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**CHRISTOPHER DAVIS:** Hello, everyone. Thank you for joining us. This is the Harvard Extension School career and Academic Resource Center, *CARC Podcast*. I am Christopher Davis, the Associate Director of CARC here at the Extension School.

And today it is my great pleasure to have with me, virtually, Professor Patricia Deyton. Professor Deyton is a Professor of the Practice of Management. She was an Associate Dean of the School of Management and the Program Director for the MBA and health care MBA programs at Simmons University. And she was also the director of the Center for Gender in Organizations for about 12 years, which is an internationally recognized center at Simmons addressing gender, diversity, and organizational effectiveness.

Professor Deyton has also taught at the Extension School for many years. And a fact that I just learned today actually is that she was formerly the Chief Executive Officer of the American Red Cross of Massachusetts Bay. She has a very interesting biography and lists of experiences. And it's my pleasure to have her here today.

**PATRICIA DEYTON:** Well, thank you, Chris. It's a pleasure to be here with you today.

**CHRISTOPHER DAVIS:** Thank you so much for being here. So I wanted to talk to you about a few things. First of all, I'm very curious to learn more about your time as the leader of the Center for Gender in Organizations at Simmons. You have been a faculty participant in the faculty aid program here at the Extension School that I manage. And you've had a student working with you this semester.

And you have had the experience of having a faculty aide student in the past too. And I'm very curious to hear about A, the research projects that you worked on, have worked on, and your experience as an instructor. But first of all, if you could tell us a little bit about your time overseeing the Center for Gender in Organizations. I think it would be very interesting for our students.

**PATRICIA DEYTON:** Well, I'd be glad to do that. I came to that position a number of years ago as I had been, as you noted, CEO of the American Red Cross of Massachusetts Bay. And then when I moved on from that position, I went to a position actually at the Kennedy School at Harvard as the Executive Director of the Council of Women World Leaders. And I had always been very interested in women's leadership or the lack thereof in both the profit and for profit sectors in the United States-- I'm sorry, the nonprofit and for profit sectors in the United States and in fact, around the world.

So my moving to the Council of Women World Leaders was a marvelous experience, where I had the opportunity to work with the women, current and former heads of state in government around the world. So these are the women at the very highest level of political leadership. And I really began to learn a great deal more about the challenges they had to overcome, the barriers that were in the way, the stereotypes, the biases, which certainly led me more and more to wanting to explore what's going on. What are the real things that are standing in the way of women in leadership positions?

So when the Council of Women World Leaders moved to Washington DC in the early 2000s, I then moved to Simmons University, where I had been invited to become the head of the Center for Simmons-- Center for Gender and Organizations. And the whole purpose of that organization is to explore what is holding women back from leadership, and especially to move away from blaming women for that, and looking at the ways in which our society and our organizations are built that don't favor women's participation. And barriers that are often very subtle, very unspoken, not even realized exist and need to be called out, need to be named, and need to be changed.

So our work was about changing the workplace through research of many, many different types and helping people and organizations learn how to become change agents. So a few examples of the areas which I personally worked in had to do with women in negotiations. I did a lot of work in that area and still do, working with mentoring programs, how those are effective or not, resource groups for women and organizations, and also the looking at how different ways in which women use their voice can be problematic in terms of how it's interpreted. Always with the idea that we need to look at these as systemic issues, and that is issues that are personal problems of women. I can't emphasize enough how important that is.

So as I said, that was a wonderful opportunity. We did-- while I was there, we published about 40 pieces that were widely used in academia around the world, a huge distribution of them. And in fact, in my teaching now at the Harvard Extension School, where I teach a course in the spring in women in leadership, I use a number of those publications.

And they continue to be extremely relevant to the work that we're doing to try to advance women in leadership and also, advance equitable workplaces for women and for everybody. At this point, I would say, there's a change in the focus in that it's not just about gender. But it's about understanding gender as a part of the entire spectrum of diversity, inclusion, and equity.

