

NACAC 2011 New Orleans  
**Connecting the Dots to Find the Right Fit:  
How to Get Your Girls to Consider  
Women's Colleges**

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# Heads Up!

The Coalition's website – [www.womenscolleges.org](http://www.womenscolleges.org) – is rich with information and resources to help you in your work with your female advisees and their parents/grandparents.

For an expanded version of today's presentation, including all of the research, data, and dots to which we will make reference – NSSE, Hardwick~Day and Linda Sax, etc. – as well as the stories behind the pictures in our newest poster, go to: <http://womenscolleges.org/story/nacac2011>.



# Every picture tells a thousand words.

<http://www.womenscolleges.org/story/poster2011>

## Community: A Sense of Belonging

When you begin college, you will become part of a new academic community as well as a new social community. You will become part of the distinctive environment that is created by the faculty and students who will play a central role in your life, both in and out of the classroom. The single most important environmental influence on your learning and development is your peer group, your classmates.



Will I find people like me? Will I make friends? Will I have a community? These are some of the questions you might be thinking about during your college selection process. The relationships you will build and the friendships you will make in college will last a lifetime...

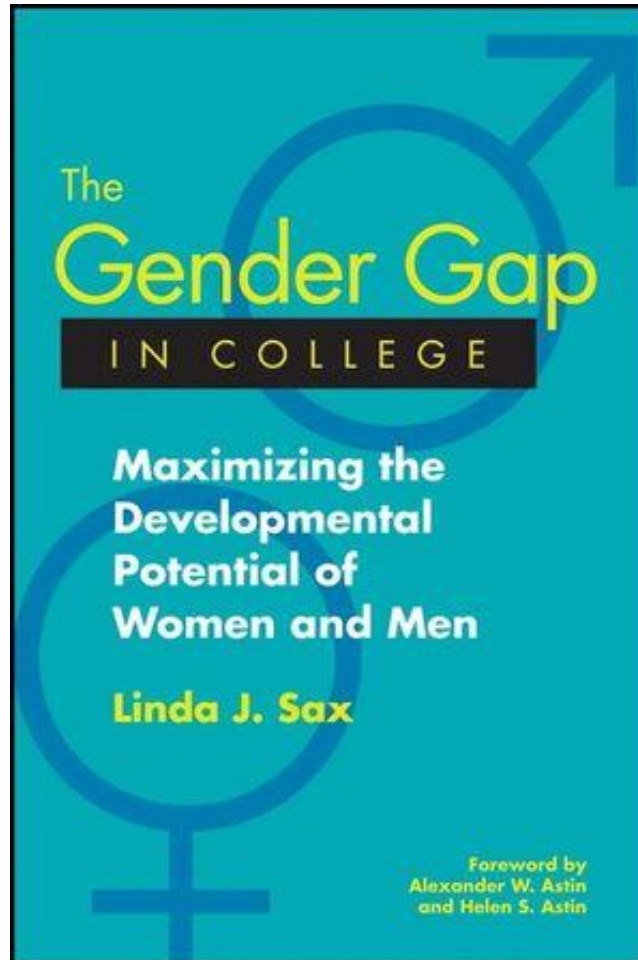
# Why Does Women's Education Matter?

“Although women are now entering the highest levels of leadership across the globe, women leaders have not yet achieved anything close to parity with men.

“With extraordinary challenges facing us – from global poverty, inadequate health care, gender-based violence, and environmental degradation – ***there is no better time than now to ensure that women contribute their ideas, energies and leadership to make the world a better place.***”

Debora Spar, President, Barnard College

# Why does our girls' education matter?



# Key Gender Differences Among First-Year College Students (Sax)

- Socioeconomic Background
- Academic Self-Confidence and Engagement
- Physical and Psychological Well-Being
- Careers and Majors

# Gender differences are evident at college entry, but...

Are there gender differences in the “impact” of college?

