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Out of the Shadows the Matriarch Rises: A Case Study of Women Academic Deans at a Southern, Research One Institution

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OUT OF THE SHADOWS THE MATRIARCH RISES: A CASE STUDY OF WOMEN ACADEMIC DEANS AT A SOUTHERN, RESEARCH ONE INSTITUTION

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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The Department of Human Sciences and Education

by

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Abstract

This study examined the experiences of women in higher education as a career as well as the challenges women face in pursuing an appointment as Dean of a college. Selected participants were interviewed to gather data from their own narratives about the experiences and challenges as current women Deans in higher education. Each participant attributed their success to family support and proper mentoring, while highlighting institutional policies acting as a form of gendered oppression. Recommendations were suggested to higher educational representatives and legislators concerning the correction of the gendered environment favoring the advancement of men into a more equitable setting for women to succeed.
Chapter I. Introduction

Over the last two hundred years, education has “profoundly changed the contours of women’s lives in America” (Solomon, 1985, p. xvii). Women now have the freedom to make decisions for themselves; however, women do not hold equal status with men. Educational institutions are “typically buffered by policies,” which are understood to serve as “barriers to mobility for women” by “maintaining the organization status quo wherein the cultural majority remains in positions of power and dominance” (Jackson & O’Callaghan, 2009, p. 463). Both education and society are influenced by cultural ideologies regarding gender stereotypes (Jost & Kay, 2005). The maintenance of gender stereotypes reinforces the historical anxiety men continue to exhibit towards the possible eradication of gender norms (Xu, 2008; Solomon, 1985). Unfortunately, “social stereotypes are indeed powerful environmental stimuli that do not depend on conscious, personal endorsement for their effects to be palpable” (Jost & Kay, 2005, p. 498).

Although historical strides toward equality and equity, “societal structures and institutions, such as education, might respond more appropriately to these concerns,” while understanding the “enduring complexities facing women,” (Archard, 2012, p. 190; Solomon, 1985, p. xxi).

Americans in the 17th century dismissed the notion of women earning an education. According to Solomon (1985), education was “beyond the reach of most men,” therefore it is not meant for “women” (Solomon, 1985, p. 2). Women’s responsibilities revolved around the family, meaning they were expected to care and provide for each member in order for the family to survive. In this role, women were primarily meant to bear children and their identity was either that of a daughter, wife, or
mother (Jost & Kay, 2005; Jackson & O’Callaghan, 2009). This position within society was not questioned nor did the woman ever question her husband. The only education common to women during this time constituted “instruction in domestic skills” (Solomon, 1985, p. 3). Domestic education is furthered discussed by Madigan (2009) and Palmieri (1987) as each stress women not being suitable for any education higher than domestic training. In fact, Palmieri (1987) points out that “woman’s intellect was also considered inferior to man’s, and extensive learning for women was deemed inexpedient and dangerous” (Palmieri, 1987, p. 243).

Near the end of the 17th century, it became necessary for all citizens to read and understand Scripture (Madigan, 2009; Solomon, 1985). Unfortunately, being able to read and understand religious documents was “not meant to stimulate independent thinking” and thus, “however much religion offered women opportunities for personal development and support for their hard lives, as an approach to education, it was indirect and incomplete” (Solomon, 1985, p. 4). English writers, such as George Savile, the Reverend James Fordyce, and Dr. John Gregory, believed that women should “accept the inequalities between the sexes” and embrace the notion that women are “helpful, kind, gentle, warm, and empathic” (Solomon, 1985, p. 6; Jost & Kay, 2005, p. 498).

As the colonies neared the beginning of the War for Independence, women were needed in roles primarily meant for men. Solomon (1985) highlights how this war, similar to future wars, provided women an opportunity to prove their importance to society. But, as Palmieri (1987) discusses, “success, overwhelming success, triggered as many problems as would have total failure” (Palmieri, 1987, p. 243). As the new Constitution was drafted, women were not granted rights. Both the leaders and common
citizens “feared the result of too much learning for women,” but Madigan (2009) explains that over time it became accepted that the education of women would benefit the well-being of the newly established nation (Solomon, 1985, p. 12). Women would receive an education in order to teach “small groups of children” in their homes (Madigan, 2009, p. 11). Palmieri (1987) refers to this period as Republican Motherhood, when women would educate children in what would be called Dame Schools. A dame school is a “school influenced by the English model of home instruction” (Madigan, 2009, p. 11). The school was intended to provide boys with preparation for town schools, which would then pave the way to college. It was not until the end of the 18th or beginning of the 19th century when women would be granted access to public education beyond dame schools (Solomon, 1985; Madigan, 2009; Palmieri, 1987).

Education for women primarily centered on the preparation of teachers. In fact, “educating women to be teachers became a respected element,” altering public opinion towards educating women (Solomon, 1985, p. 16). As Solomon (1985) discusses, it is quite important to understand that women’s “zeal and intellectual curiosity” that opened the door for education (Solomon, 1985, p. 17). As the need for educating highly qualified teachers continued, single.gender universities were established. Single.gender institutions, such as “Smith, Mount Holyoke, Wellesley, Barnard, Radcliffe, Vassar, and Bryn Mawr,” were constructed to meet the educational needs of women (Madigan, 2009, p. 12). According to Madigan (2009), however, single.gender universities might have been merely symbolic. The reason is that by the start of the 20th century, the majority of public education and universities had become “predominantly coeducational” (Madigan, 2009, p. 12). Palmieri (1987) sites economic industrialization as probable cause for the
educational advancement of women. This is not to say that Palmieri (1987) does not believe that women were not responsible for their own advancement. It is only hypothesized that public opinion favored women’s education in response to a need of a highly educated workforce (Palmieri, 1987; Madigan, 2009; Solomon, 1985).

The 20th century continued to show signs of progress, but still held on to traditional views of women into the 1960s (Carvalho & Machado, 2010; Murray, 1996). In the 1960s, women were coerced into occupational choices that might not have been their first selection. Jobs such as “secretarial, nursing, teaching, or motherhood” were understood to suit women thus, maintained the established social structure (Madigan, 2009, p. 12). Gender based discrimination, such as coercion into occupational fields, would not become illegal in education until the 1970s. In 1972, the passage of Title IX specifically addressed gender discrimination, which influenced or persuaded women from entering educational disciplines formerly perceived as more appropriate primarily for men (Solomon, 1985; Madigan, 2009; Palmieri, 1987). Title IX’s nondiscriminatory rules and regulations based on sex were applied to multiple facets of education, covering all disciplines, extracurricular activities, organizations, etc. Lehmon (2015) highlights several components such as recruitment, admissions, counseling, financial assistance, athletics (regardless of individual interests and/or abilities), athletic benefits and opportunities, athletic financial assistance, and employment. Each area presents various challenges when striving to promote, implement, maintain, and increase a nondiscriminatory atmosphere, which fosters gender equity (Madigan, 2009; Stromquist, 2013). Lehmon (2015) best summarizes Title IX as she states

The essence of Title IX is that an institution may not exclude, separate, deny benefits to, or otherwise treat differently any person on the basis of
sex unless expressly authorized to do so under Title IX or the Department implementing regulations. When a recipient is considering relying on one of the exceptions to this general rule, Title IX coordinators should be involved at every stage and work with school officials and legal counsel to help determine whether the exception is applicable and, if so, properly executed (Lehomn, 2015, p. 1).

In order to ensure the compliance of the rules and regulations outlined in Title IX, at least one employee must be designated as the Title IX coordinator. Lehmon (2015) outlines the responsibilities and authority of the Title IX coordinator that includes implementing a systematic approach of ensuring an environment of nondiscrimination. Furthermore, Title IX representatives are responsible for promoting gender equity within their institutions as well as developing methods to measure campus climate in regards to gender equity (Stromquist, 2013; Lehmon, 2015; Madigan, 2009). According to Madigan (2009) and Lehmon (2015), measures can include surveys or interviews and the documented data can be used for training and technical assistance on school policies related to sex discrimination and develop programs, such as assemblies or college trainings, on issues related to Title IX to assist the recipient in making sure that all members of the school community, including students and staff, are aware of their rights and obligations under Title IX (Lehmon, 2015, p. 2).

Once observed within the initial context of Title IX, single-sex education was considered sex discrimination if provided separately on the basis of sex. Madigan (2009) and English (2009), however, discuss how the “United States Department of Education published amendments to the Title IX regulations that provide school districts with flexibility in the implementation of single-sex programs” under the President Bush administration in 2006 (Madigan, 2009, p. 12). Madigan (2009) cites the U.S. Department of Education as providing data, which documents single-sex education
productive, particularly for women. The research includes educator’s overall impression of single-sex education as productive by allowing women to experience “better peer interactions, a greater emphasis on academic behaviors, a greater degree of order and control, socio-emotional benefits, and safe behavior in single sex environments” (Madigan, 2009, p. 12-13).

English (2009) begins her argument by explaining the reasoning behind the Title IX amendments in 2006 were to improve “educational achievement” while providing “diverse educational opportunities” (English, 2009, p. 1). Although these newly implemented regulations might appear altruistic, English (2009) believes that the revisions provided an opportunity for future gender discrimination. In essence, the new regulations “threaten the availability of equal opportunities for women and girls in education” (English, 2009, p. 1). English (2009) continues with briefly describing arguments for and against the Title IX amendments. Arguments for the amendments to Title IX in 2006 focus on single-sex education eradicating gender discrimination against men, providing gender specific education for both men and women, and the increase of institutional autonomy (Stromquist, 2013; English, 2009). The discrimination against men argument utilizes data involving the academic success of boys. With a larger number of women earning college degrees, the opinion of gender discrimination reversal is implied generating the view of men being the “victims of discrimination in education” (English, 2009, p. 1).

Similar to the argument above, sex differences are used in an effort to highlight the importance gender has on educational outcomes. Based on this, men and women would each benefit from single-sex education. In this setting, education could be tailored
to satisfy sex differences. English (2009) reports that “feminist groups agreed with the Department of Education’s early reports that indicated sex segregated programs may be effective in some situations, but there is a lack of scientific evidence proving that it is more effective than co-educational programs” (English, 2009, p. 2).

The positions against the implementation of the Title IX amendments refer to the Title IX regulations of the 1970s (Stromquist, 2013). The former regulations permitted the use of sex-segregated education for “remedial class, or classes based on affirmative action to overcome the effects of past discrimination” (English, 2009, p. 3). It is also stated that the Bush administration amendments could possibly violate the Equal Protection clause due to the lack of credible validation in support of single-sex education (Madigan, 2009; English, 2009; Evans, 2007). Stromquist (2013) comments, before the Bush administration amendments, “Title IX is an educational policy that sought women’s advancement” (Stromquist, 2013, p. 4).

**Statement of Problem**

Although higher education became more inclusive for women in the past 60 years, women are still subjected to a patriarchal environment as institutions transition from a collegial to a managerial model (Bagilhole, 2012). This transition is slowing, perhaps even halting, “gender mainstreaming efforts” within the higher educational sector (Agarwala, 2015, p. 143). The collegial model assigns authority from lower positions, professors/researchers, to the leadership positions, such as Dean. This democratic structure provides professors/researches to elect an individual from among the group to serve as an academic leader. Conversely, a managerial model’s authoritative configuration is arranged from the higher, leadership roles down to the
professors/researchers. This allows for academic leaders to be appointed by those who are already in control. Due to the historical “organizational culture premised on male” leadership, women “continue to confront a range of challenges and constraints, including but not restricted to, opportunities for promotion, access to senior leadership roles and administrative responsibilities” (Agarwala, 2015, p. 143). The managerial model impacts an institution’s organizational structure, which does not view gender as neutral. In this organizational structure, gender is understood as dynamic rather than inert, where individuals perform their gender. Gender performativity, in this organizational structure, ascribes women to a specific social category, which uses gender construction to justify the “notion that equality has been achieved” (Carvalho & Machado, 2010, p. 33). Due to this, in the managerial model of higher education, women are “disproportionately located in lower-level administrative positions, while White males are disproportionately located in upper-level positions” (Leon & Jackson, 2009, p. 46).

While women “earn more than half of all Ph.D. degrees,” they continue to encounter educational hardships through gender discrimination or sexism and thus are underrepresented among positions of academic leadership (Bilen-Green, et al., 2008, p. 1). Ward and Eddy (2013) state,

> For the past 35 years, women have represented the majority of undergraduate students. Yet they fill only one in four college presidencies and represent a mere 29 percent of full professors – with women still overrepresented in the feminized disciplines of education and nursing and underrepresented in engineering and the sciences. Obtaining the rank of full professor affords opportunities for leadership in faculty governance, extends national influence in the disciplines, and is a traditional prerequisite for climbing the leadership ladder (Ward & Eddy, 2013, p. 1).

In fact, Evans (2007) reports that at the beginning of the “21st century, there were 176,485 tenured full professors at the nation’s public and private universities” (Evans,
Women, both White and Black women, comprised seventeen and two percent respectively of the “176,485 tenured full professors” (Evans, 2007, p. 131). This staggering statistic suggests the “gendered environment which creates an unequal playing field through organizational work policies, interpersonal networks, and embedded attitudes favoring the advancement of men” into tenure ship and on track to becoming appointed as Dean (Bilen-Green, et al., 2008, p. 1).

Women continue to be “underrepresented in academic leadership positions, both absolutely and relative to the eligible pool of tenured women” (Dominici, Fried, & Zeger, 2009, p. 1). Women’s underrepresentation in the “senior ranks and in senior administrative positions” is troubling for the future of higher education (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2017, p. 229). The concern is due to the notion that;

Department chairs and academic deans can be key agents of change in efforts to diversify the academy, encouraging new approaches to recruitment and equity in promotion and tenure. However, women are even less well represented among academic deans and department chairs than among full professors, raising questions about the root causes for the persistence of gender inequity at the highest ranks of academic leadership (Dominici, et al., 2009, p. 1).

As Leon and Jackson (2009) suggest, “achieving gender equity in the administrative levels is a challenge, even in fields that are dominated by women” (Leon & Jackson, 2009, p. 58).

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to determine the challenges and/or barriers, if any, women encounter when pursuing administrative appointments, such as Dean, as well as to understand how women are negotiating gender expectations as both a woman and a woman Dean. These challenges/barriers might include, but are not limited to, gender
oppression/sexism, gender bias in advancement opportunities, and/or “discrimination in the nature of emotional violence directed by powerful males” (Murray, 1996, p. 253). Following the data collection and analysis, this study may provide accounts of the disruption concerning gender bias and oppression or shed light on more complex issues. Focusing on women who have ascended the administrative ladder to earn the appointment of Dean will, in theory, provide more depth and richness within the data. It is a possibility, however, that women are unable to “overcome greater barriers in their pursuit of leadership positions” (Archard, 2013, p. 158). Furthermore, this study might highlight both individual and institutional success in terms of proper support and development of women by providing “opportunities to both learn and develop their leadership skills” (Archard, 2013, p. 153).

The data collected will hopefully add a narrative component of women who have overcome professional, personal, and/or other types of challenges/barriers to earn the appointment of a Dean. These detailed accounts of successful women might support or refute the already established body of research that discusses the challenges facing women in a hostile or benevolent sexist arena. Focusing on women, who have succeeded in earning an academic administrative appointment of Dean, may provide educational advocates and legislators a better understanding of gender equity, or lack of, within higher education. Documenting the individual experiences might act as a catalyst for equitable change within institutions concerning professional opportunities, which in turn, will disrupt patriarch, which serves as a “pervasive societal structure comprising ideology, traditions, and institutions that justify the holding of greater power, assets, and status by men than by women” (Stromquist, 2013, p. 3).
Research Questions

1. What are the experiences and challenges women face in ascending the administrative ladder to Dean of a college?

2. How do women negotiate cultural gendered norms, from others and themselves, in relation to being both a woman and a woman Dean?

Theoretical Framework

To properly address the research questions in this qualitative study, Critical Feminist Theory will be used to analyze the experiences and challenges women face in ascending the administrative ladder to the position of Dean, as well as how women negotiate cultural gender stereotypes in being both a woman and a woman Dean. Critical Feminist Theory is used from a gender equity “perspective for understanding human behavior in the social environment by centering women and issues that women face in contemporary society” (Lay & Daley, 2007, p. 49-50). Maintaining this perspective will assist in the consideration of “how women experience various aspects of their lives, or how men’s experiences affect women’s lives,” as well as the “ways in which gender norms are maintained or disrupted by current institutional practices” (Ropers-Huilman & Winters, 2011, p. 671). Ward and Wolf-Wendel (2017) state critical “feminist theory helps frame the lives of women in a larger societal context where gender and power shape how people interface with the workplace and the roles they play in their families,” while providing a “vehicle to look at women and gender as key analytic approaches” (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2017, p. 231). Each theory will “call for centering gender and consideration for how gender differences effect human behavior” within the masculine dominated environment of higher education (Lay & Delay, 2007, p. 50).
Based on this, Critical Feminist Theory will assist in examining an institution's internal framework in an effort to analyze gender bias. Critical Feminist Theory is useful in addressing the case study of women’s issues of gender equity in higher education in regards to “differences between men and women,” as well as the possessing “embedded attitudes favoring the advancement of men” (Lay & Daley, 2007, p. 50; Bilen-Green, et al., 2008, p. 1). In turn this will assist in striving for social justice within higher education through the “change of oppressive structures,” which embrace more “women than men are in part-time or non-tenure track positions, and the increasing scarcity of women as you look at higher academic ranks” (Lay & Daley, 2007, p. 50; Bilen-Green, et al., 2008, p. 1). Critical Feminist Theory provides a framework for researching higher education as an institution where gender bias is occurring (Stromquist, 2013; Ropers-Huilman & Winters, 2011). Using Critical Feminist Theory will develop a focus on “women’s perspectives, activities, and behaviors,” which is “crucial to understanding and taking action on improving social situations” (Ropers-Huilman & Winters, 2011, p. 673). Critical Feminist Theory seeks to “critically analyze what is happening in our social world from multiple contests and provide strategies for the amelioration of adverse conditions” (Lay & Daley, 2007, p. 51). In this case study, Critical Feminist Theory will assist in developing this research’s importance and usefulness in respects to higher education’s need for gender equity (Grant & Osanloo, 2014; Ward-Wolf-Wendel, 2017; Ropers-Huilman & Winters, 2011).
Overview of Methodology

Participants and Research Site Selections

Participants were selected based on the following criteria: one who identifies as a White woman, is currently Dean within one of the college’s schools, and is willing to participate in the research project. The selection and sampling of participants will be purposeful in order to seek “information-rich cases which can be studied in depth” (Hoepfl, 1997, p. 51). The setting, or site, where the research will be conducted will be a southern, research one institution. The institution is termed southern because it is located in the Southeast Region of the United States. It is also referred to as a research one university due to the fact that it awards at least twenty research and/or scholarship doctoral degrees and possesses the highest research activity (Shulman, 2000). Conducting the research at a familiar site will, hopefully, cause the participant to be confident and relaxed, yielding saturated data (Andrade, 2009; Srivastava & Thomson, 2009; Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981).

Research Design

The methodological framework for this study proposal is a qualitative research design. Andrade (2009) defines qualitative research as a “process that investigates a social human problem where the researcher conducts the study in a natural setting and builds a whole and complex representation by a rich description and explanation as well as a careful examination of informants’ words and views” (Andrade, 2009, p. 43). It is useful to immerse oneself into the setting of the participant when utilizing a qualitative approach. Prior to collecting data, developing adequate research questions assists in facilitating interviews, however, qualitative research involves “open-ended questions that
will support discovery of new information” (Hoepfl, 1997, p. 49). This flexibility provides both the researcher and participant the liberty to focus on the individual meaning and complexity of the research (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Carlson, 2010).

In order to facilitate the research methodology, a multiple case study will be used. Yin (2003) states that a case study is an “empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context,” which allows the researcher to “grasp a holistic understanding of the phenomenon under investigation” (Yin, 2003, p. 13; Adrade, 2009, p. 44). A case study design will assist in answering the “how” and “why” questions because it has “demonstrated its appropriateness to generate a well-founded interpretive comprehension of human/technology interaction in the natural social setting” (Andrade, 2009, p. 44). Case studies also are pertinent when “you cannot manipulate the behavior of those involved in the study” and “you want to cover contextual conditions because you believe they are relevant to the phenomenon under study” (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 545). Due to this, case studies provide the ability to develop a deep understanding of a particular phenomenon. Although this can be achieved from a single case study, multiple case studies are preferred for the documenting of reliable data, however, it is suggested to not exceed five cases in a study. Prior to beginning a case study, it is important to avoid researching a problem that is too broad, as this will increase the volume of data, becoming an overwhelming project (Andrade, 2009; Eisenhardt, 1989; Baxter & Jack, 2008).

Gathering data will involve interviews performed face-to-face or conducted as telephone interviews with participants. These interviews will consist of “open-ended” questions, but to avoid overwhelming data boundaries are used in participant criteria
To ensure proper dictation of participant narratives, interviews will be recorded to provide the researcher an opportunity to both fact and member check following transcription (Morrow, 2005; Carlson, 2010; Tracy, 2010; Rossman & Rallis, 2012). In order to obtain adequate data, but not an overwhelming amount, two interviews will be held. Each interview will represent an individual case study and last a minimum of one hour. The interviews will take place in a setting predetermined by each participant, whether this is in their office, at a coffee shop, etc. Initial contact will begin with an email explaining the research project as well as the logistics of the study. If the potential participant responds positive, showing interest, a follow-up email will provide more detailed information concerning the study and interview along with a consent form. Upon receiving the consent form completed, a date, time, and location will be scheduled.

