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Formerly research director at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, Trower studied academic leadership, shared governance, faculty work life, employment issues, policies, and practices including the experiences of faculty through a generational lens, women in STEM disciplines, and underrepresented minorities for 16 years. Prior to Harvard, Trower served as a senior-level administrator of business degree programs at Johns Hopkins University; she has also been a faculty member and department chair at a liberal arts college. Trower has published an edited volume on faculty policies as well as dozens of book chapters, articles, and case studies.

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Cathy has a BBA (1981) and an MBA (1985) from the University of Iowa and a PhD (1996) in education policy, planning, and administration from the University of Maryland, College Park.