*This question serves as the foundation of the research the Women’s College Coalition is undertaking with Linda Sax.*

(To view the PPT of the presentation Dr. Sax made at the Coalition’s November 2010 Annual Meeting, go to

[http://womenscolleges.org/files/pdfs/2011\\_Annual\\_Meeting\\_Linda\\_Sax\\_PPT.ppt](http://womenscolleges.org/files/pdfs/2011_Annual_Meeting_Linda_Sax_PPT.ppt))

# Gender Differences in College Effects (Sax)

## Examples From Two Themes

Theme #1: Impact of Student-Faculty Interactions for Female Students

Theme #2: Salience of Family Connections for Female Students

## Student-Faculty Interaction: Unique Effects for Women (Sax)

*Faculty not taking student's comments seriously predicts...*

- Declines in self-rated physical health for women only
- Declines in self-rated math ability for women only
- Declines in degree aspirations for women only

# Student-Faculty Interaction: Unique Effects for Women (Sax)

*Receiving honest feedback from faculty predicts...*

- Gains in physical health for women only
- Gains in drive to achieve that are larger for women
- Higher college GPAs for women than men

## Connection to Family (Sax)

*Attending college farther away from parents predicts...*

- Gains in leadership confidence for women only
- Increases in emotional health for women only
- Gains in academic orientation for women only

# Hector Martinez

## Director of College Guidance, The Webb Schools

- Choose Wisely
- Watch Your Language
- Put It On The List
- Bring Them Back To Tell Their Stories
- They Will Thank You Later

# Deb Shaver

## Director of Admission, Smith College

For many prospective students the notion of a women's college is full of negative connotations:

- *not* co-educational
- *non-existent* social life
- *not* the “real world”
- *not* a typical choice

## Change the conversation

From what women's colleges *aren't*...to what they are.

## Think smart: *Think with your head.*

The Hardwick~Day Comparative Alumnae Survey compared women's college alumnae with alumnae from coed institutions.

([http://womenscolleges.org/files/pdfs/WCC-What\\_Matters\\_March08.pdf](http://womenscolleges.org/files/pdfs/WCC-What_Matters_March08.pdf))

Women's college received much higher effectiveness ratings on a variety of factors.