**Data Analysis**

The analysis of the data will be both continuous and thorough. As Hatch (2002) states,

Data analysis is a systematic search for meaning. It is a way to process qualitative data so that what has been learned can be communicated to others. Analysis means organizing and interrogating the data in ways that allow researchers to see patterns identify themes, discover relationships, develop explanations, make interpretations, mount critiques, or generate theories. It often involves synthesis, evaluation, interpretations, categorization, hypothesizing, comparison, and pattern finding. It always involves what Wolcott calls “mindwork”… Researchers always engage their own intellectual capacities to make sense of qualitative data (Hatch, 2002, p. 148).

Data analysis might appear to be daunting, but using analysis methods assist in providing guidelines to ensure a proper systematic search for meaning. For this case study, two data analysis, constant comparison and classical content analysis, will be used.
Constant comparison analysis will “identify underlying themes presented through the data” and can be “undertaken deductively (e.g., codes are identified prior to analysis and then looked for in the data), inductively (e.g., codes emerge from the data), or abductively (i.e., codes emerge iteratively)” (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007, p. 565). Coding is the “process of organizing the data by bracketing chunks (or text or image segments) and writing a word representing a category in the margins (Rossman & Rallis, 2012; Cavanagh, 1997).

Classical content analysis, which is similar to the constant comparison method, allows for the “number of times each code is utilized” to be counted (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007, p. 569). This is important to identify the most used codes in order to focus on the most important concepts. The most common codes will provide further descriptive information for the documented data and support the conclusion of the various themes developed through constant comparative analysis (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007; Elo & Kyngas, 2008; Srivastava & Thomson, 2009). In order to assist in the coding process, ATLAS.ti 8, a software program to manage qualitative data, is used in order to maintain a well-organized data set.

**Research Limitations**

The ability to relate with participants will serve as a limitation. With my gender identification as a man, I do not possess an understanding of the difficulties women have and continue to experience in masculine dominated areas such as higher education. Experiencing gender discrimination might have assisted in being able to connect to participants, reducing the possibility of appearing as condescending, disconnected, and/or
disinterested. My gender identification will limit the types of questions and responses that may be required to further enrich both the interview and the collected data.

Furthermore, participants are White women creating a singular focus on finite experiences. Not including women of color will serve as a limitation because their experiences might be significantly different. Without this data a cross cultural analysis cannot occur eliminating the possibility of determining universal higher educational policies to specifically address gender equity concerning both White and Black women.

Another limitation in this research will be the limited exposure during adolescence among women who obtained an undergraduate degree or higher outside of the educational setting. This limits personal exposure to the continued struggle women face in pursuing a career in higher education. Limited exposure will also impact how data will be analyzed and reported to develop themes as well as implications for further research.

Despite limited exposure and gender identity, I am confident in my ability to conduct this research. Lack of exposure can potentially allow me to analyze data in a non-biased manner. Without direct personal preconceived notions of gender oppression, I might be able to identify codes and themes providing a new perspective for further research. Also, as a man I will be unable to compare my experiences to the participants’ ensuring that interviews are not critiqued as whether or not the participant is telling the truth. Finally, being on the outside of gender oppression required a deep immersion within the available literature concerning gender equity. Becoming familiar with a plethora of research findings will serve as a foundation throughout the research process
generating more of an academic lens rather than a mix of academic and personal experience.
Chapter II. Literature Review

Sexism in Higher Education

Archard (2013) states “despite more than 20 years of legislative and educational change,” sexism in higher education continues to present women with difficulties in being viewed as professional and “still underrepresented at the senior level” (Archard, 2013, p. 159; Dhar, 2008, p. 2). Xu (2008) views “sexism as a well-known tradition,” which creates “gender stereotypes, double standards, exclusion from informal networks, negative attitudes and ‘chilly climate’, and lack of work-related assistance or mentoring” (Xu, 2008, p. 101; Dhar, 2008, p. 9). Jackson and O’Callaghan (2009) suggest that sexism creates a glass ceiling that reinforces cultural norms and gender stereotypes, leading to the dismissal of women in leadership roles. Glass ceiling is a concept that is “generally viewed as a set of impediments and/or barriers to career advancement for women and people of color. These impediments an/or barriers span a constellation of variables that materialize into conscious and sub-conscious discriminatory practices” (Jackson & O’Callaghan, 2009, p. 460).

Patton (2004) believes that education is at fault in creating either a chilly climate or glass ceiling through the reinforcement of cultural assumptions. Education is an influential power that can either refute or undergird “cultural assumptions regarding the different abilities and roles of men and women” (Archard, 2013, p. 159). Sexism, therefore, is theorized as “closely connected with cultural value,” which has an impact on the “bias and discrimination to females” (Xu, 2008, p. 101). Jost and Kay (2005), however, argue that women are “complicit in their own subordination” (Jost & Kay, 2005, p. 498). Cooperating with a system of oppression reaffirms the notion that
“masculine and feminine stereotypes are complementary in the sense that each gender group is seen as possessing a set of strengths that balances out its own weaknesses and supplements the assumed strengths of the other group” and develops a sense that the “system as a whole is fair, balanced, and legitimate (Jost & Kay, 2005, p. 499).

Based on this, the “reproduction of gender expectations is inextricably linked to the social learning practices of education” (Archard, 2013, p. 159). Ward and Wolf-Wendel (2017) consider it imperative for the acknowledgement that

Sex and gender inequality exist and are central to social relations and the structure of social institutions. Sex and gender inequality are not ‘natural’ or essential but products of social relations. Sex and gender inequality should be eliminated through social change (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2017, p. 231).

Patton (2004) is more direct commenting that institutions should “acknowledge that men, in general, are more advantaged in certain respects than women” (Patton, 2004, p. 61). In higher education, women are “vulnerable to prejudice and sexism,” creating a hostile environment (Wilkinson, 2009, p. 42). According to Patton (2004), sexism is “often entrenched in higher education through policy and the inadvertent actions of administrators, faculty, staff, and students” (Patton, 2004, p. 62).

Women may experience two forms of sexism independently or simultaneously, such as hostile or benevolent sexism. Whereas benevolent sexism suggests positive tones and feelings towards women, Glick and Fiske (1996) define hostile sexism as beliefs where “women inhabit restricted domestic roles and are the ‘weaker’ sex” (Glick & Fiske, 1996, p. 492). It is important to mention that women do not always interrupt benevolent sexism as benevolent. In fact, both benevolent and hostile sexism suggest that women are “less favorably than men when enacting leadership roles” (Glick & Fiske,
Due to this, women might begin to develop feelings of tokenism when or if they are advanced into higher leadership roles within the university. This perception causes women to view their career advancement as primarily based on “social category rather than competence,” which diminishes respect, authoritative control, sense of accomplishment, and increases pressure on women in top positions to prove themselves worthy of such a promotion (Bilen-Green, et al., 2008, p. 3).

These “evaluative feeling tones toward women,” as Glick and Fiske (1996) refer to sexism, cause women to lose a sense of their agency. According to Bilen-Green, Froelich, and Jacobson (2008), “women learn to assimilate into the male culture by downplaying their attributes, and the Catch-22 of less prevalent but apparently more necessary developmental experiences and informal networks to draw upon” (Bilen-Green, et al., 2008, p. 3). Furthermore, women continually feel obligated to prove themselves more in order to advance in academic rank. Unfortunately, as the feeling of tokenism begins to permeate women’s beliefs of their advancement, the focus becomes less on their agency and competence and more on institutions attempting to eliminate the stigma of gender bias. “Attaining a critical mass of women in the leadership structure” in higher educational institutions is needed in order to reduce the perception of tokenism, gender bias, and sexist attitudes (Bilen-Green, et al., 2008, p. 4). Bilen-Green, Froelich, and Jacobson (2008), as well as Glick and Fiske (1996), believe this will assist in allowing women to reclaim their agency and position higher educational institutions on path for gender equity. Xu (2008) states, however, that sexism is “impossible to eliminate or rebuild them in such a short time” (Xu, 2008, p. 103).
Higher Education

Higher education is a building block for a life of prosperity in the United States of America since the establishment of Harvard University in 1636 (Pratt, 2002; Solomon, 1985). According to Wun (2014) and Leon and Jackson (2009), the benefits associated with the attainment of a college degree are instrumental in providing an opportunity for social mobility for all citizens regardless of age, race, gender, and/or sexual orientation. In fact, Williams (2016) believes that higher education is directly “linked to the promotion of social justice through increasing social mobility” (Williams, 2016, p. 629). Ianneli and Paterson (2005), however, question the premise that education promotes social mobility and state “overall, the gap has not changed: educational expansion has benefited all social classes equally without reducing social inequalities” (Ianneli & Paterson, 2005, p. 2). Regardless of either position, possessing a higher degree provides the necessary intangibles for an individual to serve as an asset to society and is therefore privileged to various economic benefits. Benefits include, but are not limited to, a larger salary, increased communal engagement, and a reduced need for governmental assistance programs (Hill, et al., 2005; Carnevale, et al., 2015; Dion, 2008).

Education is an “important factor in determining which jobs people enter and in determining their social class position” (Iannelli & Paterson, 2005, p. 2). In their positioning, individuals in the United States can prove their value, as well as contribute, to the greater good of society. Serving the greater good of society creates the belief that higher education is a public good. As a public good, education “could drive national technological progress or, through developing human capital, increase individual employability” (Williams, 2016, p. 619). Employability is “one form and aim of higher
education, where learning and education are contextualized as good in the sense of the need to be an education citizen within an educated public” (Gibbs, 2000, 559). Although Kezar (2004) agrees with Williams (2016) concerning “universities and colleges serve long-standing and stable missions for society,” Kezar (2004) believes that higher education is abandoning its missions for society by striving to increase individual employability (Kezar, 2004, p. 429).

Gibbs (2000) discusses the benefits of higher education serving as a public good and individual employability. Striking and maintaining equilibrium between both is necessary in order to develop a “skilled authentic social agent” (Gibbs, 2000, p. 559). The primary concern for Gibbs (2000) is that “employability becomes the prime purpose of higher education, satisfying only often ill-informed and morally base notions of what is an adequate education by reference to a measurable return on financial investment” (Gibbs, 2000, p. 559-560). Williams (2016), however, argues for a more individual employability focus. Williams (2016) understands an employability outcome to serve as “social inclusion and social mobility,” as well as leading to “increased earnings and job security” (Williams, 2016, p. 620).

Bagihole (2012) focuses on the higher education’s transition from a collegial to a managerial model as attention toward a quantifiable gain. Bagihole (2012) describes the collegial model as

…governance by a community of scholars, as opposed to central managerial authority. In the collegial model, the leader facilitates the process of decision-making by consensus and does not lead, direct or manage anything. Formal decision-making under the collegial model is through a collegial structure based on assemblies of academics which preserve their professional autonomy (Bagihole, 2012, p. 24).
As the shift towards a managerial model continues, higher education is “functioning increasingly as an industry with fluctuating, predominantly economic goals and market-oriented values” (Kezar, 2004, 430). Rosser, Johnsrud, and Heck (2003) suggest that higher education is not at fault for this transition. Throughout the past ten years “institutions have been increasingly held accountable for measurable outcomes. Increases in competition for scarce resources and a decrease in the public’s trust in higher education practices have resulted in demands for campuses to demonstrate their productivity, effectiveness, and efficiency” (Rosser, Johnsrud, & Heck, 2003, p. 1).

Gibbs (2000) disagrees with Rosser, Johnsrud, and Heck (2003), proposing that higher education is partly to blame by following the “authority of others (regulators, quality agencies, funding councils) to determine both the content and the purpose of education” (Gibbs, 2000, p. 562).

Why is higher education’s transition from a collegial to a managerial model important for society? Kezar (2004) states

Changes here affect choices made by all individuals in the system of higher education from policymakers to parents to faculty to students…if policymakers and the general public are not clear about why investment in higher education matters and do not appreciate the social and public benefits, other public policy priorities may end up gaining more support than higher education. Critics suggest that diverting resources from higher education will lead to growing economic and social disparities, increased expenditure on social welfare programs, inability to compete in an increasingly technological world economy, declining quality of living, and diminished civic engagement (Kezar, 2004, p. 431).

Based on a 2012 State and National Analysis, statistics indicate there is a decline in the numbers of college degrees being earned causing attention from both state and federal government officials (Zaback, Carlson, & Crellin, 2012). In fact, former “President Obama, philanthropic and policy organizations, and states have set bold goals essentially
to double the number of postsecondary degrees” awarded (Zaback, et al., 2012, p. 2).

Educational reform that focuses on goal oriented standards and accountability is implemented in an effort to rectify the decline of postsecondary degrees (Taubman, 2009; Garrison, 2009; Wun, 2014; Jennings & Bearak, 2014).

Through the implementation of goals and standards of accountability, the United States is striving to once again produce the highest percentage of diverse college graduates (Taubman, 2009; Zaback, et al., 2012). Baum, Ma, and Payea (2013) suggest that currently the requirement for college-educated citizens is not being supplied to properly meet the demands of the global economy. College graduates are not equipped, however, to be competitive in a continually evolving global economy of the 21st century (Baum, Ma, and Payea 2013; Lemann, 2000; Carnevale, Rose, & Cheah, 2015). The diverse needs and demands of the 21st global economy coupled with ill prepared graduates, creates income gaps between college and non-college graduates. Zaback and Crellin (2012) state,

…those who obtain a bachelor’s degree have a median income of $50,360 compared to a median of $29,423 for people with only a high school diploma. An associate’s degree leads to a median income of $38,607, more than $9,000 higher than a high school diploma. Those with a graduate degree have a median income of $68,064, 35.2 percent more than those with a bachelor’s degree (Zaback & Crellin, 2012, p. 2).

Societal members who do not possess an undergraduate degree experience a decline in wages, as well as job opportunities, and thus directly and indirectly affect unemployment. For instance, those without an undergraduate degree held the majority of jobs lost during the economic recession in 2008 (Baum, et al., 2013; Hill, Hoffman, Rex, 2005). In fact, “four out of every five jobs lost in the recession were held by workers with no postsecondary education experience” (Zaback & Crellin, 2012, p. 2).
Earning a higher degree provides the possibility for a citizen to experience “additional economic benefits” (Zaback & Crellin, 2012, p. 23). Baum, Kurose, and Ma (2013) discuss the benefits that higher education provides, such as more opportunities, better financial stability, health care, and other nonmonetary benefits for all U.S. citizens. These benefits, however, are not equitable and “vary greatly depending on the degree type, age, gender, race/ethnicity, and occupation of an individual” (Carnevale, et al., 2015, p. 2). Carnevale, Rose, and Cheah (2015) state, “At all levels of educational attainment, African Americans and Latinos earn less than Whites. For example, African Americans and Latinos with Master’s degrees have lifetime earnings lower than Whites with Bachelor’s degrees” (Carnevale, et al., 2015, p. 2).

Gender, however, further impacts the distribution of benefits within each ethnic category. In fact, “women earn less at all degree levels, even when they work as much as men. On average, women who work full-time, full-year ear 25 percent less than men, even at similar education levels” (Carnevale, et al., 2015, p. 2). According to Baum, May, and Payea (2013), women with a bachelor’s degree earn roughly $35,000 – 69,000 while men who possess some college, but not a degree earn between $32,000 – 67,000. Men who have a bachelor’s degree earn $44,000 – 100,000. Men who do not have a degree are viewed, monetarily speaking, as valued as women with a degree. The difference in pay between men and women of the same educational level is troubling, however, the disparity in compensation worsens as the level of education increases. For instance, men who have an advanced degree can earn from $65,000 – 170,000 and women with the same degree can earn between $53,000 – 140,000 (Baum, et al., 2013; Carnevale, et al., 2015).
Attention is then turned to degree attainment by the gender of the student regarding Associate’s, Bachelor’s, and Doctorate degrees in an attempt to provide a possible explanation for compensation inequality. The analysis will include the 2007-2008 academic year, the economic recession, and the 2014-2015 academic year. In the academic year of ’07-’08, the total number of Associate’s were 750,164, with men attaining 282,521 and women earning 467,643. Awarded Bachelor’s degrees totaled 1,563,069, with 667,928 for men and 895,141 for women. Master’s degrees awarded were 630,666, with 250,169 awarded to men and 380,497 for women. Finally, Doctorate degrees totaled 149,378, with men obtaining 73,453 and women 75,925. Women earned 62.3 percent, 57.3 percent, 60.3 percent, and 50.8 percent of Associate’s, Bachelor’s, and Doctorates in ’07-’08 respectively. These numbers increased in the academic year of 2014-2015, reflecting a total of 1,013,971 Associate’s degrees, 1,894,934 Bachelor’s degrees, and 178,547 Doctorate degrees. Respectively, women earned 617,358 (61.3 percent), 1,082,265 (57.1 percent), 452,118 (59.6 percent), and 93,626 (51.9 percent) (NCES, 2017, p. 1-2). These figures suggest that women are more educationally prepared to enter and succeed in the economy than men, however, compensation rates reflect “embedded attitudes favoring the advancement of men” throughout society (Bilen-Green, et al., 2008, p. 1).

In the United States, universities and colleges were developed to serve the “collective or public good, a historically important component of the charter between higher education and society,” using a “core set of values to support such a mission” (Kezar, 2004, p. 429). Unfortunately, higher education is foregoing the mission to develop and contribute to a “more equitable society,” rather to “exist in a delicate balance
between professional autonomy and political and economic forces” (Baum, et al., 2013, p. 9; Bagilhole, 2012, p. 24). The reshaping of educational institutions “placed a strong emphasis on efficiency and effectiveness principles, which meet the traditional masculine management style” (Carvalho & Machado, 2010, p. 34). The use of traditional values and practices “legitimize women’s position at the lower levels of the hierarchy,” causing a “lack of women in leadership across higher education” (Burkinshaw & White, 2017, p. 14 & 1). Carvalho and Machado (2010) state, “social constructions that attribute a closer relationship between masculinity and power have been identified as one of the main obstacles women face in getting into top organizational positions” (Carvalho & Machado, 2010, p. 33).

**Women in Higher Education**

Evans (2007) states, “cultural diversity in higher education is essential to the intellectual health of every campus” (Evans, 2007, p. 131). Institutional policies and initiatives are developed to address the need of cultural diversity. Unfortunately, social initiatives ignore the complexity of systemic and interlocking forces at work in education, which can sometimes lead to a band-aid approach. Band-aid approaches neglect the individual and combined impact of variables such as race, racism, sexism, and gendered racism on educational experiences and outcomes of underrepresented groups (Ricks, 2014, p. 10).

Stromquist (2013) suggests, “public policies designed to modify gender relations in education tend to be incomplete, poorly funded, and extremely vulnerable” (Stromquist, 2013, p. 3). Thus, women are included in “modern social structures” in attempt to address “formal demands” without manipulating the patriarchy that pervades higher education (KhosraviShakib, 2010, p. 29). Stromquist (2013) defines patriarchy as a “pervasive
societal structure comprising ideology, traditions, and institutions that justify the holding of greater power, assets, and status by men than by women” (Stromquist, 2013, p. 3). In this patriarchy, there is a “set of social relations between men, which have a material base, and which though hierarchically, establish or create interdependence and solidarity among men that enable them to dominate women” (KhosraviShakib, 2010, p. 29). Hart (2006) believes that “academe as entrenched in the power of patriarchy,” but states, “not all women are equally marginalized in patriarchy” (Hart, 2006, p. 41). Hart (2006) continues by explaining

Today, more women than ever before are active participants in higher education. For example, more than 50% of all undergraduate students are women and the numbers of women graduate, professional, and doctoral-degree recipients and faculty are increasing. In fact, for the first time, American women have earned more doctorates than American men have (Hart, 2006, p. 40).

Higher education, however, “justifies the increasing institutionalization of the notion that equality has been achieved” with the “increased presence of women in the academy” (Carvalho & Machado, 2010, p. 33; Hart, 2006, p. 40). In fact, Bilen-Green, Froelich, and Jacobson (2008) provide an understanding the higher education is supportive of cultural diversity by explaining that women are currently earning more fifty percent of granted Ph.D. degrees. According to Evans (2007), at the beginning of the “21st century, there were 176,485 tenured full professors at the nation’s public and private research universities” (Evans, 2007, p. 131). Out of the 176,485, roughly eighty percent were men and twenty percent women. Bilen-Green, Froelich, and Jacobson (2008) present similar data that suggests women “comprise only about 45% of tenure-track faculty, 31% of tenured faculty, and just 24% of full professorships” (Bilen-Green, et al., 2008, p. 1).
Unfortunately, the professional environment within higher education is not reflective of Evans (2007) assertion or Bilen-Green, Foelich, and Jacobson’s (2008) data. The detrimental undertone references gender bias within higher education. Although there is research demonstrating a prevalence of women holding leadership and other positions throughout various academic ranks, there is still concern. Bilen-Green, Froelich, and Jacobson (2008) theorize,

...progress is due mainly to greater numbers of women applicants rather than diminishing gender bias. Such disquiet is reinforced by lingering disparities in salary and especially rank, along with deteriorating working conditions as more women are hired into the growing number of part-time and non-tenure track positions (Bilen-Green, et al., 2008, p. 2).

It is concerning that women are earning higher degrees in larger numbers than men, but are underrepresented in positions of leadership, a rather “surprising fact, given the increase in the number of full-time women academics which has accompanied the higher education expansion from the 1970s onwards, the period during which the careers of those who are now senior academics were being built” (Brown, 2000, p. 105). Tomas and Castro (2013) comment “women are clearly in the minority at university management level and in the power centres of decision-making,” leaving the “upper levels of university hierarchy are still dominated by males” (Tomas & Castro, 2013, p. 17). Evans (2007) focuses on the gendered environment of higher education stating that “at each step, women are frequently given mediocre reviews and isolated by lack of women mentors; their mistakes are often amplified or remembered long after their male colleagues missteps are forgotten” (Evans, 2007, p. 133). Tomas and Castro (2013) suggest that women are underrepresented in leadership positions due to the “differentiation of roles according to gender” (Tomas & Castro, 2013, p. 17). Bagihole
and White (2003) determined that women are typically more engaged with teaching, while men are normally understood to be more concerned with conducting research. This causes women’s productivity regarding publications to be lower and results in less research funding (Dorn, 2008; Tomas & Castro, 2013). Howard-Vital and Brunson (2006) highlight the “hidden workload issues such as multiple familial responsibilities” as a cause in fewer publications (Howard-Vital & Brunson, 2006, p. 5). They continue by stating “female faculty and administrators” are continually “juggling multiple priorities that included childcare, lifestyle maintenance, and familial nurturing” (Howard-Vital & Brunson, 2006, p. 5).

