



USAID's Higher Education System Strengthening Activity

International Summit on Shaping the Future of Higher Education in Pakistan 10-12 June 2024, Islamabad

Session 9: Tuesday, 11 June 2024 (14:30 to 17:00 hours)

Topic: Showcasing HESSA Best Practices: Strengthening Women Leadership Capacities in Higher Education

Speakers: See program below

Description: The focus of the HESSA Women's Leadership Program was to provide both theory and practice in the area of higher education leadership, generally, as well as to provide guidance regarding challenges specific to women's leadership in Pakistani higher education. Participants were selected from among the faculty members, department chairs, deans, or other administrators of the HESSA partner institutions. At the conclusion of the Women's Leadership Program, participants were able to:

- Discern their own leadership strengths and areas for growth, and design strategies for how to maximize those in real-world settings
- Learn about and apply strategies for "leading from the middle"
- Analyze challenges specific to women's leadership, and how those should be addressed
- Learn about, discuss, and practice strategies for building and sustaining teams as a woman leader, including maximizing individuals' strengths within the team
- Practice strategies for overcoming bureaucratic and operational challenges and for resolving conflicts
- Demonstrate utilization of strategies for prioritization, time management, and resource management, aligned with institutional strategic plan and/or priorities
- Demonstrate knowledge of how to identify and utilize mentors (male and female); construct and maintain a mentoring network between the participant, the US mentor, and two Pakistani mentors
- Design a strategic initiative to be designed and implemented by the end of the training, and to be presented at the closing workshop – a problem or policy that needs addressing, as advised by a senior official in participants' own university, and that will both allow them to put their lessons into practice and help advance their visibility as leaders within their own university
- Develop gender-specific strategies for managing work-life balance

The training occurred in four phases:

- 1) **Opening Workshop** – overview of activities and principles
- 2) **Study Tour** to the University of Alabama (two weeks) – including department-specific consultations, shadowing of women leaders, case studies, communications workshops, and other immersive activities and discussions
- 3) **Online course** involving readings, reflections, and scaffolded construction of a Leadership Portfolio (6 months)

