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## FOUNDATION WILL TARGET THREE UNIVERSITIES TO BOOST WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

By Chris Triunfo

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STATE HOUSE, BOSTON, NOV. 14, 2018....Three Massachusetts universities will be the target of a campaign to increase the number of women leaders in their administration, according to EoS Foundation President Andrea Silbert.

During a speaking event Wednesday, Silbert said that donors, alumni, faculty and students from Tufts University, Boston University and the University of Massachusetts Amherst are being organized to petition their school's administration for higher representation.

"We want to give organizers a real opportunity to weigh in," Silbert said during a speaking event at the State House. "We're eager to get this cluster of people on campuses going."

The organizers will mainly use data from an EoS Foundation report in their efforts.

The September report, "Women's Power Gap in Higher Education," ranked 93 colleges and universities in Massachusetts based on the number of women who served in the most recent academic year as president, on governing boards or in senior leadership positions. It drew from research commissioned from the UMass Boston Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy, a group based on a campus that is currently led by interim president Katherine Newman.

Simmons College achieved the highest ranking, followed by Smith College, Emmanuel College, Wellesley College and Bay Path University. William James College ranked 93rd, tied with Franklin W. Olin College of Engineering and Boston College at the bottom of the rankings. Tufts University ranked 87th in the state, while Boston University ranked 82nd and UMass Amherst ranked 55th.

Researchers placed 20 percent of the campuses studied into the "needs urgent attention" category - the remainder were categorized as satisfactory, status quo or needs improvement.

Wednesday's event was attended by a series of recently elected legislators, including Nika Elugardo, Michelle Ciccolo, Tami Gouveia, Maria Robinson and Lindsay Sabadosa. Speakers included House Speaker Pro Tempore Patricia Haddad and Commissioner of Higher Education Carlos Santiago.



EoS Foundation President Andrea Silbert was joined by Commissioner of Higher Education Carlos Santiago to discuss gender disparity in Massachusetts' colleges and universities. [Photo: Chris Triunfo/SHNS]



"Different points of view bring an incredible richness to everything that's done," said Haddad. "That can't be done in an atmosphere of all white men."

Before introducing Santiago, who is a member of Gov. Charlie Baker's administration, Silbert called on state government and elected officials to make gender and racial parity a priority at public higher education institutions, slamming the administration for a lack of diversity.

"Women are missing in the Baker administration's statewide education leadership team," said Silbert, a 2006 Democratic candidate for lieutenant governor. "There has never been a female leader of the (Department of Elementary and Secondary Education), although women make up 75 percent of teachers. You've got Secretary of Education Jim Peyser, Commissioner of Early Education and Care Tom Weber, Elementary and Secondary Education and Care Jeff Riley and Commissioner Santiago. Not a woman in sight."

Silbert also recommended that Massachusetts learn from models in California and New York to achieve greater women and minority representation, citing the states' levels of parity in representation. Commissioner Santiago defended the Commonwealth's system of higher education governance, saying that Massachusetts and New York give far too much power to one person, while Massachusetts ensures that all decisions are made by local search committees.

"It can seem like a complex process," Santiago said. "But it is a system that better ensures diversity."

Santiago also said that while the report shows that there is work to be done, he noted significant diversification in recent years. At the same time, he expressed his support for the foundation's organizing initiative.

"There is a huge inequality within public higher education, and the children and students that need to be educated need to see more diversity, and for that to happen, they need to see some more resources as well," Santiago said. "Our board here in Massachusetts is interested in looking at this issue from an equity lens. We need to close those gaps."

Following discussion of various gaps in representation, Santiago and Silbert took questions on other topics spanning higher education and thanked legislators who were in attendance, including Sen. William Brownsberger, Sen. Cindy Friedman, Rep. Sarah Peake, Rep. Paul Brodeur, Rep. Paul Donato and Rep. Alice Peisch, who

co-chairs the Education Committee.

Senate President Karen Spilka was scheduled to attend Wednesday's event, but was not in attendance due to a surgery, according to Haddad. A Spilka aide confirmed she had foot surgery earlier this week.

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