Ward and Wolf-Wendel (2017) agree that there are “many reasons for this marginalization” concerning the lack of women in academic leadership positions, but believe that “some of the blame can be attributed to their desire to combine work and family” (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2017, p. 229). In fact, Evans (2007) posits that “women pay the ultimate social tax: their child bearing, child rearing, and care-taking roles put them at a clear and often significant disadvantage on the job” (Evans, 2007, p. 133). Baptist (2017) suggests that women become worn out in academia trying to find a manageable balance between both work and family obligations. It appears that the environment in “higher education did not lead to balance in the lives of many women faculty and administrators. Rather, women are limited by the environment” (Howard-Vital & Brunson, 2006, p. 5). Amer (2013) theorizes that “institutional policies that help faculty deal with professional and home responsibilities will both enhance the quality of the educational environment, making it more attractive to academic women, and help them fulfill professional and personal duties” (Amer, 2013, p. 14).
Ward and Wolf-Wendel (2017) and Mason, Wolfinger, and Goulden (2013) do acknowledge that “not all women faculty have children and not all women academics with children are unable to succeed (by either standards put forth personally or professionally); however, as a group, academic women and their career advancement face barriers” (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2017, p. 229). Baptist (2017) understands institutions to be “fraught by gendered organizational structures and practices that limit” women regardless of whether or not they have children (Baptist, 2017, p. 3). Based on this, there are “gendered organizational practices at institutions of higher education” that are deemed “responsible for the glass ceilings faced by female academics” (Baptist, 2017, p. 1). Bilen-Green, Froelich, and Jacobson (2008) state the “gendered organization concept helps us understand women’s stalled momentum and the complexity of making significant and enduring change” (Bilen-Green, et al., 2008, p. 2). The gendered organization coupled with preexisting barriers and challenges is “preventing women from reaching the top-ranking academic positions on parity with men” (Amer, 2013, p. 12). Ward and Wolf-Wendel (2017) are more specific as they comment “women remain underrepresented in many disciplines, in the senior rank and in senior administrative positions” (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2017, p. 229). Burkinshaw and White (2017), however, suggest, “representation of women in leadership roles has increased,” but mainly in “administrative areas” (Burkinshaw & White, 2017, p. 3).

Continued disparities could be attributed to perceived career interruptions for women, such as childbirth and rearing, which carries the stipulation of necessitating a mother to devote herself towards domestic responsibilities, limiting her career potential (Bilen-Green, et al., 2008; Solomon, 1985; Ricks, 2014). Burkinshaw and White (2017)
state, “early academics often juggle career and family” and that “academic women are therefore often building their careers later than their male colleagues, and are less likely to have a traditional trajectory starting as a lecturer and the progressing through the ranks” (Burkinshaw & White, 2017, p. 2). Burkinshaw and White (2017) continue by postulating “both motherhood and academic work are greedy institutions, demanding total commitment and dedication. Academic mothers must negotiate both institutions without sufficient time, support, and resources in either” (Burkinshaw & White, 2017, p. 2). Amer (2013) states “women tend to shoulder a greater proportion of domestic work than men, and they typically balance multiple conflicting roles – academician, mother and home maker” (Amer, 2013, p. 12). Kearney and Lincoln (2016) focus on the “growing need for policies to help women balance their domestic and professional commitments” for proper support (Kearney & Lincoln, 2016, p. 799). According to Howard-Vital and Brunson (2006), however, “supportive work environments still seem to elude many women in higher education,” especially academic mothers (Howard-Vital & Brunson, 2006, p. 6). In fact, “fewer women, in academic institutions, reach the final stages in search process for coveted, leadership positions” (Howard-Vital & Brunson, 2006, p. 6). Amer (2013) believes that “cultural expectations which persist about women’s responsibilities and capabilities have a negative impact on the careers of women” (Amer, 2013, p. 12).

Baptist (2017) continues to discuss that barriers and

...challenges faced by female academics begin in graduate school where students lacking female faculty role models shy away from academic careers. Students who do venture on into academic, despite all its challenges, are faced with an uphill task as they strive for senior positions and equity with their male counterparts” (Baptist, 2017, p. 1).
Burkinshaw and White (2017) suggest that the “gendering of particularly academic careers” is established during “PhD candidature through lack of support and mentoring and sponsorship particularly in relation to advice about career paths and in the early career phase, and can then persist throughout the careers of women in universities” (Burkinshaw & White, 2017, p. 2). Brown (2000) posits that the “appointment and promotion of women academics to senior positions has not kept pace with the recruitment of women students” (Brown, 2000, p. 105). In order to properly address gender equity, Kearney and Lincoln (2016) discuss the need to examine “challenges in the career paths and leadership development of women in higher education” beginning with students (Kearney & Lincoln, 2016, p. 1). This will increase the probability to thwart the “values and practices that legitimize women’s position at the lower levels of the hierarchy and portray managerial jobs as primarily masculine” (Burkinshaw & White, 2017, p. 2).

Ward and Wolf-Wendel (2017) acknowledge that “colleges and universities have made significant efforts to meet the needs of academic mothers and fathers by creating and updating policies such as parental leaves, tenure clock stop policies, and modified duties of work” (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2017, p. 230). According to Tomas and Castro (2013), however, the efforts taken by colleges and universities have not been enough to eliminate the traditional structure of higher education as “masculine, patriarchal and elitist” (Tomas & Castro, 2013, p. 16). In fact, Amer (2013) understands that both men and women as academician professionals and parents struggle with the task of achieving a balance between work and family life, however the challenge for women is greater than for men, given the simple logistics of the biological clock, the physical demands of pregnancy and childbirth, the gendered expectations of family obligations, and the ongoing disparity with which women take on the ‘second shift’ through maintenance of children and home. For academic mothers, one of the most time consuming aspects of their lives and a source of significant
professional, personal and marital stress is the fact that many feel as though they work a ‘second shift’ at home (Amer, 2013, p. 12).

Based on this, Bagihole (1993) suggests there is a need to systematically “examine the institutional practices within universities, as there is no reason to believe that women academics are less able than men, and therefore can be no reason other than sex discrimination to account for their inferior status within universities” (Bagihole, 1993, p. 269). Leon and Jackson (2009) highlight sex discrimination postulating that there are “characteristics (e.g., race, gender, and attitudes) influence hiring decisions” into both lower and upper level administrative positions (Leon & Jackson, 2009, p. 47). Hart (2006) believes that the “fact that power is male-centered indicates that achievements by women are gained in spite of that male-centered power” (Hart, 2006, p. 41). This presents women with the “challenge of having to be twice as good to get half the recognition” in order to be considered for promotion (Evans, 2007, p. 133). Due to this, institutional “policies tend to be underutilized for fear of bias” by women (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2017, p. 230). Howard-Vital and Brunson (2006) state that it is

...necessary for women in higher education to articulate how specific factors in the academic environment can be revisited and refurbished to be more supportive and nurturing of the talents and challenges of lives of women and men. There is a need to transform the academic environment so that it produces more productive and less stressed, scholars and leaders who are women. As women, it is necessary to make our colleagues aware that there are assumptions, practices, policies, and values in the current environment that are detrimental to supporting our talent and producing more intellectual talent (Howard-Vital & Brunson, 2006, p. 8).

**Women: Leadership and Mentoring**

Isaacs (2014) states

Due to current demands, professionals must be successful in leading their organizations through change by having the knowledge and skills necessary to do so. It is important for university administrators to be well-
equipped and effective at implementing and maintaining this positive change (Isaacs, 2014, p. 113).

Wolverton and Gmelch (2002) define academic leadership as the “act of building a community of scholars to set direction and achieve common purposes through the empowerment of faculty and staff” (Wolverton & Gmelch, 2002, p. 33). Current academic leaders are experiencing a “transition that demands personal development and creates new learning settings” (Hacifazlioglu, 2010, p. 2258). Qualities such as confidence, resilience, and adaptability are needed to be “successful in a changing environment, and to assist the field in its response to both internal and external factors,” when “taking a stand for equity, even in the face of resistance” (Isaacs, 2014, p. 114; Nelson, et al., 2011, p. 102). Hacifazlioglu (2010) states

> This has become all the more important in the last decade, when middle management has come to play an ever more central role in ensuring the overall and long-term welfare of institutions of higher education. Rather than having a single leader, as was often the case in traditional higher education, multiple leaders have emerged in response to the increasingly diversified needs of contemporary higher education institutions. Provosts, deans, associate deans, and department chairs have accordingly become more influential and vocal within this new paradigm (Hacifazlioglu, 2010, p. 2258).

Academic leaders “must be willing to share power” because “sharing power equates to sharing responsibility” and sharing responsibility causes individuals to act with a “purpose in mind beyond oneself” (Nelson, et al., 2011, p. 100). Based on this, Rosser, Johnsrud, and Heck (2003) and Gmelch (2013) claim that academic deans serve as one of the most integral and unique management role within higher education. Hacifazlioglu (2010) goes further to claim that “deanship appears to be a leadership position that is becoming as important as presidency” (Hacifazlioglu, 2010, p. 2259). Deans serve as
…academic leaders, they have the authority to chart where a college its programs are headed. By selecting which goals they choose to pursue (and which to forego) deans and directors have the potential to exert a tremendous influence on the direction of the unit. They have the ability to control information, accumulate and allocate resources, and assess the performance and productivity of their faculty and staff. Deans serve as academic facilitators between presidential initiatives, faculty governance, and student needs. By virtue of their midlevel placement within the higher education organization structure, they are in the center of controversy, conflict, and debate; they play the role of coalition builder, negotiator, and facilitator (Rosser, et al., 2003, p. 2).

Gmelch (2013) understands that this “transformation from faculty to academic leadership takes time and dedication,” creating a need for developmental leadership programs to be in place, however, the “programs developed on campus focus primarily on management duties (legal and fiscal issues mostly) designed as prophylactic measures to keep the departments and colleges out of trouble and the newspapers” (Gmelch, 2013, p. 26 & 28). In fact, it is estimated that only “3% of universities and colleges invest in developing their academic leaders – deans and department chairs,” which has led to “scholars and administrators alike speak about a great leadership crisis in higher education” (Gmelch, 2013, p. 26). Leadership and “skill development for chairs and deans, unfortunately, is woefully inadequate” (Gmelch, 2013, p. 28). This is confounding, according to Hacifazlioglu, 2010, since “deanship is seen as a turning point, where those who proved successful are rewarded as a result of years of academic, professional, and personal sacrifice” (Hacifazlioglu, 2010, p. 2260). Gmelch (2013) states that “institutions need to invest and grow campus leaders” because the “time of amateur administration is over,” if higher education is going to effectively address the challenges of today (Gmelch, 2013, p. 27). Rosser, Johnsrud, and Heck (2003) suggests that “leadership is negotiated as a mutual and reciprocal process between deans and the various members of
their academic units as well as their superiors – a process that responds to the mutual needs and wants of both leaders and followers” (Rosser, et al., 2003, p. 6). According to Gmelch (2013),

Deans and department chairs typically come to the position without leadership training, without prior executive experience, without a clear understanding of the ambiguity and complexity of their roles, without recognition of the metamorphic changes that occur as they transform from an academic to a leader, and without an awareness of the cost to their academic and personal lives (Gmelch, 2013, p. 26).

Unfortunately, Brown (2000) postulates that women have “low levels of confidence and self-esteem” to perform the duties of academic deans due to the “lack of clarity…about the decision-making process and structures which prevail in the university system” (Brown, 2000, p. 106-107). Archard (2012) proposes that “women do not choose to develop their talents or select their career domains based on achievement but rather on cultural and social imbedded gender constructions” and “therefore lack the self-confidence necessary for taking on these tasks and roles” (Archard, 2012, p. 191).

Nelson, Guerra, and Henry (2011) acknowledges that “creating equitable educational environments is a sizeable challenge” for women, but “leaders must relentlessly work toward that end” (Nelson, et al., 2011, p. 103).

Edds-Ellis and Keaster (2013) provides a strategy, which may increase the number of women leaders. “Drawing on the career and leadership experiences of current female leaders through mentoring” can effectively prepare and increase women leaders in higher education (Edds-Ellis & Keaster, 2013, p. 1). Mentoring is a key component of leadership development due to the fact that knowledge focused on the “expectations and complex roles of leadership in higher education” is transferred and internalized (Edds-Ellis, & Keaster, 2013, p. 1). Without the proper mentoring and training an aspiring
leader will not possess the necessary abilities to lead a department or institution. In fact, “mentoring is well established in the literature as one of the most effective means of not only encouraging individuals to move into administration (or higher levels if already serving in an administrative role), but to effectively train those aspirants as well (Edds-Ellis & Keaster, 2013, p. 1). For mentoring to be effective, institutions must strive to be “keenly aware of and open to the demographic shifts than those in the general community,” meaning that an awareness acknowledging that “academia has traditionally been seen as masculine, patriarchal and elitist” be accepted (Nelson, et al., 2011, p. 101; Tomas & Castro, 2013, p. 16). Recognizing this traditional belief will enable women to be paired with women leaders, producing an “environment ripe for a positive mentoring experience” (Edds-Ellis & Keaster, 2013, p. 3). Providing the “female-to-female exchange within the formal mentoring setting” increases the potential for a positive experience that could prove to be career altering (Edds-Ellis and Keaster, 2013, p. 3).

Gobaw (2017) agrees with Edds-Ellis and Keaster (2013) commenting that women-to-women mentoring is important because it shapes the “perception women hold towards the nature of higher education leadership and management. Whether they are too many or few, their attitude critically affects the nature of managerial positions they hold and will hold” (Gobaw, 2017, p. 29).

Regardless of the proposed barriers and challenges, Burkinshaw and White (2017) discuss how the “focus is often on women’s deficits in higher education leadership,” removing the need to systematically investigate “intra-organizational culture and procedures” (Burkinshaw & White, 2017, p. 3). Examining the “administrative and managerial selection process in higher education” can potentially uncover the “long-held
social and cultural assumptions regarding the different abilities and roles of men and women” (Leon & Jackson, p. 47; Archard, 2013, p. 159). According to Larson (2011), educational leaders are burdened with a “moral obligation to use their position of leadership to increase educational equity and advance educational opportunity” and prevent the “reproduction of gender expectations” (Larson, 2011, p. 324; Archard, 2013, p. 159).

The managerial model of higher education can be articulated to provide women opportunities in developing their careers, however, in “reality it perpetuates and even intensifies the gendered organizational culture” (Burkinshaw & White, 2017, p. 3). Gobaw (2017) suggests that the managerial model prevents women from a “lack of access to ownership, leadership and decision-making opportunities” (Gobaw, 2017, p. 29). This interpretation leaves women “systematically disadvantaged in this male-normed institutional environment” (Bilen-Green, et al., 2008, p. 2). A masculine oriented institutional environment follows gender norms that can “limit women in what they can achieve if they want to be a professional and a parent” (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2017, p. 230). Thus, gendered norms causes the focus to shift

…towards programs and measures aimed at fixing the women an way from the organization reflecting on a culture that is not generally encouraging to women. This emphasis of fixing the women helps to rationalize why women are not progressing their careers. Such a deficit model focuses on why women do not measure up to higher educational leadership roles and does not inspire confidence in building career paths or in their institution, adding yet again to the precariousness of their leadership careers. Not surprisingly some women can become ambivalent about their role in the academy and disengage while others look at and dismiss higher educational leadership, making a conscious decision in the current organizational context not to seek leadership roles (Burkinshaw & White, 2017, p. 3-4).
Dhar (2008) continues addressing gendered norms in higher education by stating “traditionally, male leaders have aimed to used education to make women more capable of fulfilling their traditional roles as wives and mothers and not to make them more efficient and active units” in academia leadership (Dhar, 2008, p. 1). Ward and Wolf-Wendel (2017) understands the current patriarchy in higher education to “transcend all women regardless of their parenthood or partner status, with women expected to behave in ways that fulfill traditional gender roles” (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2017, p. 230). The traditional values operate to construct the notion of an ideal worker who is “dedicated to the job, meaning they are not supposed to take into consideration things that are non-job related (i.e., family)” (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2017, p. 230).

Nelson, Guerra, and Henry (2011) suggest that “ensuring a more equitable educational system requires leaders who are willing to engage in practices that challenge current structures,” promoting “ongoing systemic change” (Nelson, Guerra, & Henry, 2011, p. 99). Burkinshaw and White (2017) argues that “women in leadership roles can improve working conditions for all women” by questioning “work cultures by carefully interpreting uncertainty for colleagues across the institution and frame the current situation in ways that collaboratively connect with others, so this helps to reposition organization work cultures as problematic rather than (women) leaders” (Burkinshaw & White, 2017, p. 3). Covert (2013), however, views “relying on one woman at the top, or even a handful, to understand what all women below them need and to act on that is simply naïve” (Covert, 2013, p. 1). Covert (2013) continues “we just shouldn’t kid ourselves that putting more women at the top solves the structural barriers women face” (Covert, 2013, p. 1). Bilen-Green, Froelich, and Jacobson (2008), on the other hand,
agree with Burkinshaw and White (2017) that “attaining a critical mass of women in the leadership structure is especially important to position an institution for change” (Bilen-Green, et al., 2008, p. 4). The difference is that Bilen-Green, Froelich, and Jacobson (2008) do think women in academic leadership positions should be tasked with “transforming work life for all women” (Covert, 2013, p. 1). Instead, “women in formal leadership positions actually model the desired culture change in a conspicuous and powerful way,” allowing for the institution to “exhibit these characteristics in such a manner that other members of the organization reflect similar behavior” (Bilen-Green, et al., 2008, p. 4; Isaacs, 2014, p. 113). Bilen-Green, Froelich, and Jacobson (2008) believe that developing a “self-reinforcing cycle” will inspire “bold organization actions” to disrupt the patriarchal monopoly over higher education (Bilen-Green, et al., 2008, p. 4).

“Higher education today is operating in a constantly changing environment,” which requires highly educated, motivated, and adaptable employees (Isaacs, 2014, p. 112). In order to properly address these needs, higher education must employ transformative style leaders, “ensuring a more equitable educational system” and to address the “humane aspect of employees” (Nelson, et al., 2011, p. 98; Gobaw, 2015, p. 33). Unfortunately, Wilkinson (2009) and Howard-Vital and Brunson (2006) believe institutions are developing and relying on the “emergence of diversity policies, as a substitute for equity policies” rather than acknowledge the “cultural and environmental issues that often face women in higher education” (Wilkinson, 2009, p. 39; Howard-Vital & Brunson, 2006, p. 4). Dhar (2008) posits that women are “inadequately prepared for administrative positions” and what is “needed to help women develop the expression of their views are educational programmes geared to their experience” (Dhar, 2008, p. 2).
Brown (2000) states, women require “career development and training, specifically, that women should be given particular encouragement to attend career training” (Brown, 2000, p. 103). Leaders do not instantly assimilate into their position; rather “leadership development is a process that extends over many years” (Gmelch, 2013, p. 27). Currently, there are “assumptions, practices, policies, and values” in higher education that are detrimental to the support and development for women leaders (Howard-Vital & Brunson, 2006, p. 8). Gobaw (2017) provides three levels in which the hindering factors or barriers can be placed; “personal factors, institutional factors, and societal factors” (Gobaw, 2017, p. 32). Gobaw (2017) continues to provide a list of potential factors concerning each level.

…inadequate formal education and training, lack of prominent women visible as role models, lack of mentoring, lack of women’s self-empowerment by believing in themselves, lack of self-confidence, research and publication, and lack of fair and comprehensive policy framework… lack of practice in encouraging women, exposition and subjection to pressures and experiences not met by men, heavy domestic responsibility, deep-rooted traditional and cultural beliefs about women, and their roles in community, stereotypical views, biased recruitment and promotion procedures, attitudes of employers to women employees, multi-fold intimidation, unsafe working environment, and absence of strong women’s movement (Gobaw, 2017, 32).

Despite the fact that “universities have undergone significant changes in recent years, the process has not be accompanied by a move towards equal distribution among men and women” in regards to academic leadership positions (Tomas & Castro, 2013, p. 22). Nor do women experience and share equal benefits with men in higher education. In higher education, women face “constraints as mothers, as women, and as leaders while maintaining the balance between their responsibilities as academicians and as leaders” (Hacifazlioglu, 2010, p. 2261). As Gobaw (2017) states, “The issue of women’s plight is
an issue of all humanity” and must corrected (Gobaw, 2017, p. 28). This would require institutions across the country to become “culturally responsive,” requiring “systemic change” (Nelson, et al., 2011, p. 101). Gmelch (2013) explains developing faculty into academic leaders is both a privilege and responsibility of university administrators and institutions of higher education. The privilege is advancing colleagues and programs, while the responsibility rests in developing our most valued resource, people. Through campus leadership programs, institutions benefit from building academic leadership teams, creating connections of leadership across campus, building in institution renewal, promoting ‘purposeful’ leadership diversity and pluralism, tapping hidden talent, maximizing individuals’ potential, and retaining campus talent. Achieving these individual and institutional benefits requires time, commitment, and dedication. The future of universities and colleges depends on answering ‘the call to leadership’ with commitment and vision (Gmelch, 2013, p. 34).

