Nancy H. Hensel

University of Maine at Presque Isle

Dr. Nancy H. Hensel is President of the University of Maine at Presque Isle, having moved into this position in 1999 from the University of Maine at Farmington where she served first as Dean of the College of Education, Health and Rehabilitation (1992-95) and then as Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs (1995-99). Before her affiliation with UMF, she lived and worked in California. She received both her bachelor's and master's degrees from California State University, San Francisco, and her doctorate from the University of Georgia. Her academic preparation has concentrated most heavily on early childhood education, and throughout her career, her professional research, writings and presentations have focused on a variety of issues related to women's equity.

As a leader in higher education in Maine, Dr. Hensel has led several efforts that significantly benefit the citizens of Maine. She chaired the state Committee on Results Based Teacher Certification, which developed the ten standards for teacher education that are now used to certify all Maine teachers. Her strong leadership, staying the course in a very difficult change process, resulted in a teacher education certification process that is noted nationwide as exemplary and has led to Maine having some of the best-prepared teachers in the country.

In her work at Presque Isle, she led the effort to establish the Houlton Higher Education Center, where individuals, especially women who are place-bound by family and other responsibilities, can receive work training, complete their GED, or earn a college degree in their own community. The Center is a partnership of the University of Maine at Presque Isle; the Northern Maine Technical College; Women, Work and Community; and the Houlton Adult Education Program. It was Dr. Hensel's efforts that coordinated the planning of this one-stop education center, including working with state legislators to obtain funding. Because of her efforts, this innovative Center now serves as a model throughout Maine and rural areas elsewhere to address the training and education needs of individuals, especially women, for whom traditional education programs do not work.

Throughout her career, Dr. Hensel has been a tireless advocate for women, constantly exploring the complex issues facing women and the many intersections of issues that are unique to women in today's society. She has, in her writings and professional presentations, explored over and over again, in many ways, the question, "How is balance struck for women?"

In her professional work, she has constantly studied, researched, and written on...
women's issues. Her 1991 groundbreaking monograph was the first of its kind to focus on the impact of maternity and child rearing on university tenure; this monograph has since had significant impact on university campuses nationwide as leaders have increasingly sought to address the issues of tenure, maternity leave, and women's roles in the higher education power structure.

Dr. Hensel serves as both a professional and personal model for women who seek to become leaders with integrity. She has achieved a remarkable career and has a strong sense of herself, but her actions come from a selfless place. In an environment traditionally dominated by males, she has taken a chair at the leadership table while remaining true to herself, governed by her intelligence and sense of justice, and she has led other women by her example.

Not to be overlooked are the challenges she establishes for herself personally. Her friends have marveled at her personal focus on adventure and exploration of the unknown. From seats of comfort, they have cheered her on as she has explored the flora and fauna of the Amazon, the icy environment of the South Pole, and with great respect, waited for word as she traveled to Tanzania and climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro. Dr. Hensel sets personal goals for herself that unintentionally built deep respect for her among her friends and colleagues, both female and male alike.

As Dr. Hensel takes her place in the Maine Women's Hall of Fame, all citizens of Maine should be proud that ten years ago she chose Maine as her home. Women throughout the state, her friends, colleagues, and even those who do not know her personally have benefited, and will continue to benefit, significantly from that choice.

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