

# Gender pay gap shrinking for some female university presidents

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Credit: INFORMS

While serious economic and societal issues continue to swirl around the gender pay gap, new research published in the INFORMS journal *Organization Science* shows one area where this inequality is starting to disappear—higher education. Researchers have found that the gender pay gap disappears at more prestigious universities.

The research, conducted by Dane Blevins of the University of Central Florida, Steve Sauerwald of the University of Illinois at Chicago, Jenny Hoobler of the University of Pretoria, and Chris Robertson of

Northeastern University is based on 17 years of data from more than 1,100 university presidents working for more than 700 universities in the United States. The status of universities in the study is determined by data collected from *U.S News & World Report's Best College Rankings*.

While the study reveals that in [higher education](#) there is typically a 9 percent compensation difference between male and [female presidents](#), with women receiving less pay than men on average, at higher status universities, female presidents are receiving similar levels of total compensation as male presidents- and some are even earning more than male presidents at prestigious universities.

"Our research finds accounting for where the [glass ceiling](#) is broken is an important consideration in understanding the gender pay gap," said Blevins, an associate professor in the Department of Management at the University of Central Florida. "Higher status universities are often viewed as guideposts and their standard of compensation among female presidents may encourage other universities, businesses and organizations of all types, to follow suit and further reduce, if not close, the [gender pay gap](#) in the United States."

**More information:** Dane P. Blevins et al, Gender Differences in Pay Levels: An Examination of the Compensation of University Presidents, *Organization Science* (2019). [DOI: 10.1287/orsc.2018.1266](https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.2018.1266)

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