This further “situates higher education’s presence in a constantly-changing environment” as it continues to play a vital role in developing and producing societal leaders (Isaacs, 2014, p. 113).
CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter presents the qualitative research methods that guided this case study in order to “provide more in-depth examination and understanding” (Nassaji, 2015, p. 129). This study will document the challenges and experiences of women who ascended the administrative ladder and into their current position as Dean, as well as how each negotiated gendered expectations. Participants will be asked to disclose personal experiences regarding their challenges and experiences.

Reasoning for Qualitative Methodology

Based on the research questions, qualitative research will function as the methodological framework for this proposed study. Qualitative methods tend to provide diverse approaches when attempting to examine context specific settings (Anney, 2014; Golafshani, 2003; Reeves, et al., 2008). This methodological approach, as Hoepfl (1997) states, “accepts the complex and dynamic quality of the social world” (Hoepfl, 1997, p. 48). Malterud (2001) further iterates that qualitative research is “used in the exploration of meanings of social phenomena as experienced by individuals themselves, in their natural context” (Malterud, 2001, p. 483). The research process will involve semi-structured interviews containing open-ended questions allowing for the continued emergence of both questions and themes, while data can be analyzed and interpreted through inductive or deductive means in order to obtain and provide meaningful answers to the research questions (Gustafsson, 2017).

Conducting semi-structured interviews is appropriate because “individuals’ narratives about their lives are complex and often contradictory and are better captured
through the interactional exchange between interviewees and interviewers” (Goldberg & Allen, 2015, p. 7). This will increase a more “naturalistic and holistic understanding” of gender equity and social justice for women (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007, p. 558). To provide adequate, saturated, and rich data to address the research questions, a small sample size of participants is used (Malterud, 2001; Anney, 2015). Too large of a sample will not permit an in-depth data analysis to develop a profound understanding, while uncovering the complexity of gender equity in higher education (Nassaji, 2015; Goldberg & Allen, 2015). Boddy (2016) states

…despite the apparent limitations of samples which involve a single case or single research participant…has nevertheless been noted that individual (single sample) case studies can provide reliable indications for the directions in which future research can go. Individual cases can also provide a new, deep and nuanced understanding of previously unexplored phenomena (Boddy, 2016, p. 428).

**Case Study Design**

Yin (2003) defines a case study as an “empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 2003, p. 13). A case study can;

…afford researchers opportunities to explore or describe a phenomenon in context using a variety of data sources. It allows the researcher to explore individuals or organizations, simple through complex interventions, relationships, communities, or programs and supports the deconstruction and the subsequent reconstruction of various phenomena (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 544).

A case study design will assist in answering the “how” and “why” questions because it has “demonstrated its appropriateness to generate a well-founded interpretive comprehension of human/technology interaction in the natural social setting” (Andrade,
Furthermore, a case study provides “different ‘lenses’ through which to look at complicated problems and social issues, focusing their attention on different aspects of the data and providing a framework within which to conduct their analysis” (Reeves, et al., 2008, p. 631).

Based on this, this study will utilize multiple case studies to ensure that the topic is well researched and explored, providing themes and commonalities across the multiple cases (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Creswell & Miller, 2000; Srivastava & Thomson, 2009). Baxter and Jack (2008) define a multiple case study as a method that “enables the researcher to explore differences within and between cases,” which is important to “replicate findings” among the unique cases (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 548). The scope of the study and nature of the topic creates a need for saturated data to obtain insight into the experiences and challenges women face in pursuit of Deanship and how gendered norms are negotiated. With this in mind, the individual participant within the study will comprise each distinctive case in an effort to provide similar, or contrasting, results (Andrade, 2009; Boddy, 2016; Nassaji, 2015).

**Sampling and Participants**

Purposeful sampling will be utilized in this naturalistic inquiry in order to best address the research questions. Purposeful sampling will assist in providing “information-rich cases which can be studied in depth” (Hoepfl, 1997, p. 51). Using purposeful sampling will provide an opportunity to “focus on key informants, who are particularly knowledgeable of the issues under investigation, because purposive sampling allows decisions to be made about the selection of participants” (Anney, 2014, p. 278). To properly utilize purposeful sampling, participant criterion will be specific, requiring
participants who identify racially as White, a woman, is currently serving as a Dean of a research one institution, and is willing to participate in the research project. The gender specific criterion is necessary to collect data that will thoroughly address the research questions. The participant criterion of White woman is due to my racial identity as White. I do not believe I have the ability to fully connect, relate, or understand the complex interaction of both racial and gender oppression Black women encounter. Furthermore, I grew up in a primarily White town and was exposed to neither a racially diverse environment nor situations of overt/covert racism; however, it still may prove to be arduous to connect with participants due to identifying as a man. The fact is that as a White man I have not experienced any type of oppression based on my gender or racial identification. The sampling of participants that satisfy the predetermined criteria will provide information regarding the challenges and experiences women face in climbing the administrative ladder to the position of Dean and how women negotiate predetermined gendered expectations from themselves and society as both a woman and a woman Dean.

Initially, participants were contacted by email, which provided a brief introduction of the researcher and the purpose of the proposed study. The email requested a response if the individual met the qualifying criteria and was willing to participate. Two out of three participants responded with acknowledgment as a White woman and their willingness to participate received an Informed Consent form accompanied with the research and guiding questions. Participants provided available dates, times, and location for the interview.
**Data Collection**

Case studies require multiple sources to provide an adequate amount of data to be analyzed and interpreted (Andrade, 2009; Baxter & Jack, 2008; Tracy, 2010; Golafshani, 2003). Based on this, data was collected from semi-structured interviews, allowing the conversation to begin with a “broad/holistic question,” and conducted “face-to-face” (Srivasta & Thomson, 2009, p. 75). The interview lasted from sixty to seventy-five minutes in length and was recorded for accuracy purposes. The interview protocol consisted of determining guiding questions in relation to the research questions in the possible event that the interview deviates or stalls. Guiding questions were developed to answer the research questions and to address gaps in literature. Gaps in literature centers around the lack of studies focused on the challenges and experiences of women ascending the administrative ladder to Dean of a college, as well as how women are negotiating cultural gendered expectations as a woman and as a woman Dean.

Permission was requested from participants via email prior to conducting interviews and collecting data. The email provided the potential participant an overview of the study, including participant criteria, and requested an indication of interest in participating in the study. If the contacted participant displayed interest, a follow-up email containing an informed consent form, to be filled out and returned, was provided. The participants are to remain anonymous in order to ensure confidentiality. In order to facilitate the data collection procedure, confirmed participants received both research and guiding questions before the scheduled interview, allowing for participant preparation. Following the interview, data was transcribed in preparation for analysis.
Each participant was provided a pseudonym for security measures regarding their identity and personal information. The first interview was conducted in the morning at Elizabeth’s office. Upon arriving, the administrative assignment was welcoming and requested I have a seat. Waiting for roughly ten minutes, Elizabeth was ready for the interview. Upon entering her office, it was observed to be well organized and clean. Prior to beginning the interview, Elizabeth asked questions concerning the dissertation topic, career interests, prior experiences, etc. Following this she explained that she had read over the research and guiding questions to assist in maximizing the allotted time. Throughout the interview she was open and willing to disclose information believed to address each question. She was extremely structured and diligent, moving quickly from one question to the other without too much time in between each answer. This provided a large quantity of data to transcribe and analyze.

Similar to the first interview, the second interview was conducted in the participant’s office in the afternoon. She was provided with the pseudonym of Grace. Grace’s administrative assistant requested I wait in the waiting room while Grace was completing a prior commitment. Grace came out to introduce herself and apologize for the delay. We went into her office and sat at some chairs around a small coffee table. Her office was organized and clean. She had some military memorabilia on a bookshelf and we discussed military branches and aviation specifically. Grace disclosed that she had not read over the research and guiding questions. This was not a problem and provided me an opportunity to go through the entire interview process. Grace was very candid in her responses, but seemed to be hesitant to disclose too much information concerning a few
of the questions. Despite the lack of familiarity with the questions, Grace provided a comprehensive and thorough data set.

**Research Questions**

1. What are the experiences and challenges women face in ascending the administrative ladder to Dean of a college?

2. How do women negotiate cultural gendered norms, from others and themselves, in relation to being both a woman and a woman Dean?

**Data Analysis**

Data analysis in qualitative methodology involves breaking down the data and putting it back together to form themes and generalizations (Elo & Kyngas, 2008; Srivastava & Thomson, 2009). As Basit (2003) explains, the “object of analyzing qualitative data is to determine the categories, relationships and assumptions that inform the respondents’ view of the world in general, and of the topic in particular” (Basit, 2003, p. 143). Data was analyzed using the constant comparison and classical content analysis. Constant comparison seeks to “identify underlying themes presented through the data” (Leech & Onwuegbuzi, 2007, p. 565). This was achieved either deductively or abductively as codes are predetermined or emerge during data analysis. Coding is defined as the process for organizing data by “bracketing chunks (or text or image segments) and writing a word representing a category” (Rossman & Rallis, 2012).

The classical content analysis was also used in analyzing the collected data. This measures or counts the “number of times each code is utilized” (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007, p. 569). Determining the repetitions of each code assisted in focusing on the most prevalent concepts generating overarching themes, between each case study, developed
through constant comparison analysis (Patton, 2009; Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007). However, it is important to note that content analysis is “not only about collecting records and making tallies of occurrences of words or phrases,” but can “lead to the suggestion of answers to research questions, hypothesis testing and the development of theory” (Cavanagh, 1997, p. 6). According to Elo and Kyngas (2008), “content analysis is a research method for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context, with the purpose of providing knowledge, new insights, a representation of facts and a practical guide to action” (Elo & Kyngas, 2008, p. 108).

In order to maintain a well-organized data set, a software program was utilized. ATLAS.ti 8 is a software program designed to manage qualitative data. Aside from using coding software, ATLAS.ti 8, a cross-case and I-poem analysis will be utilized to add further depth to the study (Cavanagh, 1997; Rossman & Rallis, 2012; Elo & Kyngas, 2008).

Following the collection of data, data was transcribed, then analyzed to develop “meanings, intentions, consequences and context,” and then coded (Cavanagh, 1997, p. 5). Codes emerged in relation to the participant’s gender, marital status, parental status, and in relation to the theoretical lens. It is important to acknowledge that as codes did emerge within the data, the emergence is based on the researcher’s perspective using a feminist lens. These categories were chosen to address the research questions and in an attempt to fill the gaps in the literature. Using gender was in an attempt to unearth information focused on the challenges and experiences of participants in pursuit and while serving as Dean. Gender was also used in an effort to determine how participants negotiated gendered expectations as a woman and a woman Dean. Both categories of
marital and parental status assisted in understanding external challenges for women to negotiate coupled with professional responsibilities. These categories also provided the discovery of whether or not support systems assisted in women negotiating gendered norms while balancing a family and a career. The theoretical lens of critical feminist theory served to illuminate other potential data determinations pertaining to the higher education’s social inclusion and advancement or the lack of gender equity (Yacoub, 2017). It also provided a lens to further analyze codes that emerged from each categorical classification. Codes were then organized into themes to assist in providing a detailed description of each individual case and setting (Tracy, 2010; Goldberg & Allen, 2015). Themes consisted of Challenge, Opportunity, Mentorship/Leadership, and Family within Elizabeth’s data set. Grace’s data themes were Challenge, Mentorship/Leadership, and Gender Bias. These themes were determined based on repetition of categorical cues and participants’ continued reiteration of said themes.

**Rigor**

Data must be analyzed rigorously to remain transparent in order to demonstrate both integrity and competence. According to Goldberg and Allen (2015), “transparency is fundamental to the demonstration of rigor” (Goldberg & Allen, 2015, p. 11). Transparency was further through the use of strategies, such as triangulation, member checking, and a thick description of the data, providing the readers with descriptive analysis as well as personal bias (Anney, 2014; Tracy, 2010; Ponterotto, 2006). Triangulation requires the “use of multiple and different methods, investigators, sources and theories to obtain corroborating evidence (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2007, p. 239). By using multiple participants, any conclusion can become more credible, if each case study
converges on the same determination (Boddy, 2016; Nassaji, 2015; Golafshani, 2003). It is important to note that triangulation may not “result in improved accuracy,” but rather “allow different facts of problems to be explored, increases scope, deepens understanding, and encourages consistent (re)interpretation” (Tracy, 2010, p. 843).

Based on this, triangulation for this study used multiple sources regarding literature to support or refute case determinations.

Member checking is used in conjunction with triangulation to further validate research (Basit, 2003; Andrade, 2009). According to Anney (2014), member checking …eliminate researcher bias when analyzing and interpreting the results. This means that the analyzed and interpreted data is sent back to the participants for them to evaluate the interpretation made by the inquirer and to suggest changes if they are unhappy with it or because they had been misreported. Informants may reject an interpretation made by the researcher, either because it was socially undesirable or because of the in which it was presented by the researcher (Anney, 2014, p. 277).

Although member checking is important in establishing and increasing transparency within a study, it can be a fragile step where participant rapport is damaged or falls apart (Boddy, 2016; Cleary, Horsfall, & Hayter, 2014). Due to this, providing participants with options regarding member checking can assist in maintaining a healthy relationship. Options can also instill “power, voice, and engagement to the participant throughout the research process” (Carlson, 2010, p. 1105). Essentially, “member reflections are less a test of research findings as they are an opportunity for collaboration and reflexive elaboration” (Tracy, 2010, p. 844).

Another method to increase the transparency of the research requires the final report to be comprised of rich, thick descriptions (Boddy, 2016; Tracy, 2010). Ponterotto (2006) defines thick description as follows:

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Thick description accurately describes observed social actions and assigns purpose and intentionality to these actions, by way of the researcher’s understanding and clear description of the context under which the social actions took place. Thick description captures the thoughts and feelings of participants as well as the often complex web of relationships among them. Thick description leads to thick interpretation, which in turns leads to thick meaning of the research findings for the researchers and participants themselves, and for the report’s intended readership. Thick meaning of findings leads readers to a sense of verisimilitude, wherein they can cognitively and emotively “place” themselves with the research context (Ponterotto, 2006, p. 543).

Thus, thick descriptions are utilized in order to establish credibility with readers, “who read a narrative account and are transported into a setting or situation” and “enables readers to make decisions about the applicability of the findings to other settings or similar contexts” (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 129). To provide the reader with thick descriptions, the data set of participant will be used as much as possible as how it pertains to the research questions. Although this may appear to be unnecessary, it will assist in supporting codes, themes, and results found within each respective data set. Goldberg and Allen (2015) suggest

…quotations represent the best illustration of the findings. Participant quotes are ideally used to illustrate themes or to capture a particular type or category of participants. In other words, they should be selected to exemplify what authors are describing and will ideally both bring the findings to life and also speak to the ‘thickness’ and richness of the data (Goldberg & Allen, 2015, p. 14).

**Role of the Researcher**

Researcher reflexivity serves to enhance transparency and provides the opportunity for a researcher to “self-disclose their assumptions, beliefs, and biases” that might impact the study (Creswell & Miller, 2000, p. 127). This procedure necessitates “honesty and authenticity with one’s self, one’s research, and one’s audience” (Tracy, 2010, p. 842). The researcher’s lack of personal experience with gendered oppression is
both a strength and weakness. Limited experience and/or understanding provide a unique opportunity to enter the research process without any preconceived notions of data results or any desired outcomes. The lack of gender oppression will also assist in reducing the researcher bias due to the fact that commonality cannot be established or found. The lack of experience concerning gender oppression, however, is also seen as a weakness. The need to rely on current research and course material to develop any prior judgment or belief may limit the ability to evaluate each data set through a feminist perspective efficiently. The researcher might potentially overlook key factors within data that could be useful in exploring the complex nature of cultural gender expectations both in and outside of higher education as the expectations pertain to women.

Despite the ever-increasing interest in gender equity, bias towards gender equity, or lack of, is shaped through a spouse’s difficulties in negotiating cultural stereotypes to fit society’s view of a woman, wife, and a working professional. These preconceived notions regarding gender equity will not coincide with participants’ challenges and experiences. As a result, personal bias must be continually addressed in order to analyze and interpret participant data within her respective era.

**Institutional Review Board**

Following the proposal defense, but prior to seeking participants for this study, an application was submitted for approval to Louisiana State University’s Institutional Review Board (IRB) to commence with the research.

**Limitations**

Limitations for this proposal include the criteria for participants, the researchers racial and gender identity, as well as the availability and willingness to participate in this
research. The exclusion of Black women will omit narratives that involve both racial and gender oppression. This complex interaction of race and gender would be beneficial to compare and contrast the overt or covert impact of racial identity for women in higher education. Requiring participants to currently hold the position of Dean reduces the ability to include lower-level administrators’ narratives to corroborate the challenges and experiences of current women Deans. However, the research questions require a woman currently serving as Dean to express the challenges and experiences while ascending the administrative ladder to their current position as Dean. Based on their professional experience, it is believed that participants will have a rich amount of information pertaining to the negotiation of gender expectations as both a woman and woman Dean.

The researchers identification as a White man limits the ability to understand the current and past challenges women face in higher education. Identification as a White man further limited the criteria of participants due to perceived ignorance concerning racial oppression. It is currently feared that participants who are willing to participate may be prone to exaggerate experiences or might not be willing to share detailed accounts due to the belief that they will be ignored, disagreed with, or judged by a researcher identifying as a man (Patton, 2009). Participants might also be prone to describe personal challenges and experiences in a self-bias and defensive manner or potentially refuse to answer questions altogether. Due to this, it is held that including race within an already socially charged case study could prove to be too much for a novice researcher to properly address.
Ethical Considerations

Due to my role within this research project, ethical considerations must be contemplated. Throughout the process I must strive to “ensure that data was appropriately and ethically collected, analyzed, and reported” (Carlson, 2010, p. 1103). One ethical consideration concerns the participants of the study. Participants’ names, employing institutions, and departments will be replaced with an alias. This will thwart any potential information that might negatively impact her career. Also, it will prevent anyone from procuring any “damaging or private information” that could be used to defame the participant (Tracy, 2010, p. 647). Careful attention must also be used in analyzing and interpreting data to allow gender relations to reflect participant voices and not the researchers.

Aside from procedural ethics, Tracy (2010) describes situational, relational, and exiting ethics for consideration. Tracy (2010) states

Situational ethics assumes that each circumstance is different and that researchers must repeatedly reflect on, critique, and question their ethical decisions. Situational ethics often revolve around the utilitarian questions ‘Do the means justify the ends?’ In other words, are the harms of the research practices outweighed by its moral goals? (Tracy, 2010, p. 647).

Relational ethics requires constant evaluation of one’s approach towards the participant and situation in order to maintain a high level of respect. Remaining professional and respectful to participants in regards to their earned status will be maintained. Finally, exiting ethics focuses on producing a well-developed project to avoid any potential unwarranted or inadvertent consequences (Nassaji, 2015; Carlson, 2010; Boddy, 2016; Yacoub, 2017). Producing an accurate account while holding steadfast to participant confidentiality is believed to assist in producing a meaningful and secure study.
To continually ensure proper ethical procedures and considerations, self-reflection is practiced. Morrow (2005) believes that self-reflection assists the researcher to “deal with biases and assumptions that come from their own life experiences or in interactions with research participants, which are often emotion-laden” (Morrow, 2005, p. 254). By assessing my own personal biases and provide “self-reflexive commentary about subjective feelings and sense making,” as data is gathered and analyzed, will assist in remaining ethical while reminding the reader regarding my “presence and influence in participating and interpreting” throughout the project (Tracy, 2010, p. 842). This is crucial as the researcher is the primary instrument used in conducting, analyzing, and interpreting, the semi-structured interviews.
Chapter IV. Data Analysis and Results

Summary of the Study

This qualitative study explored the experiences and career of two White women Deans at a Southern, Research One institution. The study utilized a multi-case research design, which directed both the data collection and analysis. Participants were asked questions in a one-on-one semi-structured interview in an effort to provide a detailed narrative, and understanding, of the challenges and experiences women face in ascending the administrative ladder to the position of Dean, as well as how women negotiate gender expectations as a both a woman and a woman Dean. The intention behind this method was to provide readers awareness of the continued battles women face in pursuing leadership roles within higher education, such as Dean of a college. Continued inequity stems from gender bias, meaning that there is the development of a “gendered environment which creates an unequal playing field through organizational work policies, interpersonal networks, and embedded attitudes favoring the advancement of men” (Bilen-Green, et al., 2008, p. 1). Furthermore, due to the lack of literature focusing on the challenges and experiences women academic leaders, as well as how gender norms are negotiated, it was the researcher’s objective to deliver a narrative component of women holding the position of Dean in order to provide educational advocates and legislators detailed accounts to continue to construct a platform of gender equity throughout higher education. The research questions guiding this qualitative study were:

1. What are the experiences and challenges women face in ascending the administrative ladder to Dean of a college?
2. How do women negotiate cultural gendered norms, from others and themselves, in relation to being both a woman and a woman Dean?

Following the Institutional Review Board’s approval to proceed with the study, participants were identified using the following criteria, one who identifies as a White woman, is currently Dean within one of the college’s schools, and is willing to participate in the research project. To effectively utilize a multiple case study, it was determined that each participant would represent an individual case for analysis purposes. Due to this, two to three participants would be sought. After investigating southern research institutions, three participants were initially contacted by email. This email disclosed the purposes of the study along with requesting their interest and willingness to participate within the study. Two out of three responded positively towards the study and the interviews were scheduled. The third participant was contacted a second time to determine willingness to participate, however, there was not response.