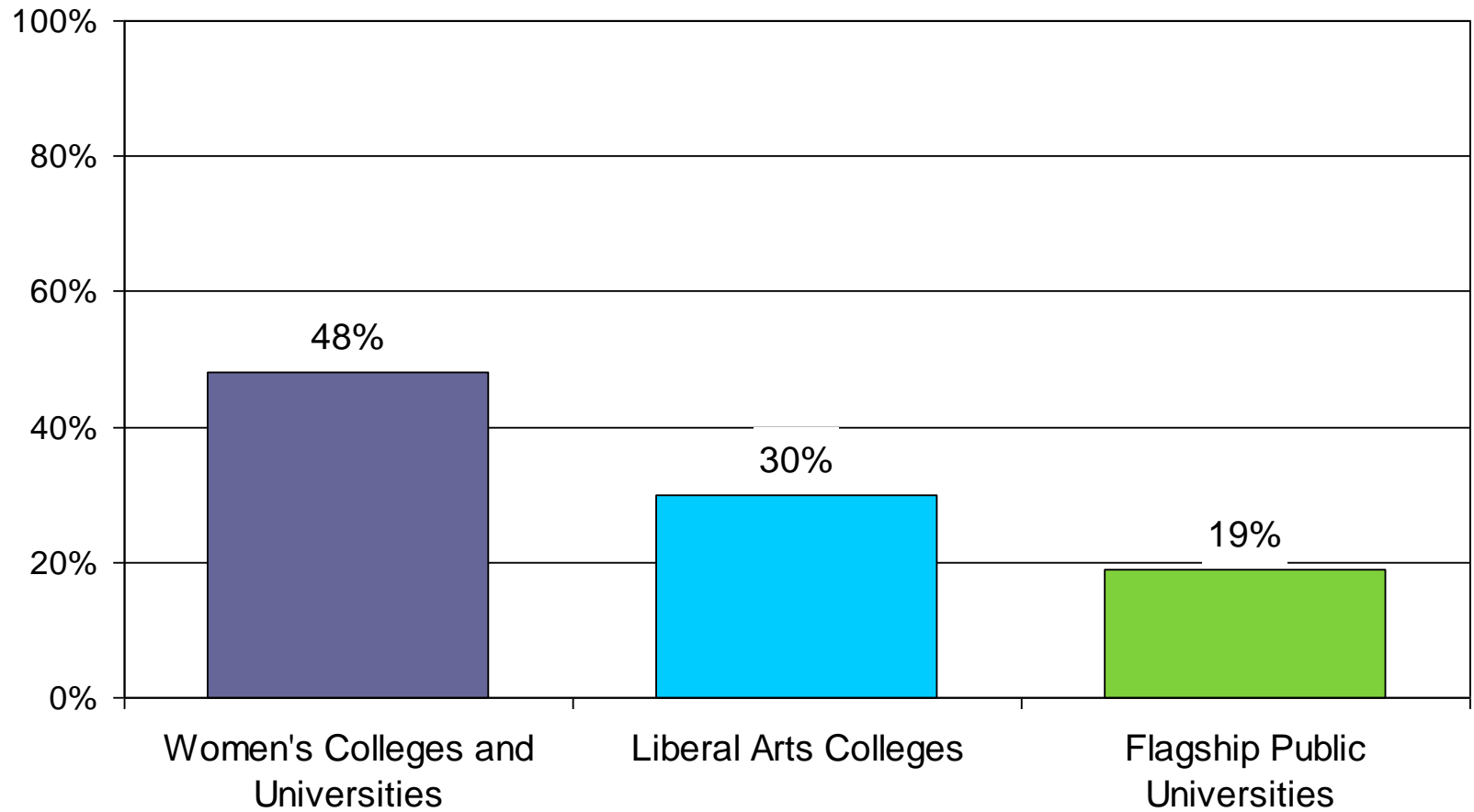
## Think smart: *Think with your head.*

Women's college received much higher effectiveness ratings for helping students:

- Learn to be leaders
- Learn to solve problems and make effective decisions
- Learn to relate to people of different backgrounds
- Learn to work as part of a team
- Learn to write and speak effectively
- Develop the ability to learn new skills
- Develop self-confidence and initiative
- Have a sense of purpose in life
- Be prepared for their first job
- Be prepared for career change or advancement