**CHRISTOPHER DAVIS:** Thank-- yes, and thank you for noting. I should have referenced earlier you teach a couple of courses at Harvard Extension School, leading and managing non-profit organizations and gender, leadership, and management. That segues into one of the questions that I wanted to ask you.

And it's clearly tied to your research, your teaching interests. I think it was earlier this year, you had a faculty aide Extension School student working on a research project that you cited a report that looked into nonprofits across Massachusetts, and how a select few of them had managed to cultivate a more gender diverse board, and why those particular nonprofits were successful, where many have not been. Can you talk a little bit about what the goals of your research were and what some of the results may have been?

**PATRICIA DEYTON:** Sure. I'd love to do that. I will say, and what I-- I've had the experience of being in nonprofit leadership myself. And now, working in the field, and then working for many years in the field of research and exploring the issues around gender and leadership, and then also in academia. So I have-- these three things have come together to really form the basis of what my interests, which are the leadership of women, and especially in the nonprofit sector.

And so again, we look-- so what are the various factors and the elements, that we look at all of those. So last spring, I had a research assistant, a faculty aide. I consider them research assistants, Chris, who worked with me on a project, where we took some research from another organization I'm affiliated with, the Boston Club, which is an organization of about 700 executive women in the greater Boston area.

And we had conducted, over an eight year period of time, a research project to look at the number of women on the boards of directors of the largest 100 nonprofits in Massachusetts. And I might add that Harvard University is the second largest one on that list. And we found, over that eight year period of time, that the needle had not moved very much from our first report to our fourth report, staying in the lower 30 percentages of how many women were serving on those boards.

But when we went deeper into the data, we found that there were a handful, and I mean, literally, a handful, five or six nonprofits, who over that same period of time, had moved from having maybe 10% or 20% of their board members as women to right around 50%. So they were achieving gender parity on their boards of directors, but it was a gradual move. So the research we did was to explore how that had happened, what happened, what changed. Was it intentional? Was it accidental?

And for that purpose, I had a faculty aide from the program who was-- I couldn't believe her qualifications. Let me say that first of all. I was so fortunate to find-- to have someone apply for the position who was so qualified, had done excellent research in the past, and did it with us as well.

And what we landed doing was a case study on the greater-- the YMCA of Greater Boston, which had moved up from about 20% to 50% of gender parity on its board over that eight year period of time. We conducted a number of interviews and read a lot about the Y. And what we learned in a nutshell is that it was very intentional.

It was a 10 year and now going into its 11th year commitment of moving women forward in leadership positions. And it evolved to be a program that was not just about the advancement of women but the advancement of people of color and looking very closely at some inequities they identified in their pay scale and the amounts of money that were being paid for the same position but in different locations, where the Y was located. And they did a very intense and very open examination of so many of their systems and have changed that organization into one that I think has an outstanding program that can be commended to others to look at and see how they could use that to bring about both gender equity and much more diversity into their organizations.

And I could not have done that research if it had not been for the assistant I had working with me at that time. That case study is going to go public in the early spring of 2021, jointly between the Boston Club and the YMCA. And you can be sure we'll be giving credit to our faculty assistant for this program as well. But that was a very, very beneficial study and very rewarding study to do.

**CHRISTOPHER** That's fascinating. I'm so glad to hear that. And in fact, it sounds like maybe something that would be referenced  
**DAVIS:** in one of your future courses from the sounds of it.

**PATRICIA** Well, you're exactly right. I do plan to use the case study in my spring course, that's coming up starting in late  
**DEYTON:** January, because it's highly relevant to-- we teach about all of these things that are the barriers and how they can be overcome, how they need to be understood. And here is an organization that did it. You know? And understood that and wrestled with doing things new ways.

**CHRISTOPHER** That is truly fascinating. And having taken management courses myself, I know how beneficial those case studies  
**DAVIS:** can be at digging into the processes that led to sometimes good outcomes, sometimes not good outcomes. But those are wonderful learning opportunities. That's wonderful.