**Data Analysis Procedures**

Data analysis was performed using both constant comparison and classical content analysis. The data was collected during two separate semi-structured interviews that consisted of predetermined research and guiding questions in consideration of a feminist theoretical lens. Using critical feminist theory ensured that questions were developed in an effort to “place gender at the center” of this research and to “provide a space and contest for women to tell and hear their own and each other’s stories” (Ropers-Huilman & Winters, 2011, p. 668 & 675-676). It is important to note that participants addressed any and all emerging questions that organically developed during the semi-structured interview. Initially, crude associations developed during the interviews through
researcher notes. Data analysis further continued while listening and transcribing interviews with the participants. During the transcription process, it was determined that data saturation had been achieved to adequately address the posed research questions and “provide reliable indications for the directions in which future research can go” (Boddy, 2016, p. 428). This determination was made in an effort to provide the opportunity to perform deep case analysis. The participants’ transcripts were then approached as an individual case, being reviewed carefully and repeatedly, along with notes made during the interviews. In order to perform both case and cross-case analysis, data was thematically coded and recoded along with the amount of repetitions the theme emerged throughout the data. Cross-case analysis allowed for both similarities and differences to be identified between participants. It is necessary to note that cross-case analysis is typically not viewed between two cases; however, it is used to increase the depth and possible directions of the research.

**Participant Introduction**

**Elizabeth**

Elizabeth is 58 years old, married, and currently serves as Dean/professor. She earned her Ph.D. in 1990 after three and half years of hard work and dedication. She began a career at her current institution, experiencing no delays in promotion. Elizabeth has spent 28 years in higher education and is serving year four as Dean.

Upon walking into the administrative offices, I was greeted by Elizabeth’s assistant. She was very nice and welcoming, asking if I needed anything to drink. She explained that Elizabeth was on a conference call and would be with me momentarily. As I sat there I noticed the overall atmosphere to be calm and friendly. Other staff members
were discussing tasks that needed to be completed and distributed responsibilities according to individual availability as well as interest. My initial observation is that the structure of the office represents the leadership style of Elizabeth, which is supportive, appropriate delegation, and freedom to make internal choices without being micromanaged.

Elizabeth approached me apologizing for not being prepared in terms of punctuality as well as for the interview. She explained that she did not pre-read the research questions and began to delve into varying tasks and responsibilities that were requiring her direct involvement. Her office was set up nicely with her desk placed to face out of the window with a table at one end for quick conferences, personnel evaluations, etc. It is at this table where the interview took place. Following the interview, Elizabeth shook my hand, thanked me for being patient, walked me out, and offered to assist me further if needed.

**Grace**

Grace is 60 years old, married, and currently serves as Dean. Earning her Ph.D. in 1986, Grace has had success at both institutions she has been employed at throughout her 26 years of experience.

Entering the administrative offices, the space was open, harder to navigate, and in need of remodeling. The best comparison I have for the space is it reminded me of walking into the Department of Motor Vehicles. Despite the outdated space, everyone was pleasant to speak with. The student-worker assisted me in finding the location of Grace’s office. Grace’s assistant did not appear to be overly nice, but she was not rude either. Her demeanor came across as she had a lot of work to either complete or delegate,
which I can relate with. Similar to Elizabeth, Grace was wrapping up a conference call and I was asked to sit in the waiting room. Outside of Grace, her assistant, and the student-worker, I did not have any other interactions with the staff nor could I hear any discussions. While waiting I scanned the area viewing the layout of the offices. The Dean’s office is distinctly separated from the others, but is also the first office when entering the main door into the administrative offices. Unable to fully postulate a reason, other than that is how the architecture plans were designed, I picked up a newsletter regarding the department and began to read.

Grace startled me when she came out to introduce herself and invite me into her office. We both laughed following the surprise as I nearly jumped out of my seat. Grace’s office was large with her desk at the opposite end of, and facing, the entrance. There was plenty of storage space for books and family pictures. When entering her office, there was an informal space set up immediately to the left comprising of a couch and three chairs around a coffee table. The interview took place in this informal meeting area.

**Case Analysis Results**

Case analysis provides the researcher an opportunity to become profoundly acquainted with each case to determine the emergence of themes, associations, and repetitions (Goldberg & Allen, 2015; Yacoub, 2017; Anney, 2014). Although participants have similar themes and associations, each provided differing challenges and experiences as Dean. Participants also shared similar methods to negotiate cultural gender norms as a woman and a woman Dean. Each narrative provided a unique perspective, which enriched the depth of the data and added value to this qualitative study.
Case #1 – Elizabeth

Elizabeth positively responded to the email contact and a meeting was schedule to conduct the interview in her office. She was quite welcoming and professional throughout the interview process. Her experiences from childhood to this day continue to shape her, impacting her decisions. In analyzing the data regarding Elizabeth, four themes (Table 4.1) emerged from the coding process and are presented below.

Table 4.1 Case #1 (Elizabeth) Codes and Themes

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<th>Elizabeth</th>
<th>Code</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Career Employment Promotion Responsibility Dedication</td>
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<td>Equity Underrepresented Welcoming Inclusive Gender Bias</td>
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<td>Parenthood Husband Children</td>
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<td>Support Diversity Recruit Faculty Service Evaluation Adaptable</td>
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Opportunity

The theme opportunity is comprised of five codes throughout Elizabeth’s data. She discusses how her understanding of opportunities was shaped by her childhood.

I worked on my grandfather’s farm from the time I was eight through my freshman summer of college. I was chopping cotton at eight years old; my children would’ve turned me into social services. I was driving a tractor by the age of ten and spent my summers there. I would not give for that or the work ethic it brought but I was not going to do that for a living.

The opportunity to work on her grandfather’s farm gave her “such great appreciation for the mind because that sort of hard labor is so difficult.” Her appreciation for the mind echoes Gibbs’s (2000) belief that education produces “competency of the skilled authentic social agent” (Gibbs, 2000, p. 559). Education is regarded as a form of employability, which enables an individual to experience social mobility. Elizabeth viewed the development of the mind as a way to attain social mobility, but reflected fondly and proud of the work she completed on her grandfather’s farm, providing her with a long lasting understanding of hard work. Without the experience of arduous labor, she might not have come to understanding of education serving as a means of improving her position within society (Grant & Osanloo, 2014).

I think working that hard from such a young age, there is a work ethic, I mean a twelve hour day is just not that big of a deal. I’m usually in here at seven, when you are on a farm the earlier you get out there the cooler it is so you are out there at dark o’clock. If I am out of here by five or five thirty that is a short day. I attribute that work ethic both to my parents and how I was raised and I think that’s a lot of the success is just working hard. There is no short cut, whether you are working on your research or whatever the initiative is.

From eight years old Elizabeth appreciated every opportunity pouring into it the dedication she had learned from working on the farm and her parents, but she was determined that she would forge her own path. This dedication
reverberated during her time in college as she double majored and earned a teaching certificate. Following graduation she taught high school for a couple of years. She referred to teaching high school as “not my calling,” and decided to return to the university to work. During this line of work she became familiar with the administrative aspect as well as the faculty side. Elizabeth became more interested in conducting research, which is counter to Bagihole and White’s (2003) understanding that women are normally more engaged in teaching. She explains as follows.

I started as secretary, it’s not called that now and that is a pejorative term. I was the secretary in the biology department and shortly after that I was promoted to assistant personnel director and shortly to be promoted to director of personnel. In working in the personnel office I was far more attracted to the faculty side of the university rather than the support side and felt I would have greater flexibility. We had just had a child and I think that is what motivates women’s decisions throughout career opportunities.

Elizabeth saw the opportunity for several key components and opportunities, for her. She would be able to have the flexibility to be with her family, she would have the opportunity to work with young men and women shaping their minds, potentially impact other faculty members, and contribute to the greater good of society. This, however, is a lot of responsibilities to balance between career and family, but Elizabeth felt confident based on past experiences (Howard-Vital & Brunson, 2006). With the necessary skills as a “newly minted Ph.D.” Elizabeth was provided a chance to apply that irreplaceable work ethic at a tier one institution. Elizabeth, however, was not sure if she could succeed at a tier one, supporting Brown’s (2000) notion that women have “low levels of confidence and self-esteem” (Brown, 2000, p. 106-107). Fortunately, she had a work ethic that would not be deterred.
I worked my way through the ranks and was selected to tenure in 1990. I was the first woman to be tenured in this department in 1990. The first woman ever promoted and this is 1990. We aren’t talking 1950.

Reflecting on this Elizabeth appeared to be in dismay. Not because she was nervous when beginning the job or because she succeeded, for the simple fact that it took until 1990 for a woman to earn tenure in the department. Prior to her promotion the Women’s Educational Equity Act (WEEA) was experiencing decreased funding. At a time when awareness of gender equity was fading, Elizabeth was breaking through the gendered environment in “spite of that male-centered power” (Larson, 2011, p. 41). Hard work and dedication earned Elizabeth tenure, but the promotion seemed to be bitter sweet. It took until 1990 for a woman to earn tenure. How many women were passed over for tenure, fired, or quit out of frustration? Women who, as Elizabeth stated, are “just as capable as men.”

I think you will also find that where women are just as capable as men, at least literature suggests, women do not see themselves as capable as me.” So men and women who have the same skill set, men will see themselves as far more capable than woman will.

**Challenge**

The theme challenge is comprised of five codes throughout Elizabeth’s data. She discussed the challenges stemming from an equity point as well as from a more personal point of view. Prior to being appointed Dean, Elizabeth did not have any desire to assume the responsibilities of the position. Not because she was not qualified, but simply because she had been in administration before. The flexibility that comes with being a professor is not something to be taken for granted. She already knew the demands of attempting to find equilibrium between both professional and family life. For instance, Elizabeth commented that she chose to be a faculty member “to be with my family. I had served as
chair, as associate dean, interim dean, and vice provost. I had a stent of years in administration and enjoyed it, learned a great deal, but loved being a faculty member.” Elizabeth, however, had family as her top priority from the moment she decided to earn her Ph.D. Luckily, as she commented, one of her colleagues continued to encourage her to become a candidate for Dean.

One of the members of the search committee was a colleague and came to ask if I would consider being a candidate for dean. I said no, but he came back again and asked, I said no. To his everlasting credit, and I am forever grateful, he came back a third time, which makes me sound obnoxious. But I had no interest in administration, I had done my service, I had done my tours of duty, I was out. But he was just persistent and asked if I would consider it.

Elizabeth did consider becoming a candidate for dean. She explained, “So I began looking at the challenges that we had as a college and thought these are some things we need to tackle that I think I have some skills to help with this.” She had confidence in herself, which was only reassured by her colleague’s persistence. The challenges she mentioned involved gender and racial equity, budgetary management, departmental growth and outreach, etc. Elizabeth welcomed the challenge to address “systemic discrimination in which organizational policies and practices disproportionately and negatively impact women” (Jackson & O’Callaghan, 2009, p. 436). She believed that she could have the best opportunity as Dean and when appointed she stated that “I felt very rewarded to end up in this position.” Elizabeth made a deliberate choice based on the possible difference she could make and continually challenge her potential rather than determine if this was the best career decision (Dhar, 2008).

She provided an anecdote in discussing the challenges women face.

When I was coming up for tenure I found out I was pregnant, which was a surprise. There was no policy on sick leave or ability to pause tenure. I
don’t know what the university’s response was. I had a baby on a
Tuesday, cancelled class, showed a film on Thursday, and was back in the
class on the following Tuesday. It was a difficult time on campus for
women. The policies were written for men who didn’t need sick leave
because women stayed at home with the children if someone was ill and
you didn’t need maternity leave, that was not an issue in a male dominated
profession.

Policies were not developed with women in consideration. They were primarily
composed to reflect the needs of men, whether deliberate or unpremeditated. This is a
challenge she knew needed to be addressed. An atmosphere that is perceived as
unwelcoming and hostile coupled with sexist policies that favor the advancement of men
can be discouraging for women (Bilen-Green, et al., 2008; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2017).
This may cause “women to use standards that are different from those of men when
evaluating what they deserve” (Ciani, Summers, & Easter, 2008, p. 333). Elizabeth
continued by commenting, “Fortunately, the universities changed dramatically, it’s still
not an ideal situation, but faculty at least do have sick leave,” then provided another
anecdote highlighting the change, however, she ended with note that there is more work
in terms of gender equity to be accomplished (Gobaw, 2017).

When I was promoted we then did subsequently have sick leave passed
and a stop on the tenure clock so when you are off trying to give birth it
doesn’t count against you because your productivity will more than likely
be less than it would otherwise. We did have a junior faculty member
come to me as a senior faculty member and said she was pregnant and
didn’t know what to do. I said first of all you are going to take the
semester off, we are going to stop the clock, you aren’t going to worry
about it, this is fantastic news, we are thrilled for you and here for you,
and this is exciting because we want you here and your family here for a
long time. That was not an experience I could’ve had because there wasn’t
a female for me to go to. You just navigated it very stupidly by the way; I
think the department chair didn’t know whether I should go to HR or
whatever. I think that’s changing and helping women, but I do think
women continue to struggle in terms of the difficulties in a professional
career where women remain the primary care giver. It’s changing
somewhat but it's still a challenge for women who are looking to expand her career.

Being able to assist a fellow colleague was, and still is, quite rewarding for Elizabeth, but achieving equity is not exclusive to faculty. In a global economy that continues to develop the need for highly educated students increases. Students must be equipped with the skills and knowledge to be adaptable and innovative in order to meet global demands. Elizabeth began addressing the challenges concerning the student body. As a Dean, she knows that “girls must overcome greater barriers in their pursuit of leadership positions” (Archard, 2013, p. 158). Elizabeth, however, acknowledges that gender equity achievement has increased, but this has yet to fully emanate throughout academic leadership positions (Hacifazlioglu, 2010). In recruiting, retention, and development, she discussed what is currently happening as well as obstacles to overcome.

I think there is a different expectation both on the part of the student and part of the parent. I think we need to improve our commitment to student success. Back in the day when I started they had just implemented the admission standards so you had a wide variety of capability in your classroom; somebody who barely graduated high school up to someone who could be at any institutions in this country. That’s great because that’s a challenge.

However, as states continue to divest in higher education new challenges arise for institutions. Divestment has created a “change in goals, objectives and conditions of higher education” (Levina, et al., 2016, p. 8143). Universities are now dependent on tuition comprising a large percentage of the budget rather than being able to rely on state funding (Bagihole, 2012). Unfortunately, this reliance causes a shift from a public good to an “increasing presence of the market in higher education systems” is perceived as a method to achieve stability, but stability can cause “barriers to mobility for women” (Carvalho & Machado, 2010, p. 34; Jackson & O’Callaghan, 2009, p. 463). This causes
departments to focus on “serving the needs of our students,” while attempting to continually remain inclusive to underrepresented populations as Elizabeth states. Serving students is, or should be, a primary concern for universities through the “promotion of social justice through increasing social mobility,” rather than focusing on a student’s needs (Williams, 2016, p. 619). Elizabeth continues.

I think institutions have to think differently then you get it or you don’t, if you flunk out, you flunk out. I think we have greater responsibility to those students to help provide them services because they are capable of succeeding. It is not ok to just say you are just up to the level of student that you need to be to succeed at [omitted]. These are students capable so what are we doing that could be impeding that success and being really reflective about it. I think we always need to be improving the support of faculty and staff to help succeed. And we have to increase diversity of faculty and student body. I think those are still imperatives that every institution is continually trying to address.

Clearly Elizabeth understands that students are not cut from the same cloth and that each student is unique and requires varying resources to succeed, including building a diverse faculty (Gmelch, 2013). According to Elizabeth, merely admitting a diverse pool of students is not enough. She believes providing students with examples of professionals and leaders of each gender, race, and sexual orientation is imperative for success and fostering a welcoming and inclusive environment. This will also serve to address the “gendered power relations at play in universities” (Burkinshaw & White, 2017, p. 1). Unfortunately, the “appointment and promotion of women academics to senior positions has not kept pace with the recruitment of women students,” maintaining the status quo of patriarchy (Brown, 2000, p. 105). Based on Brown’s (2000) assertion, public institutions have a much larger impact on gender equity than is realized. Higher education serves a pivotal role in implementing and supporting gender equity. Elizabeth firmly believes that, “If we don’t succeed the state doesn’t succeed. That is our role.”
Family

The theme of family is prevalent throughout Elizabeth’s data. As read previously, she decided to earn a Ph.D. and become a faculty member to possess the desired flexibility to be with her family. Elizabeth believed that being a faculty member would assist in balancing both career aspirations and family responsibilities (Kearney & Lincoln, 2016). This need led her to seek out environments that were “supportive” and “contribute to personal harmony” (Howard-Vital & Brunson, 2006, p. 4). During potential employment interviews she would ask questions regarding children and a situation where a child might need to be brought by the office.

I remember asking about if your child has to come to the office to a woman faculty member and she had a look of terror on her face. Here there was a different perspective regarding family. It was more a family friendly atmosphere.

Being a mother and a wife is extremely important for Elizabeth. As mentioned earlier, she held the position of Vice Provost. This position came with a great deal of responsibilities and demanded a lot of time, which conflicted with her ability to be with her children and husband. The demands of both her profession and family proved to be too much for her to juggle. The hidden workload issues became overwhelming, reducing her “time, support, and resources” to devote herself to either (Burkinshaw & White, 2017, p. 2).

In terms of my career I was serving as vice provost a few years ago and my daughter was thirteen and I saw her about thirty minutes of the day. And that is just no ok. I would have another mother take her to school for me because I would leave about seven in the morning. My husband would pick her up in the afternoon and I would pick her up from dance. I would have the time from picking her up from dance to getting her home and a few minutes of conversation then and she would go to bed. That’s not ok. The job was just huge.
As time progressed she decided to make a change. Elizabeth “stepped down,” because she did not want to miss out on her children growing up. She continued by stating “almost all my choices were made as a parent.” Whether or not Amer’s (2013) belief that women are more likely than men to be negatively impacted by cultural norms in relation to being a wife and mother, family was, and still is, her number one priority.

I stepped away from a full time job to be a faculty member because I wanted to have greater flexibility to help raise my son. Stepped away from administration to spend more time with the daughter. I actually had an opportunity to move to the University of Georgia. I got the job on Thursday and found out I was pregnant on Friday. When you move to Georgia tenure doesn’t come with you. I would’ve started on maternity leave as a non-tenure professor, which didn’t seem like a good idea.

Regardless if this job opportunity at the University of Georgia may have proven to be best for her career, Elizabeth put the needs of her family first. She admitted that she had other opportunities that might have led her to the position of dean earlier in her career, but she believes that “children need two parents.” Her belief might stem from gender stereotypes reflecting cultural attitudes regarding women as the primary caregiver (Jost & Kay, 2005). Based on this, the view that women are “building their careers later than their male colleagues, and are less likely to have a traditional trajectory” is upheld (Burkinshaw & White, 2017, p. 2).

**Mentorship/Leadership**

Mentorship and Leadership is a theme that is composed of seven codes. Throughout Elizabeth’s data this theme stands out in terms of her career. She spoke highly of her superiors and subordinates in assisting her obtain goals, accomplish challenges, etc. (Tomas & Castro, 2013). As Edds-Ellis and Keaster (2013) stressed, mentoring serves as “one of the most effective means of not only encouraging individuals
to move into administration (or higher levels if already serving in an administrative role), but to effectively train those aspirants as well” (Edds-Ellis & Keaster, 2013, p. 1). As one of her fondest memories she spoke of a job offer she received from her Alma mater.

My Alma mater asked me to apply for a position that was open. It was very tempting for us. My whole family is back there, so I went to the chair of the department and talking to him about the possibility and said they wanted me to come back and see me as chair of that department. He said to me that you could be the chair of this department. It blew my mind that I could be chair of the [omitted]. That was a found memory for me to have someone who I considered a mentor and have great respect for, say you need to have success here. It was the first time I considered administration as an option.

Elizabeth appreciated the confidence her mentor had in her abilities. This confidence enabled her to continue tearing down gender barriers, whether intentional or not, and step into administration. Possessing a mentor assisted Elizabeth to further negotiate gendered expectations set culturally throughout society. A mentor positively reinforcing her competence as a leader enabled her to trust that she could manage the responsibilities of both a professional and a parent. She was in a position to challenge the masculine norms typically defining leadership (Rosser, et al., 2003). Although she had success and enjoyed administration, she stepped down to be with her family as noted previously. However, in the end her skills were needed as Dean to lead the department towards success. As Dean she has had the privilege of being a mentor and guiding the department under her leadership. She now had the opportunity to alter the concept of a leader and be known as a “unique women who pioneered in positions generally held by males” (Dhar, 2008, p. 10).

I think that this is the strongest leadership we have had at the college level in a very long time. And it’s very important to have really strong deans and I think this is an impressive group in terms of the leadership of the institution, which is really crucial. I would also say for myself, we have
incredibly strong department chairs. We have managed to recruit strong faculty and keep them here.

Unfortunately, assuming the responsibilities of Dean is not always glamorous. Elizabeth speaks directly to the firing process of employees as her “least favorite.”

“Those are very difficult decisions. The first time I had to fire somebody I sucked at it and hope I never get good at it. I always want it to be difficult.” Elizabeth’s approach to firing does not mesh with the “cultural biases which define leadership and competence as masculine characteristics” (Jackson & O’Callaghan, 2009, p. 463). She strives to develop the most well equipped team to tackle the challenges of the department while meeting the needs of a diverse student body, but there are some situations that cannot be prevented.

You want to be respectful but my experience is when someone’s skill set doesn’t align with what you need, they are never going to be happy and you are never going to be happy. They need to go on and do something that aligns with their skill set and you need to bring someone in who has the right skill set. A single individual who is not capable of what you are asking them to do can make an entire team a challenge and that’s hard, but that is one of the things you sign up for is to make those decisions.

Recognizing the circumstances is difficult. There are always more factors to consider than whether or not an individual is a good fit for the position. But it appears that Elizabeth is well equipped for this responsibility, discrediting cultural perceptions of women “lacking qualities necessary for leadership” (Jackson & O’Callaghan, 2009, p. 463). Rather she works to mentor the individual in a similar manner to what she has and continues to experience.

