

GENDER-SPECIFIC MENTORSHIP
FOR COLLEGIATE FEMALE BAND DIRECTORS

by

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of this study was to provide insight on the impact of gender-specific role models and mentorship for aspiring female collegiate wind band conductors. The areas of focus included methods of impactful mentorship, identifying role models, and potential improvements for the wind band field. This research project was approved for an IRB exemption by the Old Dominion University College of Arts and Letters Human Subjects Review Committee.

The subjects in this study were separated into two groups. Those that completed Survey A were either female collegiate/university band conductors, current music education or conducting graduate students, or former music education or conducting graduate students ($N = 97$). Those that completed Survey B were female undergraduate instrumental music education students ($N = 93$). The subjects completed a survey created in Qualtrics that included an informed consent statement. Two surveys were used to accurately reflect the differences in the level of experience of wind band conductors.

The survey questions addressed impactful methods of mentorship, identification of mentors, preferred gender of mentors, the importance of mentorship, potential improvements to the wind band field, and existing perceptions of the wind band conducting field. The Survey B subjects reported their likelihood to pursue graduate studies and careers at the collegiate level, while Survey A subjects reflected on the potential influence of their gender in their experiences conducting collegiate level bands. The data were analyzed using statistical mean, mode, and

standard deviation, and through the use of thematic category tables. The results from this study were compared to Elizabeth Grant's (2000) study on gender-specific mentorship. The results indicate that mentorship is viewed as important for aspiring wind band conductors, with a variety of responses focused on the type of mentor and the method of impactful mentorship.

Additionally, the results demonstrate a male-dominated perception of the wind band conductor field, with subjects from Survey A and Survey B reporting fewer female mentors and previous female teachers in their experiences. The comparisons demonstrate the potential implications of gender-specific mentorship and the potential present-day gender inequities in the wind band community that may impact aspiring female wind band conductors.

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