if she'll ever tire of being asked why it's important to be the first woman to lead Dartmouth, Beilock said: "No, I like it — it's important to show that different people can take on leadership roles at any institution."

#### POLITICO SPECIAL REPORT

**"The Women of Iran Are Not Backing Down,"** by Suzanne Kianpour for POLITICO Magazine: "Protests are not a new phenomenon in Iran. They've flared up over the years — over election fraud, economic woes, civil liberties. But this time is different — an unprecedented revolution led by women, with support from men, encompassing a wide variety of grievances, all laid out in the heart-wrenching Persian lyrics of Shervin Hajipour's song 'Baraye,' or 'Because of.' It's become the anthem of the revolution, striking such a nerve around the world that backlash after Hajipour's arrest led to his release."

**"New York lawmakers ask voters to codify abortion rights in state constitution,"** by Joseph Spector for POLITICO: "The state Assembly and state Senate voted Tuesday afternoon on the second passage of a resolution first passed last July that would protect abortion rights in the state constitution, giving it additional strength in the wake of the overturning of *Roe v. Wade* last June by the U.S. Supreme Court. It passed both chambers by an overwhelming majority.

"After the two separately elected legislatures vote on the measure, it can go before voters as early as this November. But lawmakers will direct it to be put on the ballot in November

2024 — a presidential year in a heavily blue state that would improve its chances of passage.”

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Sponsored by Business Leader members of Women Rule: The Exchange:

More than 800,000 women are still missing from workplaces compared to pre-pandemic levels, according to the National Women’s Law Center. So, what must happen to improve the future of work for women? POLITICO Focus connected with members of Women Rule: The Exchange to discuss driving positive change. [Read more here.](#)

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#### NUMBER OF THE WEEK

[Read more here.](#)

#### MUST READS

**“Women’s March Holds Nationwide Rallies on 50th Anniversary of Roe”** by Jenna Russell and Ava Sasani for the *New York Times*: “The events, which were expected to draw thousands of people from Honolulu to Hartford, make up the latest iteration of the Women’s March, the protest series that began in 2017 in the wake of the election of President Donald J. Trump. They closely followed the March for Life in Washington, the annual anti-abortion demonstration that was transformed on Friday into a victory rally celebrating the rollback of Roe.

“In Texas, which led the way in strict abortion bans even before the fall of Roe, marchers gathered in downtown Dallas at John F. Kennedy Memorial Plaza. In Boston, people rallied for abortion rights in the nation’s oldest public park, Boston Common. In Florida, which bans abortion after 15 weeks, more than a dozen events were scheduled.”

**“Women Get ‘Nicer’ Feedback — and It Holds Them Back,”** by Lily Jampol, Aneeta Rattan, and Elizabeth Baily Wolf for the Harvard Business Review.

**“Moms Demand Action founder on gun laws, stepping away and why women can force change,”** by Errin Haines in The 19th: “Five mass shootings in California. Forty in the country overall. That’s just in the first weeks of 2023, according to the Gun Violence Archive.

“Shannon Watts, founder of Moms Demand Action, announced this month that she plans to step away from leadership at the organization she started in 2012, the day after the Sandy Hook shootings left 20 children and six adults dead. I had already wanted to talk to Watts, among the most prominent leaders of the gun reform movement, about her activism. I reached out to her as the country was reeling from the deadly shooting at a dance studio in Monterey Park, Calif; within hours, news of tragedy in Half Moon Bay was emerging.

“I spoke to Watts this week about how she’s thinking about her role, what she’s been able to accomplish in the last decade and the work left undone as she winds down her time at the helm.”

“**The Secret Tax on Women’s Time**,” by Lauren C. Howe, Lindsay B. Howe, and Ashley V. Whillans for TIME: “At work, women—even those who have the security of steady employment—face further unequal time demands. Women are more often asked and expected to take on “office housework”: necessary but non-promotable tasks such as taking notes, helping new hires get up to speed, bringing in cake for colleagues, or getting coffees for the office. Aligned with gender-based stereotypes, one study found that women volunteer up to 50% more than men for these tasks.”

“**In China, Young Women Become Accidental Symbols of Defiance**,” by Shen Lu and Liyan Qi for the *Wall Street Journal*.

“**Women in South Korea Are on Strike Against Being ‘Baby-Making Machines’**” by Hawon Jung in the *New York Times*.

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Sponsored by Business Leader members of Women Rule: The Exchange:



In The Round: [A conversation on the new rules of work.](#)

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#### QUOTE OF THE WEEK

#### TRANSITIONS

**Hannah Muldavin** will be senior comms adviser for the Congressional Integrity Project. She previously was deputy communications director for the Jan. 6 select committee. ...

**Joanna Burgos** is launching a new firm, Compel. She previously was with OnMessage Inc. for a decade. ... **Kathee Facchiano** is now a VP at Van Scoyoc Associates. She previously was chief of staff for Rep. Clay Higgins (R-La.). ...

**Melissa Braid** will be comms director for the Republican side of the Senate Commerce Committee. She most recently was the comms director for the House Freedom Caucus. (h/t Playbook)

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Sponsored by Business Leader members of Women Rule: The Exchange:

When it comes to the state of work, there's good news and bad news for women. Research from McKinsey, in partnership with LeanIn.Org, found that female leaders are leaving their employers at never-before-seen rates, often in exchange for opportunities that prioritize flexibility and wellbeing, along with diversity, equity and inclusion. And yet, more than 800,000 women are still missing from workplaces compared to pre-pandemic levels, according to the National Women's Law Center.

Now, business leaders and employees alike are considering what's next. What must happen next to improve the future of work for women? POLITICO Focus sat down with members of Women Rule: The Exchange to discuss how women are driving change in the workplace, and what organizations and policymakers can do to join them.

[Read on to learn what needs to happen to help all women thrive at work.](#)

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