Now that said, I think part of what is essential in terms of those least favorite memories and one reason why you are able to professionally absorb that is that you do everything you can to help that person succeed. If they don’t then you make a difficult decision but that is easier to live with then if you personally not allowed that person to get information on why they are not succeeding. Feedback on what has got to get better, whether you are talking to a faculty member and telling them they are not
getting the publications they need and their teaching is not what it needs to be, whatever the weaknesses are and you make that clear year after year. We are brutal in the evaluations because at the end of the day if you have to let them go then they are not going to be surprised. They may not be happy, but they are not going to be surprised. I think that is incumbent upon the administrator.

Integrity is a key virtue as a mentor or leader for Elizabeth. Being honest with a subordinate means providing him or her with an opportunity to improve and succeed. Honesty, however, does not provide an opportunity to be cruel or attack a person. She states, “I also think you need to treat people the way you want to be treated.” For mentorship to work, every individual involved must hold respect.

…appreciating that I can’t do what our assistant dean of student support does. I don’t know how to read a degree transcript; I’m not at that, I don’t know how to do all the budgeting that my budget person does, she’s amazing. I don’t know how to do all the grant work. I don’t know how to do all the HR (human resources) work our associate dean does. So I respect their expertise, so if they come to me and we have a conversation and they say I think this is what we really need to do then I am going to respect their expertise. I’m not going to presume I know how to do what they do. That doesn’t mean you are blind, but I think it goes back to hiring good people.

With the success her department is experiencing, there seems to be plenty of respect. She is willing to trust her employees and try innovative ideas regardless of the outcome. To her failure is not final. The willingness to fail fits with Gmelch’s (2013) assertion regarding the “call for bolder and better college and university leadership” (Gmelch, 2013, p. 26). “I think it is important to try it out but when it fails that you are ok with that and you are proud that they were willing to go with you on a journey regardless of the outcome.” Fortunately, Elizabeth has surrounded herself with trustworthy personnel. She has placed her department in a position heading for success. She does not need to worry whether the job is being handled properly.
Case #1 Determinations

The data provided by Elizabeth in this study assisted in developing a deeper understanding of the challenges women face in ascending the administrative ladder to the position of Dean, as well as how to negotiate gendered expectations. Aligning with the theories of critical feminist theory, Elizabeth’s anecdotes detail how institutional policies covertly favor the advancement of men (Bilen-Green, et al., 2008; Leon & Jackson, 2009). Using critical feminist theory provides an opportunity to evaluate data from a gender equity “perspective for understanding human behavior in the social environment by centering women and issues that women face in contemporary society” (Lay & Daley, 2007, p. 49-50). Although this might seem arbitrary, policies can imply an institution’s beliefs, reflecting any and all bias found culturally throughout society. Individuals who do not feel welcome in a particular environment might feel alienated and/or discriminated against. Thus, institutional policies, which operate to instill a patriarchal setting, can deter women from pursuing leadership positions in academia. Without proper support, guidance, and leadership women might shy away from opportunities where they are more than capable of handling in fear that the position’s responsibilities will conflict with personal ambitions or obligations (Evans, 2007; Dumais, 2002; Gobaw, 2017). Furthermore, women may view their work delegitimized by lower compensation percentages than men. As discussed in Chapter two, women who possess a degree are viewed as valuable as men without a degree in terms of monetary worth. The disparities between women and men, in terms of compensation grow, increases with the level of education earned. Men with advanced degrees possess the potential to earn between $65,000 and $170,000 while women, with the same degree, earn between $53,000 and
Knowing this inequality of pay, the “culture of the dominant class” is established and supported while being “rewarded by the educational system” (Dumais, 2002, p. 44). Institutions utilize cultural capital to thwart social mobility by demeaning women’s worth through policies and compensation rates. Each of these corresponds with the concept of habitus, which is understood as “one’s place in the social structure; by internalizing the social structure and one’s place in it, one comes to determine what is possible and what is not possible for one’s life and develops aspirations and practices accordingly” (Dumais, 2002, p. 46). For Elizabeth, social mobility was greatly influenced on the cultural capital her family possessed. Having the opportunity to drive tractors, plow fields, etc. provided her with a dedicated work ethic and appreciation of the mind during her childhood. These qualities assisted in developing her professional capabilities, which were further enhanced through the tutelage of mentors and career challenges, leading to the realization of social justice within an oppressive environment by overcoming gender bias. Therefore, Elizabeth’s experiences and challenges provide an example of how embodied dispositions are not concrete nor serve as a determination in regards to “what is possible and what is not possible for one’s life” (Dumais, 2002, p. 46).

**Case #2 – Grace**

Grace was interviewed in her office following initial email correspondence. Grace was quite relaxed and prior to the interview she engaged the researcher in a personal conversation in an effort to become familiar with him. Throughout the interview she spoke candidly regarding her personal experiences. The data she provided had three themes that emerged in are shown in Table 4.2.
Table 4.2 Case #2 (Grace) Codes and Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Theme</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Challenge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal Initiative</td>
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<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
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<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Opportunity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oversee</td>
<td>Mentorship/Leadership</td>
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<tr>
<td>Success</td>
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<tr>
<td>Advocate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Encourage</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adaptable/Hierarchy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Gender Bias</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feminine</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pregnancy</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Challenge**

The theme challenge echoed throughout Grace’s data and is composed of six codes. Beginning in her childhood Grace had several challenges and a few resulted from her father serving in the military. Since military personnel are moved around quite often, she had to learn to quickly adapt to her surroundings. Her family moved up until she was in the sixth grade when, tragically, her father was killed in action in Vietnam. When reflecting on the experience of moving through various schools she said, “I think having the military experience was a really good thing for me in terms of being socialized, developing social skills, being adaptable.” It is necessary to note adaptability here
because it will assist Grace in her career aspirations. She became familiar with resiliency, which, according to Isaacs (2014), “is a tool that higher education professionals can use to be successful in a changing environment, and to assist the field in its response to both internal and external factors” (Isaacs, 2014, p. 114).

As for succeeding in school, she did not have any problems. “I was always a really good student and so I always got really positive feedback, even as a little kid I enjoyed school and did well.” Her success continued to follow her through high school, as Grace earned valedictorian honors and prepared for her following challenge, college. Upon entering college, Grace had an idea of what academic area she was interested in, science. Within this department she had the pleasure to experience several great opportunities, but a couple stood out.

One is that I was given an opportunity when I was a senior to be a TA (Teacher’s Assistant) of freshman chemistry lab. There are a lot of sections of freshman chemistry lab and I was a TA for two of them. There were certainly a big staff preparing the reagents and chemicals for the lab, but I still had to run my own, pay attention to safety, prepare short lectures at the beginning of the labs, prepare my students to take tests, grade lab reports, and assume a great amount of responsibility. It was my first venture into teaching and I learned that I enjoyed it and that it took a lot of work. It was a good lesson to learn early on.

This challenge provided her the proper resources to be confident and succeed as a teacher. As she built her cultural capital, Grace understood that she wanted to become influential and make a social and cultural change (Hacifazlioglu, 2010; Dhar, 2008). She continued with another example that aided in furthering her abilities.

The other thing that was a wonderful opportunity that helped shape me into the person I am now is when I was taking a physical chemistry lab, it was an advanced chemistry lab, we had group experiments for students in the class for about half the semester. Then we were challenged for the second half of the semester to go find a professor to do an independent project with. I was terrified because I didn’t know anything about this and
didn’t have any idea what it would be like. Undergraduate research, at the time, was less prominent as it is now. I’m not saying that nobody did it, but I didn’t really know anybody doing it and didn’t understand the process. I ended up finding a professor in chemistry that allowed me to come into his lab and do an independent project, which was very independent. It was real research using a spectrometer interfaced with a computer and I was asking questions that hadn’t been asked before, so I learned a ton. I learned some independence because there was no one standing over my shoulder telling me what to do now and there wasn’t a manual for this. I had to plan for my experiments and be responsible, taking care of the equipment. So I learned a little about the process of doing research, but the other thing I learned was about the very social nature of doing science.

Grace’s experiences enabled her to achieve a sense of social mobility by entering into a leadership role as well as an independent researcher. This is essential in establishing oneself in science academia, which is an area of study dominated by “male egoists” (Dhar, 2008, p. 10). Each opportunity empowered her to negotiate and transcend any and all constraints that might have been a direct cause of her gender. Following the completion of her undergraduate, Grace applied and was accepted to a number of graduate programs. She exemplified a continuation of success similar to past educational endeavors.

With a Ph.D. degree she moved to the west coast to complete her post-doctoral training, staying there for close to five years until she gained employment at tier one institution in the southeast. She joined the faculty as an “assistant professor and rose steadily through the ranks” reflecting that “there were never any delays in my promotions or anything like that. I had a lot of success at writing grants and papers, did a great job at my teaching and was promoted pretty quickly to full professor.” Here we are able to come to the conclusion that she was able to balance both a professional and personal life. Grace also disrupts the gendered stereotypes that women are more successful at teaching
than research and writing grants (Amer, 2013; Carvalho & Machado, 2010; Jost & Kay, 2005). She continues to describe her accession through the ranks coupled with an opportunity to become familiar with administrative responsibilities and duties.

I ran a joint graduate program between the University and [omitted] national lab, which gave me a little taste of administrative experience. After that I decided I was good at administration and I am very good at strategic thinking and trying new things. I like to undertake new initiatives and I’m pretty good at rallying support for new initiatives. So I decided to take my turn in doing the department head, it was called department head and not chair. I did that for four years and then I was chosen as the associate dean for academic personnel for the college of arts and sciences. This was a dean level experience, which provided me a look at the next level of administration and prepared me for my position here. That was the college of arts and sciences, which was twenty-one departments from music, history, English, psychology, math, and science so it was all kinds of things. My responsibilities were to run promotion and tenure for the college and oversee faculty hiring and mentoring. The responsibilities were very faculty centered as Associate Dean of academic personnel. I also had to address any personnel problems that arose in the college that couldn’t be managed at the department level. All these responsibilities prepared me to step into this position as Dean, where I am still responsible for most of those things, promotion and tenure, personnel issues, and faculty hiring.

Grace’s opportunities prepared her to succeed as well as providing her an in depth understanding of administration. However, through her promotion gender did not appear to impact her negatively or positively. Her expertise and level of work stood out to her superiors and continues to as Dean, supporting Ciani, Summers, and Easter’s (2008) conclusion of women working more in time and effort. She did take a moment to reflect on more personal challenges during her career, specifically being a wife and mother.

Certainly my career is not a career that is constraint from eight to five. So I will take work home and have for my whole working life. I think there have been times when work filled up more space then it needed to in my life or more than I wanted to, but that is the reality especially when you are in an executive position as this, you don’t just walk out the door. So is that a sacrifice? Perhaps. Certainly a really great thing about being in academia though is that there is some flexibility. I’m not literally punching
in at a clock when I walk in and gave me some flexibility to be there for the children in special programming and vacations. I sacrificed a little bit of free time or maybe more than a little bit of free time.

She paid homage to her husband for his unwavering support. In each move they made it was in an effort to further her career. Her husband provided her a stable base to negotiate gender norms and expectations. Without feeling pressure at home, Grace was able to apply herself and break through the glass ceiling.

So my husband has always been supportive and flexible with me. We have made moves because of my career instead of his career. He’s in business and very capable so he came and found his way there too. So when it came time to move as Dean, we were empty nesters at the time, he agreed to pick up in our fifties and move somewhere else, which is a big step. This is my alma mater not his so he’s been very supportive.

Support is crucial in pursuing a career in academia. It requires hard work, dedication, and long hours to be successful, which leads into the next theme.

**Mentorship/Leadership**

The theme mentorship and leadership is contained of seven codes throughout Grace’s data. Over the duration of her career mentors have, and continue, to act as important factor. Providing her with encouragement and guidance, mentors enabled Grace to transcend beyond the gender barriers in academia to earn the position of Dean. Proper preparation increased her abilities for success due to the fact that she was developed “important knowledge about the expectations and complex roles of leadership in higher education” (Edds-Ellis & Keaster, 2013, p. 1).

I believe in mentoring and so I’ve had mentors, who were also friends or colleagues, who I turned to for advice. I had senior faculty encouraging me to be department chair, people who had been around for a while encouraged me to do that. There was a dean for the college of arts and sciences at the time when I had just become department chair ask what’s next and said you should be thinking about that next step because you are
really good at what you do and I think you would be a great dean. I had senior colleagues always encourage me.

Grace’s experiences with senior mentors left a lasting impression. She came to view mentoring as both positive and necessary to groom faculty into future leaders of departments, reflecting the determinations of both Edds-Ellis and Kaester (2013) and Tomas and Castro (2013). Receiving proper mentoring enabled Grace to understand the “expectations and complex roles of leadership in higher education” (Edds-Ellis & Kaester, 2013, p. 1). This mentoring, however, came from an individual who had a lengthy academic career, suggesting that a mentor who is a senior member is more equipped to adequately develop more junior personnel. Similar with Elizabeth’s experiences, however, there are times when being a Dean is difficult. Grace divulged into aspects of the position that she referred to as “not the most fun thing to do on my list of tasks.”

In particular, when we have cuts to the budget always presents difficult situations. Deciding what to cut, because we need everything. Difficult personnel situations take a lot of time. The difficult people are a small fraction of the total, but take up a disproportionately large amount of time. So, working through those issues is not so pleasant. One particular thing that comes to mind, that is a personnel situation, involves promotion and tenure. When there is a situation where someone is not going to get tenure, that’s really hard. It is the right decision because someone has not performed up to expectations, but those are the difficult situations that I have dealt with as a department chair and associate dean. If you are a people person, and what I consider to be as a Dean, is advocating for faculty. Help them get resources to be successful and when someone doesn’t succeed is a very difficult situation.

She does not relish in letting personnel go or detailing where they might not be meeting departmental expectations. For Grace, however, she uses these instances as an opportunity to mentor faculty members and help them become successful. This process reflects the mentoring she was exposed to in her career coupled with the understanding of
the potential difficulties both women faculty, and faculty in general, face in higher education. Her zeal for mentoring is not merely reserved for faculty. Student mentoring is a large component of her philosophy. After all, student success is reflective of the department’s success and departmental success is reflective of the leadership.

Some of my fondest memories are having my first graduate student come to the lab, having that graduate student graduate, and those firsts are always special. But really seeing my students’ success across the board, Ph.D. students, seeing them go on and do a variety of things has been very rewarding for me. A wonderful memory I have is from when I was teaching a large undergraduate class for biochemistry of about 150 students, and did this for many semesters. On occasion I would have students write me saying that they were in medical school and teaching everyone else because you were such a good teacher and I knew my stuff. So really positive feedback from students is always gratifying.

Grace views herself as a success through the success of faculty and students. She sees their success as a form of social mobility, which will follow them in their professional endeavors. Experiencing social mobility can also provide a platform for socially engaged societal members to further develop others in a more equitable approach rather than an egocentric focus. This, however, necessitates appropriate mentorship, support, encouragement, and patience. Proper mentorship certainly contributed greatly in her career and continues to be a crucial component in her mission. She would like her “legacy to be known as someone who supported faculty and helped faculty make their dreams come true.”

**Gender Bias**

The theme gender bias is a reflection of three codes in her data. Grace never encountered sexism in concerns to career advancement. Her abilities, accomplishments, and potential were always the focal point of promotion. Unfortunately, She has experienced sexist circumstances that affected her personally.
…these are not difficulties that hampered my progression through the ranks or interfered with my being able to successfully compete for a new position I was looking for, but I have run into gender bias from time to time. These are just anecdotal; at one point in time I was having a lot of success, which I’ve had most of my career, I had a male faculty member from another department say that I was succeeding because of my feminine wiles. In other words, he was saying that I was using my gender to my advantage and that I was not earning whatever success I had on the basis of merit.

By disparaging her work the man sought to tokenize Grace, leading her to believe that accomplishments were being used as a front for gender equity. The notion of using one’s gender for career benefits may cause women to belittle their attributes, reducing the confidence to assume academic leadership positions (Bilen-Green, et al., 2008). Murray (1996) also refers to this tactic as “professional mugging” (Murray, 1996, p. 253).

Professional mugging by men seeks to portray women’s accomplishments in terms of more a publicity measure by educational institutions. This downplays, possibly eliminating, women’s sense of professionalism, competency, and motivation to continue pursuing higher appointments, reinforcing “cultural bias which define leadership and competence as masculine characteristics” (Jackson & O’Callaghan, 2009, p. 463).

Fortunately, Grace possessed the support of senior faculty members who continually encouraged her that she was more than capable and deserving of leadership positions. Due to this, she became aware of the offensive comment, but decided to not be bothered by such immaturity. Possessing mentors who provided needed support provided her an opportunity to overcome sexist comments attempting to discredit her and stifle social mobility. Moving on with her career Grace would encounter another instance of sexist behavior.
In a previous employment position, Grace needed resources for a project and was “spearheading a very large grant application.” She scheduled a meeting with the “vice chancellor for research who ran the research operation for the campus.” During the meeting a camera crew arrived to interview the vice chancellor regarding previous research from another department. Instead of doing the interview himself, he had Grace interviewed concerning unfamiliar research, which she had nothing to do with. The vice chancellor established his authoritative position by delegating the interview responsibilities to Grace. He also reaffirmed the “cultural expectations which persist about women’s responsibilities and capabilities,” which “increase support for the system of gender inequality” (Amer, 2013, p. 12; Jost & Kay, 2005, p. 498). This instance supports cultural and gendered stereotypes, which suggest, “members of subordinated groups are often complicit in their own subordination” (Jost & Kay, 2005, p. 498). After this awkward situation she was required to set up another meeting with the vice chancellor to discuss what was intended in the initial meeting.

I had a follow up meeting where we needed to come to some sort of decision about what kind of support the university was going to give for the animal care facility that I had requested. I had the initial meeting to request where I ended up on TV and the follow up meeting. I brought my department chair with me, who was a man, and as I walked into the meeting we were shaking hands and saying hello, that sort of thing. He referred to my being on TV and asked if I had seen my piece on TV or something like that. I said no I didn’t get to see it and he responded by saying everyone else did because your shirt was unbuttoned, which was not true. That disarmed me and put me on the defense, surprised and embarrassed me, and definitely set up a power structure in that conversation that was very uncomfortable. I made it through that meeting and didn’t even respond to that, just moved on and got down to business.

Immediately commenting on the interview the vice chancellor reduced Grace’s agency. Rather than being focused on the intent of the meeting she was put of the
defensive and distracted. The power structure she mentioned enabled him to look down
upon her in a condescending manner, developing an oppressive environment. This
situation exemplifies how “gender pervades structures and processes in organizations”
(Burkinshaw & White, 2007, p. 2). The vice chancellor perceives the higher educational
institution as a patriarchal organization that reflect masculine “perspectives and norms as
being representative of gender-neutral organizational structures and assume the structure
is asexual” (Jackson & O’Callaghan, 2009, p. 463). Thus, gender stereotypes and
expectations “contributes to the development of a specific social order” (Carvalho &
Machado, 2010, p. 33). Knowing there was now a gendered barrier to be confronted, she
overlooked the comment and proceeded as intended, in order to avoid conceding to
“male-centered power,” which values women’s subordination (Hart, 2006, p. 41).
Furthermore, the comment was said in front of her immediate superior, the department
chair. One can only speculate that this comment may have also been intentional to lower
the respect of the department chair towards Grace, creating another power dynamic for
her to combat. Fortunately her department chair was in complete support of Grace. A
third anecdote she disclosed involved a colleague.

The only other thing I will mention to you is that I had a male colleague
who was in the same department who began giving me presents and
leaving things in my office, he had a key to my office. I mentioned several
times that it was making me uncomfortable and to please stop and he
didn’t. He said a couple things to me that were suggestive; they were not
overt, like propositioning me, just suggestive. So I spoke with the same
chair that said he would back me up about this and we changed the locks
to my office and that is how we dealt with that. Those are just some
anecdotes, things that were uncomfortable, but didn’t derail me in terms of
my progress in my career just things I had to deal with because of my
gender.
Following her anecdotes, Grace turned to institutional policies related to gender equity. As previously stated, Stromquist (2013) postulates institutional policies designed and implemented to address gender equity in “education tend to be incomplete, poorly funded, and extremely vulnerable to challenges from governmental institutions and other groups who see such changes as cutting deeply in to the protected status quo and threatening an eventual redistribution of power” (Stromquist, 2013, p. 3). She primarily discussed those revolving around childbirth.

A good thing that has been around for a while is the stop the tenure clock policy. When faculties are hired they have a seven-year window for tenure and promotion. There are few circumstances that can stop the clock and give you an extended period of time pre-tenure. For example, if you had a specific type of research facility that you needed for your research and you couldn’t do anything with it and there were big delays in getting it set up would ben obvious thing that might lead to the extension of the tenure clock with documentation. But the more relevant thing is that before I got to [omitted] there was a policy related to childbirth. So if you have a child, this is good for the female or the male, you can make a request and have the tenure clock extended by a year. We are working right now to have parental leave policies. Right now if you have to leave you have to just use your sick days. Parental leave is related to childbirth or adoption.

Policies reflecting gender equity develops a welcoming atmosphere rather than alienating women. This environment naturally erodes gender barriers in the masculine dominated profession of higher education allowing an opportunity for women to be critiqued and promoted on the basis of merit rather than a sense tokenism. Unfortunately, men primarily run the current higher education climate and “males will be uninterested in correcting these forms of discrimination” (Fraser & Hodge, 2000, p. 175). Ward and Wolf-Wendel (2017) posit, “many colleges and universities have created policies to help facilitate the integration of work and family” (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2017, p. 231). With the masculine-centered culture of higher education, however, using a policy is “not a
good option if a person is serious about her career” (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2017, p. 231). Higher educational institutions, according to Patton (2004), should acknowledge that men are more privileged in order to increase an awareness regarding gender inequity. This acknowledgement might facilitate and encourage the use of institutional policies, while analyzing and understanding the “effects policy on the lives of women” (Ropers-Huilman & Winters, 2011, p. 676). Hopefully, this will act as a catalyst for gender equity to transcend throughout the higher educational system as academic leaders “rethink existing educational and social policies” (Ropers-Huilman & Winters, 2011, p. 676). Grace commented, “we have an administration that values diversity and inclusion and is open to studying these things and understand where gaps are.” Knowing that is but a piece of the puzzle, she provided advice for aspiring women academic leaders in her closing remarks. “I emphasized negotiation and not backing down when being hired into a job, you have to negotiate up front. There is research that numerically shows that women don’t negotiate as tough as men do on the front end.”