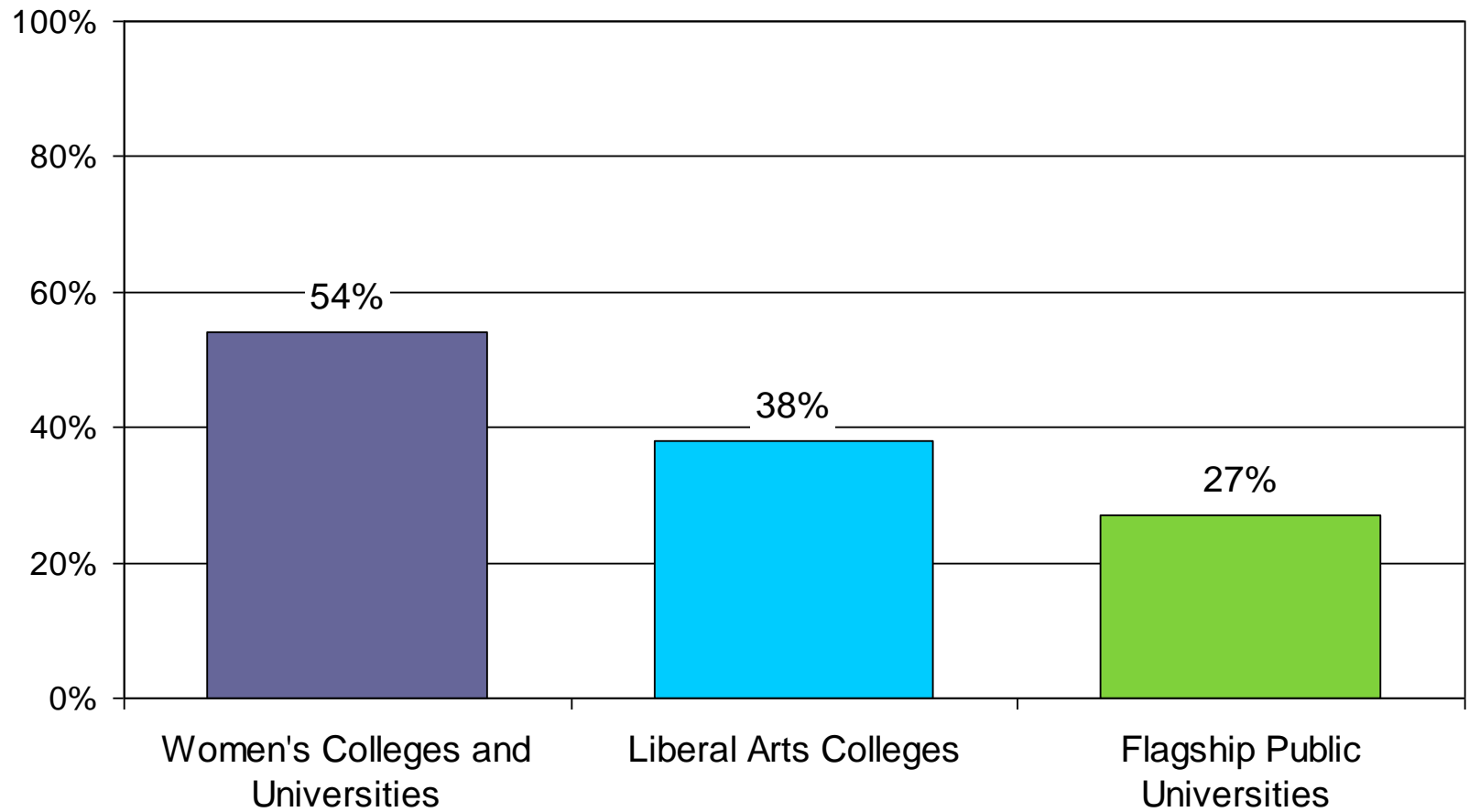
# Learn to Be a Leader

[http://womenscolleges.org/files/pdfs/WCC-What\\_Matters\\_March08.pdf](http://womenscolleges.org/files/pdfs/WCC-What_Matters_March08.pdf)



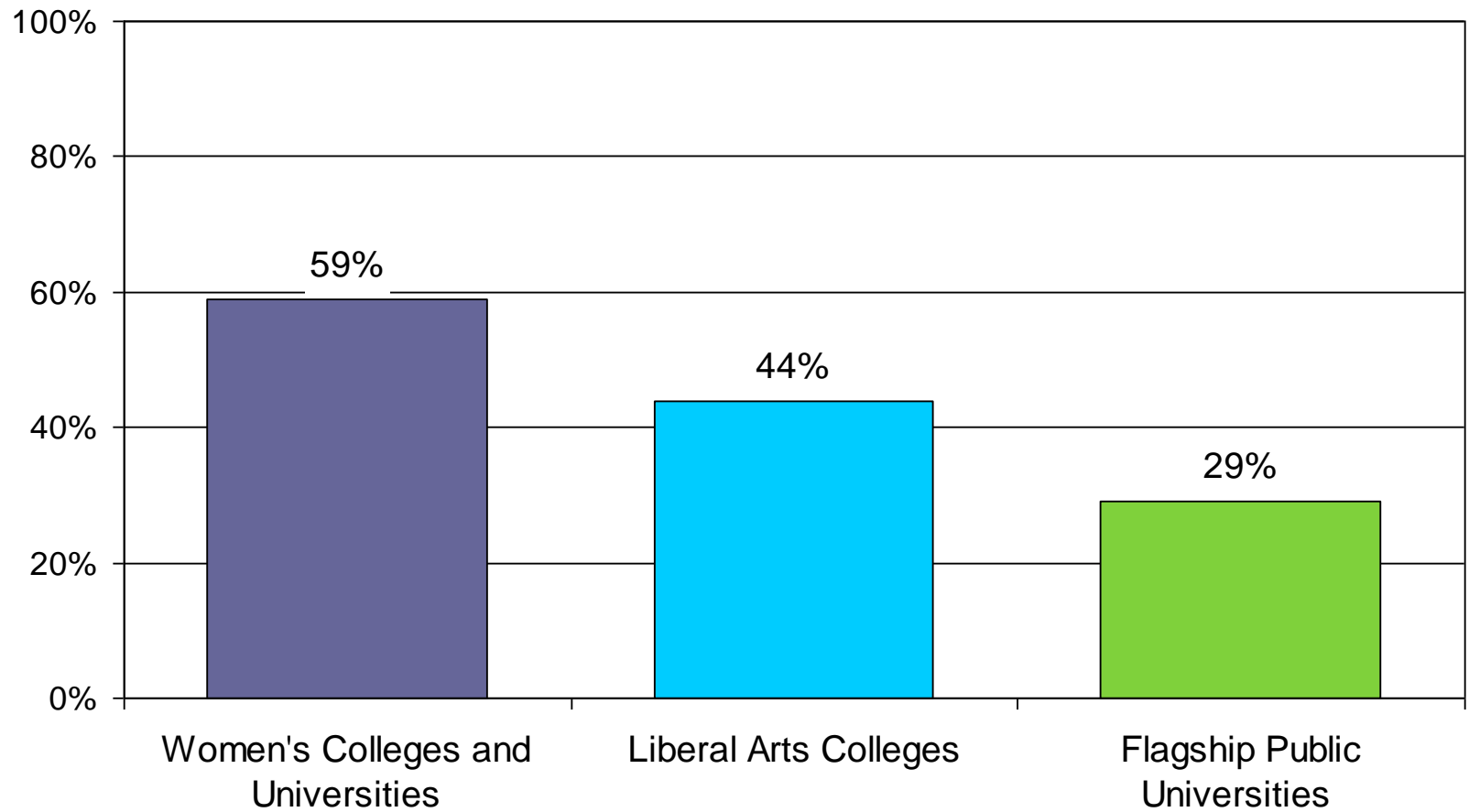
# Learn to Solve Problems and Make Effective Decisions

