**Roundtable Discussion post proposal at https://mobts.org/index.php/mobts-guidelines/**

**Session Title**: Us Too? The Role and Responsibility of Management Education in a #MeToo World

**Abstract (100 word maximum):** This session engages participants in (1) exploring our own experience and personal response to the #MeToo movement, (2) discussing management education’s role in perpetuating leadership models, organizational structures and practices, and definitions of power that fuel the current #MeToo world, and (2) developing strategies for how our teaching, scholarship, and service can help build a more just world. Presenters will discuss their own experience and orientation toward the issues, and share their model of forces and dynamics in the academy that promote unhealthy norms and practices and impede lasting change, as well as research on pedagogical practices that support the movement. The take-aways the session hopes to offer are optimism, hope, and workable individual and institutional action strategies.

**Keywords**: Gender, #MeToo, Management Education, Power, Leadership

**Upload your submission and any supplementary information in Word or PDF format. See Submission Guidelines for information on the formatting of your submission for different session formats.**

**Author information and affiliation:**  Joan V. Gallos, Professor of Leadership Emerita, Wheelock College; Lee G. Bolman, Marion Bloch-Missouri Chair in Leadership, University of Missouri-Kansas City

**Session format**. roundtable discussion

**Time requested**: 90 minutes The session can be shortened to 60 minutes, but the topic is deep and complex and we anticipate great interest.

**Resource needs**. A large enough space for discussion, a computer to show PowerPoint with capacity for audio

**Conference Track**. We submit this for the Conference Theme track. This session asks us to take a hard – and not so celebratory – look at aspects of our heritage, and understand how management scholarship, beliefs about management education, and schools of management have colluded to perpetuate definitions, models, curricula, teaching practices, and values of organizational and leadership behavior that #MeToo so powerfully speaks against. To prime the pump for a rich discussion, we will present our research of the forces and factors that have brought management education to its current state, and proven pedagogical strategies and changes that can help it move forward. This should make for a session of learning, and opportunity for people to leave with hope and practical strategies to implement.

**Unique Contribution. Indicate whether**:

**presented the work in this proposal before, at MOBTS or elsewhere?** This will be the first time for this presentation, though we hope to develop a future publication.

**currently under review elsewhere?** NO

**first time submitting to an MOBTS conference (formerly OBTC) and any comments you may have for the program chair.** NO. We are both OBTS fellows, with a forty year history of presenting.

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**Topic overview:**

 The #MeToo wave is the latest chapter in a long struggle for equal rights. At the time of America’s founding, women could not vote or attend college. If married, they could not own property. Oberlin came America’s first college to admit women and African-Americans in 1833. It was not until 1920 that the Nineteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution guaranteed the vote to women, and not until second half of the 20th century that feminism and the women’s movement began to chip away at the myriad vestiges of discrimination against women in education, work, and society. We cannot ignore the power and possibility of the #MeToo wave, as women and men bravely stand up and speak out about gender-based harassment and the misuse of power across industries, organizations, and professions. Famous names in high places tumble daily, in ways unimaginable even months ago. The naming of “The Silence Breakers” as *Time*’s *Person of the Year* signals a major shift in the national conversation and the rise of a major social movement and the potential for lasting social change long sought by the disempowered and harassed. Women in Hollywood have devised the powerful #TimesUp campaign, rolled out with advocacy statements on the “red carpet” and visible symbols (such as wearing black) on the international stage.

Meanwhile, what role are we and higher education playing in recognizing and responding to this movement? There is ample evidence that higher education is far from an island of safety in a sea of harassment and abuse. Gluckman (2017) posted an informal survey link in the Chronical of Higher Education asking for examples of #MeToo in higher education. She netted 1600 very detailed example in less than six days – the vast majority from women faculty and graduate students. They offered poignant accounts of serious and lasting career and psychic damage from the misuse of (usually male) power. The National Sexual Violence Resource Center reports that one in five women and one in 16 men are assaulted while in college, though most victims do not report the incident (NSVRC, 2015). There is much work to be done. Even allowing for great differences among institutions and disciplines, the current #MeToo revelation-revolution forces us to face the question of higher education’s role in the perpetuation of systems of inequity and its responsibility to play a leadership role in supporting change.

#Me Too is the latest embodiment of tensions around gender, access, and power that higher education has struggled to understand and cope with since the dawn of coeducation in the 19th century. Almost every university has policies, procedures, and occasional elective courses that deal with gender and sexual harassment. These often occupy a spot on the periphery: institutions do enough to stay on the right side of the law and to convey an aura of progressiveness, while basic issues remain neglected in much of the work of the institution – most importantly, in the models, values, curricula, and pedagogical principles at the core of what and how faculty teach, and in the forces and factors within the academy that maintain (or exacerbate) the current #MeToo status quo.