Case #2 Determinations

The career success that Grace exhibited, and is still currently experiencing, has been greatly influenced by mentors and her intellectual prowess. Due to this, gender barriers in relation to advancement and promotion were a non-factor. Grace’s habitus did not have any limitations providing her a perspective of endless opportunities. She understood social mobility to be impacted through proper mentorship, which she internalized and strives to emulate. The personal instances involving gender bias suggest that sexism is unabated by institutional policies. In the circumstances she disclosed the assailants were not apprehended nor disciplined. The occurrences were simply
acknowledged, as it was determined that if any action was taken that it may not do any good, and have potential negative repercussions. As noted previously, institutional policies establish the environmental setting within higher education and can either promote or impede gender equity. With the data provided by Grace we are able to infer that institutional polices, that she has encountered, does not favor the advancement of men overtly. It is difficult to speculate whether the policies covertly favor men, but it is concerning that policies developed to address sexual harassment are not enforced. This might be attributed to the majority of academic leaders comprised of mostly men.

Jackson and O’Callaghan (2009) state, “75% of academic deans are male at colleges and universities” (Jackson & O’Callaghan, 2009, p. 464). The statistical conclusion that institution Deans are primarily men; align with the assertion by Leon and Jackson (2009) that “achieving gender equity in the administrative levels is a challenge, even in fields that are dominated by women” (Leon & Jackson, 2009, p. 58).

In both cases, participants highlighted support through family and mentors as an important factor in development and advancement. Pursuing an appointment as Dean in a patriarchal environment presents several barriers and obstacles. Family support, encouragement, and motivation are important to persevere. Elizabeth and Grace also value the mentoring they received to becoming Dean and seek to serve their respective departments as an effective mentor. Furthermore, each participant discussed institutional policy as a form of gender bias. Policies were initially written to favor the advancement of men and despite higher education’s progress; policies continue to reflect favoritism towards masculine norms. To further encourage and support women in pursuing
leadership roles within academic administration, both Elizabeth and Grace believe policies need to be reevaluated and rewritten for both women and men.

**Cross Case Analysis Results**

After concluding an in-depth analysis of each case, a cross case analysis was initiated in an effort to further the richness of the data and “build a body of knowledge” (Cuzes, Dyba, Runeson, & Host, 2014, p. 1). Cross case analysis “facilitates the comparison of commonalities and difference,” assisting in addressing the research questions (Khan & VanWynsberghe, 2008, p. 1). This method is appropriate due to each individual case study containing the same research questions. Further strengthening the reasoning behind utilizing cross case analysis is that it seeks to provoke the “imagination, prompts new questions, reveals new dimensions, produces alternative, generates models, and constructs ideals and utopias” (Khan & VanWynsberghe, 2008, p. 2). These potential outcomes, in turn, can aid in providing suggestions and directions for further research (Cuzes, et al., 2014).

**Case #1 (Elizabeth) and Case #2 (Grace)**

Commonalities emerged in comparing and contrasting the data provided by both Elizabeth and Grace. Neither one viewed their gender as a barrier in terms of advancement and promotion. Although, both discussed instances of gender bias as well as covert forms of sexist tendencies that favor the advancement of men. Institutional policies do not entirely reflect the innate needs of women, creating an inadvertent hostile environment. Policies were not developed in consideration to pregnancy or giving birth, but were rather a direct reflection of the needs of men. The unwelcoming atmosphere serves as a gender barrier in higher education (Leon & Jackson, 2009). Furthermore, she
decided to step down from the position of vice provost in order to spend more time with her family. The flexibility as a faculty member was invaluable and provided equilibrium between her career and family. Elizabeth believes that women continue to face difficult decisions regarding their career and starting a family. Fortunately, institutional policies have been altered, however, Elizabeth sees more need for policy change in terms of equity.

Grace, similar to Elizabeth, discussed policies focused around childbirth as well. She commented on how there was a policy in place to assist women having a child that would put a pause on the tenure clock. Providing policies for each gender is imperative to develop an accepting professional environment, however, Grace sees a need for further change. She discussed the need for parental leave procedures. Currently, if a mother or father requires time off for their children, then they must use the amount of sick days allotted. Parental leave would remedy this by providing paid time off specifically related to family needs. Grace sees this a necessary step towards inclusion and gender equity.

While she did not speak directly to experiencing any gender bias from institutional policies, she did disclose personal anecdotes concerning sexist behavior. Having a man faculty member in another department comment that she was exhibiting success because of her feminine wiles is a passive aggressive approach to develop an unwelcoming situation. By attempting to tokenize Grace, the masculine peer intended to demean her accomplishments and place the focus more on the institution’s need to reduce or eliminate gender bias (Bilen-Green, et al., 2008). She was also subjected to a power dynamic when meeting with the vice chancellor. Referencing a previous meeting where Grace ended up being interviewed, he alluded to the fact that her blouse was open on
television. Embarrassed and defensive, she was in an awkward position where the superior was in a position of judgment. A situation such as this involves evaluative implications toward women in an effort to reduce their sense of agency (Glick & Fiske, 1996).

As previously stated, neither Elizabeth nor Grace viewed their gender to be a hindrance in regards to career advancement. Each attributed their success and social mobility to proper mentorship and hard work in research, teaching, grants, etc. What stood out in both transcriptions, however, was the homage paid to mentorship. Elizabeth credited her parents and grandfather, citing the opportunity to work on a farm for a large portion of her childhood and teen years. The work ethic she developed coupled with the appreciation for the mind was invaluable. Each one of these attributes continues to contribute to her success. Along her journey she has had the privilege of serving under leaders who not only saw her potential, but cultivated it is as well. In describing her experiences she reflects on a colleague’s persistence in relation to her applying for the appointment of Dean. She credits his resilience for the opportunities she currently has to instill everlasting change within her department. Mentorship played such a vital role for Elizabeth that she now strives to assist faculty into becoming a success. In turn, she believes that this will further address the needs of both a diverse faculty and student body. Grace’s views on mentorship were established early in opportunities as an undergraduate. Whether it was collaborative research or an independent study with a professor, she was exposed to the social nature of science in regards to mentoring. In each occasion she could be either the mentor or mentee. These experiences allowed her to
understand the value in developing personnel in an effort to construct a foundation of strong faculty support.

Comparing both Elizabeth’s and Grace’s data provided an insight into their leadership styles. Both appear to be transformative leaders, which speaks towards their enthusiasm for bringing positive change to their departments. It seems that they believe that there is a “moral obligation to use their position of leadership to increase educational equity and advance educational opportunity” (Larson, 2011, p. 324). Isaacs (2014) states

Due to current demands, professionals must be successful in leading their organizations through change by having the knowledge and skills necessary to do so. It is important for university administrators to be well-equipped and effective at implementing and maintaining this positive change, and for them to exhibit these characteristics in such a manner that other members of the organization reflect similar behavior (Isaacs, 2014, p. 113).

Throughout each narrative both participants highlight their enthusiasm for innovation and willingness to implement new measures or procedural changes. Neither is afraid of failure, but rather see failure as an opportunity to learn and improve. In a continually evolving global economy that requires highly adaptable and educated employees, their approach to leadership might be the most conducive (Baum, et al., 2013).

The differences determined when comparing Elizabeth’s and Grace’s data appeared to be focused on their upbringing as well as sexist experiences. There were not any glaring differences that stood out. Due to this, the researcher does not believe it is necessary to report the minor differences.

**Predominant Themes**

Themes are illuminated across the cases in order to further address the research questions. The first theme highlighted in each case is Mentorship/Leadership. Although
Elizabeth and Grace referenced different sources of mentorship, each value mentorship as a necessary component of social mobility and career success. Elizabeth credited her immediate family during her childhood as a staple of her continued success while Grace focused on colleague support. Both emphasized support from their spouses, whether it was assuming more responsibilities at home, remaining flexible to move for career promotions, or remaining supportive and understanding with long work hours. Participants also value being in a position of leadership that enables them to be a mentor to both faculty and students. Providing faculty with the proper support to address the needs of a diverse student body is necessary in producing sustained change for gender, racial, and sexual oriented equity.

The other predominant theme is Challenge. Elizabeth and Grace welcome challenges, as it is an opportunity for improvement to commence. In childhood Elizabeth faced the challenge of working long arduous hours on a farm rather than spending time with friends and relaxing during the summer and Grace lost her father during the Vietnam War. In their careers both battled against gender bias in personal instances and against institutional policies. As Dean, they relish the challenges facing their departments respectively, as well as the institution as a whole. Both believe that they possess the necessary skills to develop a more inclusive environment.

**I-Poem Analysis**

An I-Poem is a “thematic analysis of qualitative data, broadly, is data led” and identifies “key topics and patterns, regularities and contrasts, in the material in order to create interpretive meaning” (Edwards & Weller, 2012, p. 204). Using I statements allows for a way of not “losing the sense of individual voices amongst the noise of the
concepts and leitmotifs” (Nind & Vinha, 2016, p. 18). To accomplish this, participant transcripts were read several times in order to access the both the underlying and recurring themes (Edwards & Weller, 2012; Nind & Vinha, 2016).

I-Poem analysis served to add depth along side the qualitative approach to “capture and understand the complexities of the social world” (Edwards & Weller, 2012, p. 202). The I-Poem for each participant focuses on “reconstructing the holistic meaning of stories” in order to construct a “space between the interviewee’s own self-perception and the analyst’s perception of them” (Edwards & Weller, 2012, p. 204 & 206). The data provided by Elizabeth and Grace were used in constructing the I-Poems, with particular attention being paid to the words following any and all “I” statements. The development of the I-Poems is entirely subjective, however, each stanza is reflective of the order found within each respective data set (Balan, 2005; Edwards & Weller, 2012).

Case #1 – Elizabeth I-Poem

We had just had a child
I think that is what motivates women’s decisions throughout career opportunities
I think one of the challenges women have is centered around family
I think that’s changing and helping women
I do think women continue to struggle in terms of the difficulties in a professional career
I was serving as vice provost a few years ago
My daughter was 13
I saw her about 30 minutes of the day.
And that is not ok.
I stepped down
I would not get the years back
I had gone back to being a faculty member
Had the flexibility I had gone in this to begin with
To be with my family
I had a stent of years in administration and enjoyed it
One of the members of the search committee came to me to ask if I would consider being a candidate for Dean
I said no
He came back again and asked
I said no
He came back a third time
I had no interest in administration
I had done my service, I had done my tours of duty, I was out
I began looking at the challenges that we had as a college
These are some things we need to tackle
I have some skills to help with this
I actually put my name out there, applied for it, wanted it
I felt very rewarded to end up in this position

Case #2 – Grace I-poem

I was always a really good student
I always go really positive feedback
Even as a little kid I enjoyed school and did well
I was essentially here through high school
I was valedictorian
I enjoyed the curriculum a lot
Had a lot of wonderful opportunities here as an undergraduate
I was a senior to be a TA of freshman chemistry
My first venture into teaching
I enjoyed it
We were challenged for the second half of the semester
Do an independent research project
I ended up finding a professor in chemistry that allowed me to come into his lab
It was real research
I was asking questions that hadn’t been asked before
I learned a ton
I learned some independence
About the very social nature of doing science
I finished my Ph.D.
I joined the faculty
I ran a joint graduate program
I decided I was good at administration
I am very good at strategic thinking and trying new things
I like to undertake new initiatives and I’m pretty good at rallying support
My responsibilities were to run promotion and tenure
I also had to address any personnel problems
All these responsibilities prepared me to step into this position as Dean

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the collected data and the methods to thoroughly analyze
the data. Data gathered addressed the experiences and challenges women face in
ascending the administrative ladder to Dean of a college as well as how women negotiate
cultural gendered norms, from others and themselves, in relation to being a both a woman and a woman Dean. An in case analysis was conducted utilizing the constant comparison and classical content analysis method following data collection. Codes and themes emerged during the data analysis and are presented in Tables 4.1 and 4.2 in conjunction with participant data. This was done in an attempt to validate the themes in respect to each individual case. Themes for Elizabeth included Opportunity, Challenge, Family, and Mentorship/Leadership. For Grace, themes of Challenge, Mentorship/Leadership, and Gender Bias emerged. Following individual case analysis, cross case analysis was conducted to provide the reader with similarities and differences among participant data. Cross case analysis determined that the themes Mentorship/Leadership and Challenge are overarching themes shared by both sets of data. Similarities concerning gender bias centered on institutional policy, however, Grace experienced forms of sexism as well. In reporting data and data findings, thick descriptions were utilized in an effort to further highlight and support results concerning each participant.
Chapter V. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to gain insight and understanding into the experiences of women in higher education in ascending the administrative ladder to the position of Dean, as well as how women negotiate the gendered expectations as both a woman and a woman Dean with intent on uncovering factors that led to each participant’s success. This qualitative study differed from the majority of research concerning women in higher education and in leadership positions because it focused on individual holistic accounts of perseverance rather than primarily incorporating and highlighting professional milestones. This provides an opportunity for women to author their own experiences, as well as a “space and context for women to hear their own and each other’s stories” (Ropers-Huilman & Winters, 2011, p. 675-676).

Summary of Results

Homogeneity does not apply to the experiences of all women in higher education as a career. Nor can similarities be assumed to occur for women in pursuing positions within academic leadership. Due to this, it was important to utilize a qualitative approach to understand the individual and personal experiences women are subjected to in higher education as well as the challenges and barriers that must be overcome when ascending the administrative ladder to the appointment of Dean. This approach further provides the necessary tools to analyze and understand how women negotiate gendered expectations, placed by their own doing or by society, as both a woman and a woman Dean. In order to address the purpose of this case study, two research questions were developed, serving to guide the research.
First Research Question

The first research question posed in this study was, “What are the experiences and challenges women face in ascending the administrative ladder to Dean of a college?” To properly address this research question, a qualitative interview was conducted guided by a semi-structured interview protocol. The participants discussed their individual experiences when pursuing the appointment of Dean. Both Elizabeth and Grace comment that they each have a great interest and appreciation for the mind and learning. This zeal for education is continually challenged by the constant evolving nature of higher education. Elizabeth learned to appreciate the development of the mind while working on her grandfather’s farm. From eight years old through her first summer in college, Elizabeth worked long and strenuous hours and although she greatly appreciated manual labor, she knew she did not want it as a career. Grace, on the other hand, grew up in a military family and moved around a considerable bit in her early childhood. Moving from military station to station, Grace developed an appreciation for education. Supplementing her appreciation was her success in school. Each of their experiences followed them throughout their educational career, leading to the decision to pursue a career in higher education.

Beginning her career, Elizabeth was interviewed at several locations, however, her current institution stood out due to its family friendly environment. Kearney and Lincoln (2016) highlight family as a both a challenge to women in their careers as well as factor that impacts leadership development. Cultural expectations of women serve to influence the decisions women make in the trajectory of their career and develop barriers, or the glass ceiling according to Jackson and O’Callaghan (2009) and Amer (2013),
which “persist about women’s responsibilities and capabilities” (Amer, 2013, p. 12). Family is a theme that continually appeared throughout Elizabeth’s data. She believes that family guides women’s career decisions and experiences in higher education reflect that. She has held several positions within administration, from chair to associate dean, interim dean, and vice provost. Although she enjoyed administrative positions, she determined to step down from vice provost. The effects of gender stereotypes subconsciously influenced Elizabeth without her direct understanding or “conscious endorsement” (Jost & Kay, 2005, p. 498). Her reasoning centered around the position’s responsibilities and requirements conflicting with her ability to help raise her children and spend time with her family. Although this is probable, it is a direct correlation to the lack of institutional policies designed to assist women in striking a balance between both work and family life (Stromquist, 2013; Baptist, 2017). The lack of institutional support causes women, according to Ciani, Summers, and Easter, (2008), to “use standards that are different from those of men” (Ciani, et al., 2008, p. 333). This creates a “disproportionate number of white men are in positions of power within higher education” (Ropers-Huilman & Winters, 2011, p. 667). As the status quo of patriarchy remains intact, “contemporary discourses promote ‘fixing the women’ as a solution” to the address the low numbers of women academic leaders (Burkinshaw & White, 2017, p. 1). Redirecting the focus from correcting gender inequity caused by the current state of higher education, gendered inequalities are placed on women and the “choices women make as mothers and professors” (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2017, p. 229).

Grace, however, directly benefited from the support of her husband in making career moves. Grace’s husband challenged the social cultural constructs of gender by
providing direct support for her to directly operate and succeed within the ever-evolving state of higher education (Hissong, 2010; Isaacs, 2014). She discussed how her husband provided support at every stage, including moving to her current institution to assume the appointment of Dean. Perhaps her husband believes that leaders possess a “moral obligation to use their position of leadership to increase educational equity” (Larson, 2011, p. 324). Or Grace’s previous institution primarily supported the promotion of men and both Grace and her husband acknowledged that the current institution possessed opportunities to prepare women for leadership positions, as well as provide balance between both family and career (Hacifazlioglu, 2010; Rosser, et al., 2003; Dhar, 2008).

While both credit the support of their families, both pay homage to mentors over the course of their careers. Elizabeth explains that she has had other institutions contact her for potential employment offers as department chairs. Discussing this with her superiors and mentors, they stress to her that she could be the department chair of the institution she is at. Providing her with the encouragement to remain and succeed at a tier one institution allowed her to remain steadfast and believe in her capabilities. Edds-Ellis and Kaester (2013) perceive relationships forged with current academic leaders are pivotal for women to pursue appointments in administration. Elizabeth’s circumstance reinforces mentorship being well “established in the literature as on of the most effective means of not only encouraging individuals to move into administration (or higher levels if already serving in and administrative role), but to effectively train those aspirants as well” (Edds-Ellis & Kaester, 2013, p. 1). Furthermore, she placed her name in consideration of the appointment of Dean due to a mentor’s persistence. Her colleague contacted her several times to consider becoming dean citing her skills aligning with the
challenges and goals the department has. Without mentoring Elizabeth may not have considered becoming dean or might have accepted a past job offer. Mentoring played such a vital role in her success that now Elizabeth has adopted mentoring and coaching as a crucial component in faculty hiring and retention based on her academic career (Tomas & Castro, 2013; Gmelch, 2013). Archard’s (2013) focus on leadership as a set of skills to be developed rather than an innate characteristic is exemplified in Elizabeth’s actions as she continues to work, develop, and encourage faculty.

Grace experienced mentorship while earning her undergraduate degree. She was provided opportunities to work collaboratively with a research group as well as conduct independent research with a college professor. She was subjected to supportive environments, contributing to her personal and professional development (Howard-Vital & Brunson, 2006). Each opportunity enabled her to understand that science had more of a social nature than first perceived. Providing her with needed experience in research allowed her to succeed at her first institution. During her first stint, she became familiar with administrative work and came to the conclusion that, not only was she good at it, but she enjoyed the challenge and strategic thinking. Receiving positive feedback and encouragement from superiors provided her the confidence to remain in administration. Grace, however, was granted an access of to “ownership, leadership and decision-making opportunities” (Gobaw, 2017, p. 29). In accepting the position of Dean at her current institution, Grace brought with her a mentoring based leadership style (Isaacs, 2014). Developing the faculty and student body through mentoring has proven effective for properly preparing women for challenges in their pursuit of academic leadership (Archard, 2013).
In their experiences in higher education, both Elizabeth and Grace have been the victims of gender bias/sexism. It is important to note that neither believes that being a woman affected their advancement or promotion throughout their career. Rather, the negative experiences regarding gender bias/sexism were personal instances. For example, Elizabeth discussed the covert gender bias within institutional policies. Institutional policies, as Xu (2008) explains, is “closely connected with cultural value” (Xu, 2008, p. 1). Elizabeth explains that institutional policies were developed for men and not in consideration for women. She continues by commenting that both men and women experience difficulties in balancing both family and careers, however, the

…challenge for women is greater than for men, given the simple logistics of the biological clock, the physical demands of pregnancy and childbirth, the gendered expectations of family obligations, ant the ongoing disparity with which women take on the ‘second shift’ through maintenance of children and home (Amer, 2013, p. 12).

To further explain, she provided an anecdote. When she was pregnant, there were not any policies in place to pause the tenure clock or to provide a leave of absence. Due to this, she had her baby on a Tuesday, showed a film on a Thursday, and had to be back in the classroom the following Tuesday, giving her one week. Luckily, she comments, the university has adopted policies more gender relevant, however, there is still a long way to go in terms of policies and childbearing (Wilkinson, 2009).

Grace acknowledged the gender bias within institutional policies as well believing that measures are currently under way to close the gap. However, both a superior and a colleague subjected her to overt forms of sexism. In an interview with the vice chancellor, she was coerced into performing a television interview concerning research that she did not have any part of nor was in her same department. In a follow up meeting
with the vice chancellor, he referred to the interview on television commenting that everyone saw it because her blouse was unbuttoned. This embarrassing remark placed her in a defensive position for the meeting and developed a power structure in demeaning her request for her research. Another instance involved a colleague in a different department stating that Grace’s success was not attributed to her merit, but rather her feminine wiles. He believed that she was manipulated those around her by somehow using her gender as an advantage. By demeaning her work he sought to force her in assimilating in to the patriarchal environment of higher education. Murray (1996) refers to each of these instances as “professional mugging” (Murray, 1996, p. 253). In this atmosphere women tend to downplay achievements, reducing their personal motivation to seek positions of academic leadership, fully supporting the understanding of higher education favoring the advancement of men.