**PATRICIA** Thank you. It really was a good experience.  
**DEYTON:**

**CHRISTOPHER** So I also wanted to ask, I'm very curious about the current research that you have or had been doing this semester on something that's very timely. You, I believe, had another student working with you on a research project looking at the types of different voices of national leaders in the current COVID crisis, the global pandemic that we've all experienced, and through written and verbal communications kind of looking at best practices for communication in leaders during this moment, during this year in particular. Can you talk a little bit more about that research?

**PATRICIA DEYTON:** Yes, and that research is ongoing. We've just completed the fall semester work with our faculty assistant. And again, I was so happy and so excited to have a person apply for the position who was not only so well qualified. But this is an area in which she is very engaged in and cares about deeply. So her motivation was very high.

In fact, when we finish this, we will be including her as a co-author, which gives you an idea of her level of contribution. But this project is also-- it's not necessarily looking at barriers. It's looking at perceptions. So what we have done, after spending a lot of time trying to figure out what should be the right group that we're talking to, talking about and exploring in this, we have randomly selected 10 governors of the 50 states in the United States.

And only our research assistant knows which are men and which are women. Because she did the random selection. And myself and my two colleagues who are researchers on this project are now going to be analyzing as much public information we can find that are the actual words of these 10 governors as they talked about the pandemic and the reactions that the people in their states needed to take to address the pandemics, dealing with all the challenges, all the issues, all the problems.

And what we're looking to see is if our-- what type of voice are they using? Are they using a voice that is deemed to be more masculine, or deemed to be more feminine, or deemed to be androgynous? In other words, a neutral voice that isn't particularly either masculine or feminine and one with which not only are the speakers comfortable, but the hearers are comfortable hearing that type of voice that is a neutral voice. And by this, we mean what's masculine are attributes that are considered to be more masculine, or feminine attributes that are like being more gentle in how they talk, more empathetic. Or in the masculine one, perhaps more decisive.

Now, these are not to say that those are limited. But those are perceptions people have about how men and women speak differently, and they hear that differently. So we're exploring how they used their voice, how they use the vocabulary. And then we're going to take key data points about the pandemic itself and see if we can see any correlation between the handling of the pandemic based upon the number of cases, hospitalizations, and deaths at those key points in time and the way in which the governor of the state communicated with the people of the state.

Even as I speak about this, it scares me a little bit. Because there's a lot of stuff to look at in there. We have to be very careful not to draw conclusions that are not really strongly based in the data. But we think its value is to forward the understanding of how important communications are in a situation like this and any crises. So it's really around crises communication and what can be the most effective way of communicating with people who are looking to you for leadership in crises.

**CHRISTOPHER** That sounds quite fascinating as well. And I think you had referenced BIM's three types of leaders.

**DAVIS:**

**PATRICIA** Yes.

**DEYTON:**

**CHRISTOPHER** Yeah.

**DAVIS:**

**PATRICIA** We're using the BIM scale, which was developed a number of years ago that does list, I think it has 50 or 60 attributes divided between feminine, masculine, and androgynous. And we're not using all of those, because that would be way too many to do in a study, this particular study. So we have selected several from each of those categories.

And now, what we're doing is going through the transcripts of talks and press releases, that so we can get as close to the actual voice of the leader as possible, and assigning their words to the categories that we're using from the BIM scale. And that will be the basis from that we can see if then if someone is very strongly masculine used more of these words, or very strongly feminine, or more androgynous in their approach. That's what we're looking for now. This is still very much in progress. And then we will overlay that with, as I said, with the pandemic data itself.

**CHRISTOPHER** That should be quite an interesting study. I'm curious to see what the results are.

**DAVIS:**

**PATRICIA** So am I.

**DEYTON:**

[LAUGHTER]

We had wanted originally to make it a worldwide study. But we realized that we needed to be very careful. Because first of all, if it wasn't an English speaking country, then we would be relying upon translation. And then we would have the bias of the translator in between us and the words. And then we realized that even with an English speaking country, we would have the bias of the way in which English is used differently.

