

Truth Without Tears: African American Women Deans Share Lessons in Leadership by Carolyn R. Hodges and Olga M. Welch, afterword by Earl T. Braxton. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Education Press, 2018. 176 pp. \$28.00, paperback.

Reviewed by Brittany Hinkle, *Howard University*.

Working in academia is a rewarding career, yet the opportunity to truly make a difference is faced with many adversities, especially for those in leadership positions. Leadership positions are frequently consistent with the desire to achieve goals that are both ambitious and taxing such as obtaining funding, balancing research with teaching, and increasing student numbers. More often than not, what is required to fulfill the job may go beyond what is explicitly stated in the job description. *Truth Without Tears: African American Women Deans Share Lessons in Leadership* depicts the hardships associated with not only being an administrator but also women of color in leadership positions at predominantly white institutions. Through their personal accounts, Carolyn Hodges and Olga Welch address the many challenges to becoming effective leaders while being Black.

Truth Without Tears examines six areas of concern: what individuals don't know, having a vision, self-interest, hiring others, making decisions, and leading without fear. The last section is an afterword that provides some final thoughts about clearly defining the role, managing boundaries, and equates the educational structure to a dependency system. Throughout the chapters, the authors provide content related to their areas of concern and how these concerns interact with systemic racism at the university level. Hodges and Welch submit an introduction that offers a glimpse into the lessons and difficulties that would be discussed further into the chapters. While the chapters attempt to present new ideas, there is some overlap.

Hodges and Welch begin the first chapter with a narration of the well-known tragedy of Titanic, acknowledging that the crew was given several warnings and the tragedy was preventable. With this analogy, they highlight that as deans of color, they could not assume that they knew all the of the information that was necessary to be successful. They also assert that they were sometimes not privy to any information at all and often discovered that decisions were made without their input. However, Hodges and Welch emphasize observing others, tackling issues head on, communicating, taking risks and making excusable mistakes, which all may influence the enhancement of the organization. In Chapter 2, Hodges and Welch disclose that their visions were consistently undermined, calling out skepticism and stereotyping as underlying issues. They reasonably acknowledge that moving forward can be challenging for any new dean. However, it was important for them to strategically plan with caution. In their personal reflections, they detail leading from behind, doing damage control, and consulting while in these roles to ensure movement and implementation.

Chapter 3 begins with a Greek myth of Echo and Narcissus to demonstrate what can occur when leaders are self-centered. This chapter explores self-interests and the complex duality of both being judged by the color of their skin yet not wanting to avoid being Black. Welch offers that individuals in higher education are no different from those in private sectors because they have hopes of advancing their agendas and achieving certain objectives. Hodges speak directly to the pressures that are associated with being manipulated by faculty members and how her personal interests were described as an excessive use of power. More specifically, this chapter speaks to a lack of support and efforts not being addressed or appreciated.

The next three chapters address hiring ideal, collaborative candidates, making good decisions, and leaving regret-free, respectively. Chapter 4 expands on ideas presented in Chapter 2, which is the desire to successfully implement a vision. Part of this vision is to create an environment that is both sustainable and competitive by hiring the right people, which also allows for building relationships across levels. Welch specifically lists the necessary elements to accomplish this goal such as expecting a diverse pool of applicants and the school's commitment. Hodges recognizes the importance of including the staff in the visioning process while offering opportunities for professional development. They also propose that refining an organization may result in professional sacrifices. Chapter 5 frames the deans as "walking around like a problem", discussing them staying in their respective roles. This chapter is essential in highlighting the importance of authenticity and integrity. In this chapter, Hodges and Welch describe being true to themselves and finding value in not settling. In Chapter 6, the two describe and reflect on the negative feelings and emotions paired with their experiences such as discomfort, disappointment, fear and anger while also acknowledging their many accomplishments and that there is still work to do regarding systemic barriers. Even though it fulfills its task, this chapter is brief and could have used more content.

Truth Without Tears is a critical reading that is helpful to those that seek to understand the role of race and leadership in white environments, more specifically women of color. The majority of the information is provided in a way that is compelling and captivating and indicates that racism permeates our society at all levels. Throughout the book, Hodges and Welch offer several analogies through famous tragedies, Greek mythology and quotes and experiences of famous figures. Their personal accounts provide lessons that are transferrable to other aspects of life, especially considering the current state of race relations in the United States. *Truth Without Tears* is a good overview for higher education administrators, readers that are considering academia, professionals, and advocates interested in reforming a racist system.