[http://womenscolleges.org/files/pdfs/WCC-What\\_Matters\\_March08.pdf](http://womenscolleges.org/files/pdfs/WCC-What_Matters_March08.pdf)



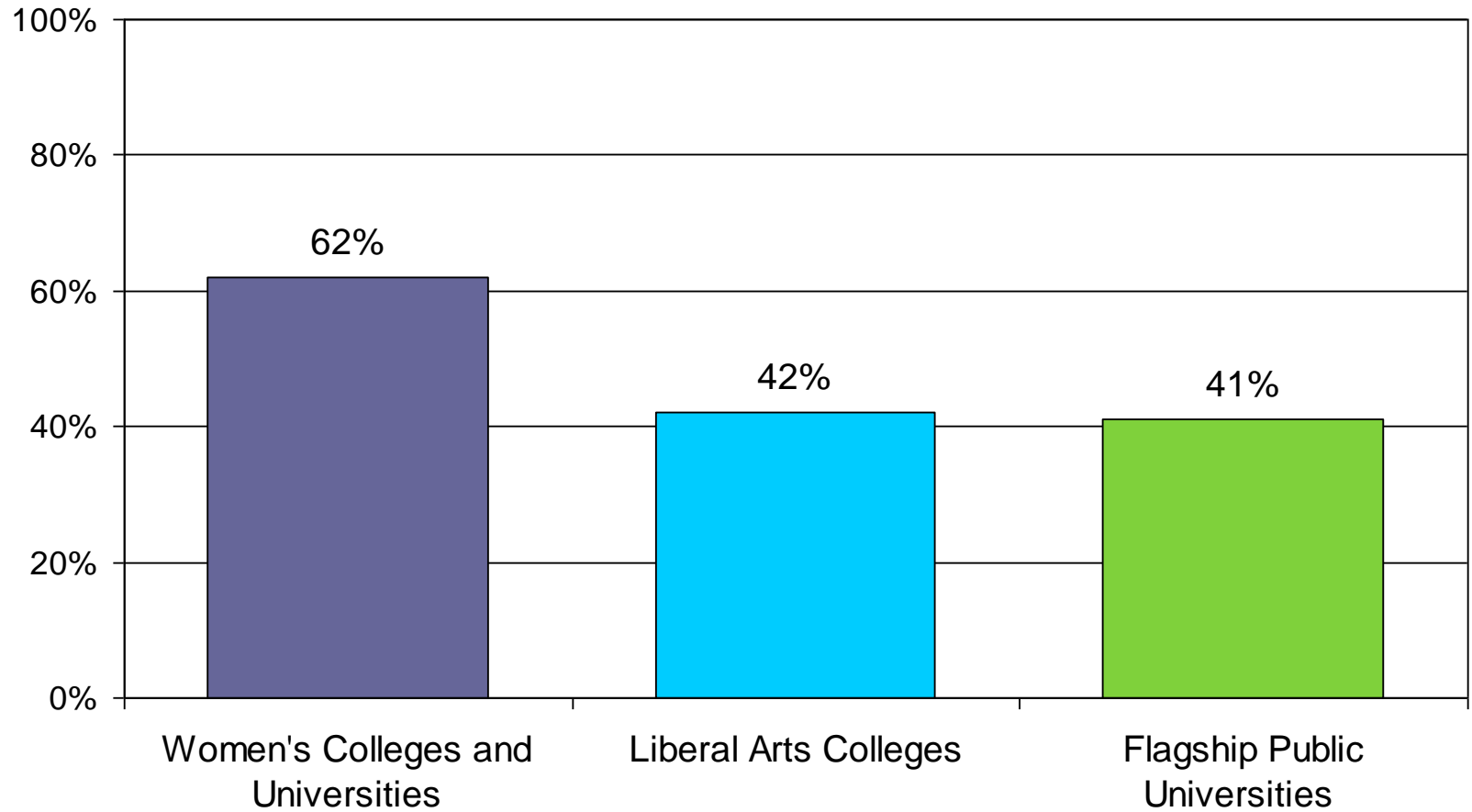
# Learn to Write Effectively

[http://womenscolleges.org/files/pdfs/WCC-What\\_Matters\\_March08.pdf](http://womenscolleges.org/files/pdfs/WCC-What_Matters_March08.pdf)



# Develop Self-Confidence and Initiative

[http://womenscolleges.org/files/pdfs/WCC-What\\_Matters\\_March08.pdf](http://womenscolleges.org/files/pdfs/WCC-What_Matters_March08.pdf)



## Think smart: *Think with your heart.*

*Fitting in and feeling comfortable.*

Concerns about social life:

- Where to find men? Consortiums and partnerships offer lots of opportunities.
- Expand the idea of boys = fun.
- Women's colleges offer the "whole" of fun.
- You can go to a party, but you don't need to live in a party.

## Think smart: *Think with your heart.*

*Fitting in and feeling comfortable.*

Community:

- Sense of community – very important to girls.
- Women's colleges are intentional communities.
- Supportive, open, accepting.
- A supportive community encourages risk taking (the good kind!).

# Act intentionally: *Where are the best opportunities?*

It's not about *equal* opportunity - it's about *every* opportunity.

- In the classroom: small classes, innovative pedagogy, inclusive curriculum.
- Research experience: women are more likely to do research at a women's college; more likely to attend graduate school, especially in math, science and engineering; more likely to go on for a PhD.
- Out of the classroom: women are “the show.”
- Leadership: every leadership position is held by a woman; female role models abound.
- Networking: forget the “old boys’ network,” this is the “ageless women’s network.”

**Be selfish:**  
*Attending a women's college is a selfish choice*

- Encourage girls to be selfish about the college process.
- Encourage girls to think independently about college choice.

**Jessica Reback '11, Smith College**  
**Teach for America – New Orleans**  
**William J. Fischer Accelerated Academy**  
**7th/8th Grade English Language Arts/Writing**

- Work hard
- Be nice
- "Get smart!"

**“To *listen* another’s soul into a condition of discourse and discovery may be almost the greatest service any human being ever performs for another.**

Douglas Steere

Thank you for being with us today and for all the good work you do.

Questions? Contact Susan Lennon at the Women’s College Coalition at

[susan.lennon@womenscolleges.org](mailto:susan.lennon@womenscolleges.org)