So I would have enjoyed using the Prime Minister of New Zealand in this study. But in listening to her, I realized she was using many words very differently and words that we don't use in the United States, necessarily, in some of the same framework. Plus she was using some Indigenous language in her talking as well. So we decided, in order to be as clear as possible as we put the data together, we should use people who speak American English.

**CHRISTOPHER** And so will this study be continuing into 2021?

**DAVIS:**

**PATRICIA** Well, yes, because we're not done yet.

**DEYTON:**

[LAUGHTER]

It will be continuing, and we will be-- I hope we'll be ready to get it to some place to be published in the first part of 2021. But we have a ways to go. There's a lot of work to do in this one. And again, I want to say, to go back to the purpose of your program, Chris, that you manage so well for us at the Extension School.

We would not be where we are without the faculty aide. She has been just amazing. In fact, she used her time up very quickly, because there was so much work for her to do. But she delivered a great deal to us, and we're very, very grateful.

**CHRISTOPHER DAVIS:** And I'm grateful to hear that, because one of the goals for me for this podcast has been to periodically hear from faculty. Because we also have instructors who have done and are doing such extraordinary research in so many different fields. And I always want to hear more about them. And this is one of the opportunities I have to do that.

And also, as you said, we have some remarkable students. And the results of their research have resulted in co-authorship of studies, as you mentioned earlier. Or they've contributed research, significant research, to books and textbooks that have been published. So it's always wonderful to hear that. And to have the voice of the instructor, as we have today, talking a little bit about the goals of the research and the specifics of it too.

**PATRICIA DEYTON:** Well, the one thing I want to be sure to say, also, for anyone who listens to this is that I consider this program an incredible benefit of being associated with the Extension School and teaching there. And I didn't use it for a while, and then when I really took a look at it and started to-- this is my third assistant that I've had. It's really a way of showing great respect to the people who teach at the Extension School and understanding that, while many come from the practitioner world with great expertise and skills out of that, they are also scholars.

And some are, actually, of course, from academia as well. But many practitioners are very fine scholars when it comes to the type of research that pertains to their field of expertise. And I think this program shows respect for that. And we're very grateful for that.

**CHRISTOPHER DAVIS:** Thank you. And you're exactly right. It does cut both ways. I mean, not only do we have students who have remarkable backgrounds and are contributing so much to these various projects. But as you said, we have a very diverse and large body of instructors. And it's been an opportunity for me and I think many of my colleagues at Extension School to really appreciate the scope of the work that they're doing in the classroom and outside the classroom.

**PATRICIA DEYTON:** The other-- I will mention my-- the first time I used a faculty aide in research was on a paper on women in negotiations. So I just want to put a plug-in for that topic as well, which is something I also focus on in my course in gender and leadership, real differences in how women have been socialized to negotiate, which is totally-- I was going to say, can be overcome. But that, again, I don't want to put the blame on women for that.

But it needs understanding. It needs to be called out. And also, in that project, we worked on that, and that faculty aide was also an excellent resource. So just if by any chance you were ever listening, I would want to be sure she had some credit as well.

**CHRISTOPHER DAVIS:** Thank you so much for referencing that. And with that, Professor Deyton, I'm going to say, thank you so much for giving your time today. I certainly hope that you continue to use the faculty aide program. And I would love to revisit this topic in a year or so and see what you're up to. And I just want to say thank you so much for sharing that with us today.

**PATRICIA DEYTON:** Well, I appreciate the opportunity, Chris. I think you can see that I'm a very enthusiastic participant in this program. So thank you very much.

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**CHRISTOPHER** You have listened to the *CARC Podcast*. This is the podcast for the Career and Academic Research Center here at  
**DAVIS:** Harvard Extension School, and I hope you will join us again.

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