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KENT STATE UNIVERSITY

College of Education, Health and Human Services

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION DEFENSE

of

Judy A. Lightner-Noll

For the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Higher Education Administration

CULTURAL ADJUSTMENT AND CAREER NAVIGATION  
OF INTERNATIONAL FACULTY WOMEN IN STEM: U.S.  
TRANSITIONS AND CONFUCIANIST INFLUENCES

April 19, 2021  
1:00 p.m.

Judy A. Lightner-Noll

M.A., Industrial/Organizational Psychology  
Bowling Green State University, 1993

B.A., Psychology  
Baldwin-Wallace College, 1991

Judy Lightner-Noll is a Faculty Development Specialist in the Center for Teaching and Learning at Kent State University. She has over ten years of experience in direct faculty support and has presented at local, national, and international conferences on various topics related to faculty development. Judy has developed and delivered multiple faculty workshops on topics related to teaching and learning as well as workshops related to faculty development. She completed the Case Western Reserve University Weatherhead School of Management's Executive Career Coaching Certification in 2019. Additionally, Judy completed the Kent State University Internationalization in Higher Education Certificate (Higher Education Administration graduate program) in 2014.

Judy is also a part-time faculty member in the Higher Education Administration graduate program and has previously taught undergraduate courses in Psychology as a part-time faculty member as well.

## Cultural Adjustment and Career Navigation of International Faculty Women in STEM: U.S. Transitions and Confucianist Influences

The purpose of this exploratory qualitative study was to gain a better understanding and provide a description of the experiences of a group of foreign-born, foreign-educated faculty (FBFD) women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematical Sciences (STEM) disciplines at research intensive institutions of higher education (R1 and R2) in the U.S. More specifically, this study focused on FBFD faculty women in STEM who were raised with a Confucianist philosophy. The experiences that were focused on in this study were those experiences related to (1) the transitions to new cultural environments and (2) career navigation and career progression as a faculty member within an academic setting when cultural differences may affect career success and (3) the intent to remain in academe in a STEM career at the participant's current institution.

The theoretical framework that guided the research was Schlossberg's Transition Theory. Additionally, the Life Experiences and Role Negotiations (LEARN) Model influenced this study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted and analyzed. Findings showed that within this group, there were common sources of support and strategies used to effectively navigate the academic career path while adjusting to several different cultural contexts. Analysis also revealed reasons why faculty women in this demographic choose to remain in their STEM faculty roles. Recommendations for future research as well as recommendations for policy and practice are discussed.