



Anda Webb, Vice Provost for Administration, can be described as a “homegrown” administrator. She joined UVA in 1987 as a computer programmer and moved one year later to the provost’s office as a systems analyst. She led the development of critical programs, including the implementation of the student information system and, while she was

Associate Dean in the School of Continuing and Professional Studies, the establishment of the Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies, the University’s first part-time degree program for adults.

As of 2022, Webb has served under 10 UVA provosts. She focuses on academic administration in the areas of human resources and budget/finance, and she serves as a strategic advisor/counselor to the provost on a variety of matters.

Webb has served as the Provost’s representative and sponsor for a number of University projects, including the development of the Financial Model and the

UFirst Initiative, a project designed to develop a strategic vision and high-performing efficient service model for human resources. She also has served on a number of University committees, chairing the President’s Women’s Leadership Council from 2002 to 2005. She served for 14 years as a member of the executive board for the Virginia Network for Women in Higher Education, and she remains engaged as an emerita member of the organization. She is an ICF-credentialed leadership coach. Webb earned her BS in Computer Science from the University of Southern Mississippi and her MBA from James Madison University.

WHY DID YOU COME TO UVA?

I kind of grew up in the organization in a way I don't think other people have the opportunity to do. I came to UVA in 1987 as a programmer analyst working for what was then the Academic Computing Center in the basement of Gilmer Hall. A position came open in the provost's office. They asked one of my colleagues to apply, and she said, "I'm not interested, but I know someone who would be." Kathy Reed, who was then associate provost for management, saw something in me and she hired me as a systems analyst.

It was a huge promotion for me, and I was sort of in over my head. They wanted me to create a searchable faculty database, and I did work on that. But Kathy put me to work doing budgets and finance and faculty personnel – so completely outside the box of being a computer programmer. It really changed the course of my career.

Then I had the opportunity to transition over to the School of Continuing and Professional Studies as associate dean. I went temporarily and ended up staying four years. I loved the work. I loved the mission of working with the nontraditional student. We created the Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies, which is what I call "heart-based" work.

When Kathy decided to retire, she called me and said she wanted me to apply for her job. I burst into tears. I said I'm not ready, I still have a lot of want to do here. But opportunities just come along. It was important to me to apply, be interviewed, and be hired into the position and not just transfer back to the provost's office. They hired me back in 2001.

My job has continued to grow and change and expand, and it's been a great ride. It's a place where I can honor what I would characterize as my generalist roots in that I get to do lots of different things.

WHAT WAS UVA LIKE WHEN YOU ARRIVED? HOW HAS IT CHANGED AND/OR STAYED THE SAME?

We're becoming more self-reflective as an institution. I think that's a huge change for us, really being honest with ourselves about our past and where we want to go in the future.

But at the end of the day, we're still doing the things that we did 30 years ago. We're admitting high-quality students. We're paying attention to the student experience. We're educating students, giving them the tools to discover who they are, where they want to be, where they want to go in life, and how they want to contribute to the world. Those things have not changed.

HOW DO YOU THINK DIFFERENT ASPECTS OF YOUR IDENTITY, INCLUDING BEING A WOMAN, IMPACTED HOW PEOPLE RESPONDED TO YOU IN YOUR POSITION?

My parents never told me that there was anything I couldn't do. I majored in computer science at a time when there weren't very many women. I was a first-generation college student. I picked my major out of the catalog because I wanted to make sure that I graduated with a degree that will let me earn enough money to support myself. That was my motivating factor.

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In Her Words | Anda L. Webb

During my time at UVA, I have always been surrounded by strong women. And I think that's why it didn't register with me that it might be unusual to be a woman in these positions. I was hired by a woman – Kathy – who started here as a part-timer in 1967 and retired as one of the highest ranked women at the University. Wow.

I was sort of in this little bubble of really, really strong women. And it wasn't until later in my career that I realized there was something special about that. In many ways, and, well, in every way, these women had paved a path for me.

WHAT SUPPORTS DID YOU HAVE?

Kathy taught me so much – she was a great boss and mentor. For example, I knew exactly how to get from point A to point B in the fastest possible way, but we kept having these conversations. And it felt like we were going around the block many, many times. Finally, I said something to Kathy about it, like “I can't stand it. I know what we need to do.”

She looked at me and she said, “This is how decisions get made at colleges and universities. And you either figure it out or you don't. And if you can't figure this out, then this is not the place for you.” So, a little bit of tough love there. But I really appreciated it, and it was an epiphany for me that there is value in that dialogue.

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WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO A WOMAN IN A SIMILAR POSITION TODAY?

When people ask me for guidance on growing and developing their careers, I tell them to get appointed to a bunch of committees. You learn so much, you build your networks, and when a problem happens in the future, you know who to call and ask for help.

I also counsel women – and this is the world according to Anda – that we sometimes read position advertisements very literally and linearly, almost like it's a checkbox. I've done these 12 things, but I'm missing the 13th and

the 14th, so I don't qualify. You really have to be willing to take a risk, a chance.

That's also true of hiring decisions. We define the requirements and experience, and we only want to look at hiring those people if they fit this little box. I encourage us to throw the doors open and see who comes in.

WHAT DOES LEADERSHIP, ESPECIALLY WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP, MEAN TO YOU?

Leadership at its very core is lifting others up. There are things like inspiring a shared vision, encouraging people in their careers, how you model behaviors – all of those things are really important to leadership. At the end of the day, a great leader supports the organization in a way that helps it achieve the vision and encourages people along this path to a shared vision, as opposed to telling them, “Here’s the vision, y’all start down the road.”

WHAT LEGACY ARE YOU LEAVING THAT YOU ARE MOST PROUD OF?

The thing I’m proudest of is the creation of the Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies program, the first part-time degree program at UVA for adult learners. It was the vision of former Dean Sondra Stallard and she really believed in it, and I believed in it, too. It was a lot of work because it was really out of the box for us as a university. It was one of the most rewarding team efforts that I have ever had the pleasure to be a part of, giving opportunities to nontraditional students.

I will say again that it was heart-based work because when you work with your whole heart, it doesn’t feel like work. Being able to meet people where they are and lift them up – to me that’s the real heart-based connection.



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