Closer to home, what contribution have business schools and management education made to addressing these issues. Over the years, business schools have often claimed to educate leaders. What have we taught future leaders about gender equity and respect? Have we been mostly silent about these issues even though our classes which will usually include a significant number of students who have experienced some form of assault or harassment? Are we part of the problem or the solution? Have we created and used models and methods that perpetrate destructive professional and organizational behaviors? What do leadership and organizational effectiveness mean in a post #MeToo world? What role should management scholarship play in developing answers? What should our role be in educating men and women to further the gender revolution?

We have sought in our research to answer such questions, and to identify issues that hinder progress. They include:

1. **Social pressures favoring a narrowly vocational purpose for management education:** Is management education about more than stamping a passport to good jobs, providing skills, and occupational training? In playing that role, have we been complicit in maintaining systems of inequity? Have we undervalued personal development and kept the undiscussables undiscussable? Should our teaching be about the development of the whole person, providing opportunities for all our students to embrace their leadership potential, and for growth and change leading to better systems, reward systems, and motivation of workers. To what extent are we serious about offering students a transformational way of thinking critically and systematically, seeing the world in larger and deeper ways, understanding personal responsibility, learning to tolerate ambiguity, and more. Gallos and Ramsey (1997) concluded that the only way we can teach about these issues is by teaching strategies that encourage professional growth, self-reflection, and interpersonal engagement. But we have often favored professional over personal development, skill over soul.
2. **Privileging the measurable over the important:** Steven Kerr’s classic 1975 article, “On the folly of rewarding A while hoping for B,” warned us four decades ago about the risk of focusing on what is readily observed and measured, while neglecting subtler and less tangible issues, even when they are more significant.
3. **Systems of evaluation and reward in academy:** We count, quantify, rate, and rank journals and publications. We give weight to numbers and position, vs impact and application. We value scholarship of empirical discovery over scholarship of engagement or application. Number of publications counts more than quality of teaching. Hard is valued more than soft, ideas more than emotions.
4. **Socialization: W**hat does our socialization teach us we rewarded for? Risk-taking or conformity? Being distinctive or fitting in? Malkiel’s (2016) discussion of the evolution of co-education at elite universities shows us that change in higher education required leadership from powerful leaders – particularly men because they did and still do hold the majority of power and influence in universities– as well as the courage to take on difficult debates and battles. Change requires champions with courage, consistency, and persistence. It requires addressing the full range of structural, human, political and symbolic issues that surround every major debate in higher education.
5. **Acceptance and support of existing power structures vs pushing for new understandings and needs:** Baritz (1960) argued that management faculty serve the powerful by giving them what they want – such as more output at lower cost and higher profit. Are we still doing that with our clients and students? Are implicit assumptions of male privilege left unchallenged?
6. **Neglect of gender as a central issue for management education**: Business schools and management education have faced a wave of critiques and reform initiatives – dating notably from the Porter McKibben Report in 1988, rising again in the wake of Enron in an ongoing search for the soul and purpose of management education. Leading scholars, deans, college presidents, distinguished academic superstars, and best-selling authors, like Pfeffer (2002), Bennis and O’Toole (2005), Mintzberg (2014), Ghoshal (2005), Adler (2009), Khurana (2007), Starkey (2009), Podolny (2009), to name a few. All agree that business schools and management education share responsibility for things like lapses of judgment, and perpetuating unfettered self-interest and bottom-line interests that wreaked havoc on the global economy and sank people’s trust in corporations. But these critiques mostly omitted issues of gender equity and power.
7. **Relative numbers and the downside of academic freedom:** The business school professoriate is still predominately male, particularly at the senior levels. Men are less likely to be conscious of and sensitive to issues of gender equity. Their teaching reflects what they know and the concerns that matter to them.Whether by omission or commission, they are more likely to More male professors, academy gives them reign to teach what they know. Collusion. Reinforcement of patriarchy

We see the session as an opportunity for the MOBTS family to ask: what roles have we, as management educators and scholars played in perpetuating unjust and incomplete definitions of power, organizational structures and systems that reward bullies and harassers, while teaching models and curricula that provide skills, vocational training and a passport to good jobs. Through out history, we have espoused growth, change and development of the whole person.How do we ensure that we live the values we espouse, and engage our students in transformational and critical thinking, so that they see the world in a larger and deeper way and embrace personal responsibility.

The many prominent men who have been outed by #MeToo are only the tip of a much larger iceberg. Tina Brown, in her most recent book, argues that powerful actions to end careers and reputations are necessary given the seriousness and longevity of the revolution. But we need to move beyond pointing fingers. Higher education can step up to its historic role as the “equalizer”.

**Session Format:**

The format will be simple. We’ll open with a brief introduction of some of the issues outlined above. Then we’ll lead a discussion. Part of the challenge will be how to create a safe space where people can reflect openly on their experience, perceptions, and attitudes toward these issues, so we expect to begin with “easier” questions such as, “Do people agree that these are issues that we need to deal with more directly?” We’ll ask for examples of experiences or approaches that people have used to address these issues, and move toward a discussion of what we can do going forward.

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