Elizabeth and Grace are continually experiencing and enjoying the success as Dean in their respective departments. Neither are currently seeking other professional opportunities nor looking to the future in terms of both short and long term career goals. Both briefly discussed, however, that they never thought or intended to be serving as Dean for their department. And it is because of this inability to predict future opportunities or plans that leave them with an open mind if the correct challenge presents itself.

Second Research Question

The second research question in this study focused on “How do women negotiate cultural gendered norms, from others and themselves, in relation to being both a woman and a woman Dean?” Despite the efforts to not view this question in a homogeneousness
manner, similar themes of Challenge and Mentorship/Leadership were common between both data sets. The determinations of the themes are subjective, but are not uncommon to women in pursuing appointments within academic leadership (Tomas & Castro, 2013; Isaacs, 2014; 2013; Edds-Ellis & Keaster, 2013). Academic leadership is understood to include “provosts, deans, associate deans, and department chairs…people holding all of these administrative positions as academic leaders” (Hacifazlioglu, 2010, p. 2258). This understanding of academic leader was held in relation to this study.

In both data sets, Elizabeth and Grace discussed the difficulties women face in regards to childbearing based on institutional policies. Institutional policies are not reflective of gender equity nor are they conducive for equity in terms of advancement and promotion. This coincides with the theme Challenge found in each respective data set. In this theme both Elizabeth and Grace viewed institutional policies as much needed area to address and improve, providing each with a sense of obligation to assume the responsibilities of Dean and correct. Developing an environment that is more conducive for women to construct a balance between professional careers and family served as a form of motivation for each of them to negotiate the gendered expectations they faced as Dean (Jost & Kay, 2005; Kearney & Lincoln, 2016). Focusing on the needs of future women leaders allowed each to accept and address the “cultural and environmental issues that often face women in higher education” (Howard-Vital & Burnson, 2006, p. 4). Furthermore, Elizabeth and Grace’s spouses provided much needed familial support with children in order to overcome cultural expectations, which create a belief of women being more suited to serve as the primary care giver (Amer, 2013; Jackson & O’Callaghan, 2009; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2017).
The other theme of Mentorship/Leadership was also found to occur within both data sets. Each participant believed the lack of appropriate mentorship for women to be a challenge in pursuing the academic leadership position of Dean. With the “lack of access to ownership, leadership and decision-making opportunities,” women cannot become mentors for potential women academic leaders (Gobaw, 2017, p. 29). This directly impacts women’s abilities to enhance the necessary skills to be confident in pursuing the appointment of Dean, as well as overcome gendered expectations. Larson (2011) suggests, “capable educational leaders embrace the broader purpose of education for increasing social justice” (Larson, 2011, p. 324). Due to the understanding that the “transformation from faculty to academic leadership takes time and dedication,” proper support systems at home and in the professional environment of higher education is both necessary and imperative for women to be properly prepared for administrative positions (Gmelch, 2013, p. 26). In order to achieve this, there is a need for more women in leadership positions to become mentors, enabling a more qualified and gender diversified pool of applicants for academic leadership positions. Ideally, this will remove the focus on the lack of women in academic leadership positions from correcting women as the primary problem to addressing the “gendered power relations at play in universities,” which “stubbornly maintain entrenched inequalities whereby, regardless of measures implemented for and by women, the problem remains” (Burkinshaw & White, 2017, p. 1).

**Influence of Theoretical Lens**

Data gathered, analyzed, and used within this study was observed through a Critical Feminist theoretical lens. Though critical feminist theory is critiqued because it
“provides moral grounding for men to make claims that they cannot help being oppressive,” the results of this study affirms the feminist belief that higher education is “pervaded by profound yet little-comprehended change, uncertainty, and ambivalence” (Lay & Daley, 2007, p. 52). Barbara Johnson (1998) comments further that

...normatively male power structures have responded by integrating genuine changes, but also, in the process, by appropriating and defusing the energies of feminist critique through changes that remain superficial and reversible. One example of this self-reconstitution of patriarchal power away from feminists has involved the status of the academy itself in American life: just at the moment when women (and minorities) begin to have genuine power in the university, American culture responds by acting as though the university itself is of dubious value. The drain in available resources away from the humanities (where women have more power) to the sciences (where women still have less power) has been rationalized in other ways, but it seems to me that sexual politics is central to this trend (Johnson, 1998, p. 3-4).

Employing a critical feminist theoretical lens provided an opportunity to view the institution as a cultural context for the possibility of determining and understanding the “oppression that is rooted in gendered relationships” (Lay & Daley, 2007, p. 50). The participants of this study provided data exposing institutional policies as gendered in favor of men (Bilen-Green, et al., 2008). Alcoff (1988) discusses that institutional policy “errors occur because we are in fundamental ways duplicating misogynist strategies when we try to define women, characterize women, or speak for women, even though allowing for a range of differences within the gender” (Alcoff, 1988, p. 407). According to Carvalho and Machado (2010), institutions rely on socially constructed gendered norms, which produces a particular social hierarchy. Jost and Kay (2005) reflect similar sentiments positing that “stereotypes being culturally available in society” and that cultural gendered expectations directly affect the “thoughts, feelings, and behavior are
affected by stereotypes at an unconscious level even in the absence of conscious endorsement” (Jost & Kay, 2005, p. 498).

Elizabeth discussed the impact of family responsibilities on the decisions women choose regarding career opportunities. The impact is of concern because institutional policies create an environment that is not conducive for childbirth and rearing where the mother remains the primary care giver. Elizabeth was not afforded the opportunity to pause the tenure clock nor was she able to take time off in order to give birth. Institutional policies at the time, according to Elizabeth, were written for men. Focusing on policies that directly impact women provides a lens to evaluate the complexity of institutional practice (Reeves, et al., 2008). Institutions reflect the patriarchal organization of society within academic leadership and management. Based on this, leadership positions are best understood as masculine, meaning that leaders are effective when exhibiting management styles of men. For women to be deemed fit for positions of leadership in academia, based on social stereotypes, women must assimilate into masculine norms. This creates hesitation for women to utilize policies primarily implemented for their benefit. This is due to men not requiring policies developed to address time off for childbirth and since masculine norms pervade leadership structures, women might be subjected to bias (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2017). Analyzing these policies through a critical feminist lens enables an understanding of the gendered oppression as both directly and indirectly. Issues, such as childbearing and rearing, continue to develop the “advancement and equity of academic women so complex, stubborn, and important to address” as women continue to determine their choices regarding both family and career based on institutional policies (Ward & Wolf-Wendel,
Grace’s data reaffirmed the notion of gendered oppression through institutional policies. She discussed the difficulties women face in finding a balance between family and career responsibilities. Policies are developed in an attempt to address the needs of women, however, the procedures assume overarching generalizations such as average time required for childbirth. Grace acknowledges that institutional policies have provided women with needed support, but they are by no means adequate in promoting gender equity.

Both Elizabeth and Grace referred to family and mentors in being able to negotiate gendered expectations. Each of their husbands contends with the “cultural discourse of the male bread-winner mandate and the economic need for two incomes” (Goldberg & Allen, 2015, p. 15). This provides a sense of ease due to academic leadership positions requiring dedication in order to properly address departmental challenges (Archard, 2013; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2017; Jackson & O’Callaghan, 2009). More women will be better equipped to mitigate the affects of gendered expectations placed on them, by themselves and society, as men are continually “shaped by, resist, and conform with these ideologies and systems of power in the context of their individual identities and martial and parental relationships” (Goldberg & Allen, 2015, p. 15).

Elizabeth and Grace attributed proper mentorship as another source that assisted in negotiating gendered norms. Each participant have been, and continue to be, exposed to mentors, identifying as a man, who advocate and promote gender equity, despite Fraser and Hodge’s (2000) proclamation that “males generally will be uninterested in correcting” institutional perceptions concerning gender stereotypes (Fraser & Hodge, 2000, p. 175). The mentors provided each participant a platform for adequate leadership
development, building “confidence in their leadership abilities, a clearer picture of the responsibilities of leaders in higher education, a deeper understanding of their particular strengths and weaknesses as a leader, and an appreciation for the demanding job” (Edds-Ellis & Kaester, 2013, p. 3). Career training and development enabled each participant to address the needs of both family and career, allowing for the negotiation of gendered norms as both a woman and a woman Dean (Brown, 2000).

The results of this study suggest that institutional policies are providing limited support for women. As Johnson (1998) commented, this is a “self-reconstitution of patriarchal power” through covert means (Johnson, 1998, p. 3). Equity is being sought after through the implementation of new policies, however, these policies are limited because higher education is primarily a structure of “patriarchy, which has deep roots in the culture at large” (Lay & Daley, 2007, p. 50). Based on this, the researcher agrees with Hissong (2010) that gender equity has not been realized and an “unyielding realization that this reality is from being recognized and a relentless desire to push ahead until great equality for women is a reality” is necessary for the disruption of patriarchal power in higher education (Hissong, 2010, p. 2).

**Implications for Educational Representatives and Legislators**

First, as women in enter higher education, there should be opportunities for the exploration of academic leadership as a career possibility. Second, women entering higher education as a career must be paired with appropriate mentorship. Mentorship is a key component in “preparing and increasing the number of female leaders in higher education” (Edds-Ellis & Keaster, 2013, p. 1). Currently, academics that aspire to earn the appointment of dean are under enough challenges as higher education is “operating in
a constantly changing environment” and coupled with the complications women face due to gender can be daunting (Isaacs, 2014, p. 112). In fact, according to “relatively recent reports, women are still in the minority where leadership in higher education is concerned,” adding to the importance to be addressed by educational representatives and legislators (Edds-Ellis & Keaster, 2013, p. 1).

In order for mentorship programs to be effective, however, they must be same-gendered (Gobaw, 2017; Tomas & Castro, 2013; Isaacs, 2014; Edds-Ellis & Keaster, 2013). Same-gendered mentorship programs in higher education are crucial for women to experience success in navigating institutional framework. Edds-Ellis and Keaster (2013) state,

Mentoring is well established in the literature as one of the most effective means of not only encouraging individuals to move into administration (or higher levels if already serving in an administrative role), but to effectively train those aspirants as well (Edds-Ellis & Keaster, 2013, p. 1).

Based on this, same-gendered mentoring allows aspiring women to develop

…relationships with experienced female leaders allows aspiring female leaders to develop important knowledge about the expectations and complex roles of leaders in higher education….same-gendered mentorships lead to higher satisfaction and more interpersonal comfort than different-gendered mentorships (Edds-Ellis & Keaster, 2013, p. 1).

Same-gendered mentoring is also important to positively impact the “perception women hold towards the nature of higher education leadership and management. Whether they are too many of few, their attitude critically affects the nature of managerial positions they hold and will hold” (Gobaw, 2017, p. 29). Essentially, a same-gendered mentoring program develops an “environment ripe for a positive mentoring experience,” providing more women with a sense of confidence and social mobility (Edds-Ellis & Keaster, 2013, p. 3).
Finally, educational representatives and legislators must develop institutional policies that promote and support gender equity if more “women are going to fulfill their leadership potential” (Howard-Vital & Brunson, 2006, p. 4). Policies are limiting women by not affording them an environment of balance between personal and professional aspirations. Women are faced with “constraints as mothers, as women, and as leaders while maintaining the balance between their responsibilities as academicians and as leaders” (Hacifazlioglu, 2010, p. 2261). Rather, higher educational institutions are producing “diversity policies, as a substitute for equity policies” (Wilkinson, 2009, p. 41). Both diversity and gender equity must be viewed as separate issues where educational representatives and legislators possess a “moral obligation to use their position of leadership” in order to champion “social justice” (Larson, 2011, p. 324).

**Implications for Future Research**

This research served to implore other scholars to continue investigating and researching the experiences of women in ascending the administrative ladder in higher education to the position of Dean, as well as how women are negotiating gendered expectations as both a woman and a woman Dean. Their experiences may provide educational representatives and legislators, awareness into the current challenges women face in higher academia and how to properly develop women academic leaders for equity in advancement and promotion. Furthermore, aspiring women deans and academics, men who are, or can be, advocates for gender equity, search committees, etc. may use, build on, and/or be impacted by this scholarship.

Both participants in this study were employed at a southern, research one institution. Future research could investigate women academic leaders at institutions
outside of the Southeast region, as well as incorporate institutions of other research classifications. This data could then be compared to data within this study to assist in gathering larger and more concrete generalizations.

Furthermore, this study sought out participants who identified as a White woman and currently serving as Dean in order to address the posed research questions and in order to connect with participants due to the researcher’s self-identification as a White man. Future research could investigate the experiences of women academics that identify as a Black woman serving as Dean to understand the challenges a Black woman faces in higher education. Women who identify as Black or White and are currently serving in an academic leadership position, “provosts, deans, associate deans, and department chairs…people holding all of these administrative positions as academic leaders,” could also participate in future research (Hacifazlioglu, 2010, p. 2258).

The lack of literature regarding the narratives of women academic leaders who had undergone either same or different-gendered mentorship programs was noted in conducting this research. A study in this element might, if conducted properly, support the notion of Gobaw (2017) that “same-gendered mentorships lead to higher satisfaction and more interpersonal comfort than different-gendered mentorships”, especially when comparing current and aspiring women academic leaders (Gobaw, 2017, p. 1).

Finally, both participants of this study acknowledged the difficulty women have in higher education as a career in regards to a “limited by the environment” created by institutional policies (Howard-Vital & Brunson, 2006, p. 5). Future research could address this by incorporating all women currently employed, whether serving in an academic leadership position or not, to fully document and understand the impact of
institutional policies and what needs to be addressed to create an atmosphere that is no longer viewed to be “masculine, patriarchal and elitist” (Tomas & Castro, 2013, p. 16).

**Conclusion**

Higher education has “traditionally been seen as masculine, patriarchal and elitist” and despite more inclusion for women, higher education continues to favor the advancement of men (Tomas & Castro, 2013, p. 16). Women are “disproportionately located in lower-level administrative positions, while White males are disproportionately located in upper-level positions” (Leon & Jackson, 2009, p. 46). Despite the progress exhibited in higher education in regard to the number of women participating in higher education, gender differences in terms of the roles they have at universities still exist. Such differentiation is similarly reflected in the power structures, since women are clearly in the minority at university management level and in the power centres of decision-making...the upper levels of university hierarchy are still dominated by males (Tomas & Castro, 2013, p. 17).

In fact, at the beginning of the “21st century, there were 176,485 tenured full professors at the nation’s public and private universities” and women only comprised nineteen percent of tenured full professors (Evans, 2007, p. 11). This staggering statistic suggests that women face several challenges in higher education, reducing the opportunities to be promoted as Dean of a college. Women are subjected to a “gendered environment which creates an unequal playing field through organizational work policies, interpersonal networks, and embed attitudes favoring the advancement of men” (Bilen-Green, et al., 2008, p. 1; Leon & Jackson, 2009).

Statistics concerning the social mobility and equity in terms of career advancement and promotion of women in higher education is reflective of the effort put forth by institutions, educational representatives, and legislators is concerning,
subsequently leaving much to be desired. The participants in this study do not believe that their gender acted as a barrier in terms of their appointment as Dean, however, they both view institutional policies as covert forms of gender discrimination and sexism. Current institutional policies cause “women to question the confidence they have in their own capacities” and create “difficulties that exist in reconciling the demands of a research career and of managing research teams with those of a personal and family life” (Tomas & Castro, 2013, p. 17). Essentially, both participants agree that higher educational policies were written for men and must be revisited in order to provide gender equity. Women will continue to be “vulnerable to prejudice and sexism” if policies are not rewritten to reflect a pro-social environment (Wilkinson, 2009, p. 42).

Furthermore, participants highlighted the importance of mentorship in regards to advancement within higher education. Each participant benefited from proper mentors who provided “important knowledge about the expectations and complex roles of leadership in higher education” (Edds-Ellis & Keaster, 2013, p. 1). This provided both Elizabeth and Grace with the necessary knowledge while preparing them for success in academic leadership positions and to negotiate gendered norms. As Dean, they value mentoring and continually strive to provide mentorship opportunities among faculty. For mentoring to continue to be effective, educational representatives and legislators might fund special programming that provides women with opportunities to experience same-gendered mentoring. Same-gendered mentoring is more apt to “lead to higher satisfaction and more interpersonal comfort than different-gendered mentorships” (Edds-Ellis & Keaster, 2013, p. 1).
Educational representatives and legislators have a “moral obligation to use their position of leadership to increase educational equity and advance educational opportunity” (Larson, 2011, p. 324). This might require taking a “stand for equity, even in the face of resistance” if more “women are going to fulfill their leadership potential” (Nelson, et al., 2011, p. 102; Howard-Vital & Brunson, 2006, p. 4). The “emergence of diversity policies, as a substitute for equity policies” is not going to achieve “gender equity in the administrative levels” (Wilkinson, 2009, p. 41; Leon & Jackson, 2009, p. 58). The social issues regarding both gendered and racial equity must be approached as a separate entity requiring specific institutional policies. As Gobaw (2017) states, the “issue of women’s plight is an issue of all humanity” (Gobaw, 2017, p. 28).
References


Appendix A. IRB Approval

ACTION ON EXEMPTION APPROVAL REQUEST

TO: Jacob Vaughn
Higher Education

FROM: Dennis Landin
Chair, Institutional Review Board

DATE: January 31, 2018

RE: IRB# E10836

TITLE: Out of the Shadows the Matriarch Rises: A Case Study of Women Academic Deans at a Southern, Research One Institution


Review Date: 1/30/2018

Approved X Disapproved ______

Approval Date: 1/30/2018 Approval Expiration Date: 1/29/2021

Exemption Category/Paragraph: 2a,b

Signed Consent Waived?: No

Re-review frequency: (three years unless otherwise stated)

LSU Proposal Number (if applicable):

Protocol Matches Scope of Work in Grant proposal: (if applicable)

By: Dennis Landin, Chairman ______

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR: PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING – Continuing approval is CONDITIONAL on:

1. Adherence to the approved protocol, familiarity with, and adherence to the ethical standards of the Belmont Report, and LSU's Assurance of Compliance with DHHS regulations for the protection of human subjects*

2. Prior approval of a change in protocol, including revision of the consent documents or an increase in the number of subjects over that approved.

3. Obtaining renewed approval (or submittal of a termination report), prior to the approval expiration date, upon request by the IRB office (irrespective of when the project actually begins); notification of project termination.

4. Retention of documentation of informed consent and study records for at least 3 years after the study ends.

5. Continuing attention to the physical and psychological well-being and informed consent of the individual participants, including notification of new information that might affect consent.

6. A prompt report to the IRB of any adverse event affecting a participant potentially arising from the study.


8. SPECIAL NOTE: When emailing more than one recipient, make sure you use bcc. Approvals will automatically be closed by the IRB on the expiration date unless the PI requests a continuation.

* All investigators and support staff have access to copies of the Belmont Report, LSU's Assurance with DHHS, DHHS (45 CFR 46) and FDA regulations governing use of human subjects, and other relevant documents in print in this office or on our World Wide Web site at http://www.lsu.edu/irb
### Appendix B. Research Questions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Questions</th>
<th>Guiding Protocol Questions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What are the experiences and challenges women face in ascending the administrative ladder to Dean of a college?</td>
<td>1. Tell me about yourself including your educational background and upbringing.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. What difficulties, if any, did you have, or still have, in education?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. What or whom influenced you to continue working towards becoming a Dean?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Corresponding Guiding Questions: 1, 2, 4, 6, 7, 11, 12</td>
<td>4. Do you feel that your gender impacted your career aspirations? Was this negative, positive, or both?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. How do women negotiate cultural gendered norms, from others and themselves, in relation to being both a woman and a woman Dean?</td>
<td>5. Is there anything in your personal or professional life that you believe you had to sacrifice to become a Dean?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corresponding Guiding Questions: 3, 5, 8, 9, 10, 12</td>
<td>6. What are some of your fondest memories/moments throughout your career?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7. What are some of your least favorite memories/moments throughout your career?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>8. Tell me about the institution you are currently working at? What is the institution doing correct? What needs improvement?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9. What factors do you attribute to your success?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>10. Is there anything you wish you would have known when you first began your career?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>11. Do you have any further career aspirations?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>12. What would you want your legacy to be as an Academic Dean?</td>
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</table>
Appendix C. Initial Contact

Dear Dr.

My name is Jacob L. Vaughn and I am a doctoral candidate in the Higher Education program at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. I am reaching out to you in order to request if you would be willing and/or able to participate within my research project. My dissertation is titled “Out of the Shadows the Matriarch Rises: A Case Study of Women Academic Deans at a Southern, Research One Institution.”

The purpose of this study is to understand the challenges women encounter when pursuing an appointment as Dean and how they are overcoming gender oppression/sexism, earning highly coveted academic positions, such as Dean of a college. I hope the case study provides a platform for gender equity to be built. Perhaps aspiring women academic leaders will benefit from the narratives of successful women leaders in how to approach and overcome gender bias in higher education without being deterred. It is also a hope that academics, whether men or women, become more aware of the inherent prejudices and strives to unravel the tightly bound favoritism for the advancement of men. A sixty-minute interview will be conducted and audio taped in person or on the phone with each participant to gain insight into the challenges and successes women experience in pursuing an appointment as Dean.

Participants in this study must identify as a white woman and is currently Dean within one of the college’s schools.

If you are willing to participate in the study, please let me know via email at jvaug26@lsu.edu or jvaug30@gmail.com. A consent form will then be provided by email to be signed, scanned, and emailed back along with the interview protocol. If you have any questions, concerns, or comments please feel free to contact me.

Respectfully,

Jacob L. Vaughn
jvaug26@lsu.edu
jvaug30@gmail.com
615-417-9192
Appendix D. Informed Consent

Title: Out of the Shadows the Matriarch Rises: A Case Study of Women Academic Deans at a Southern, Research One Institution

Description: There is a deficit in the literature concerning women academic leaders, such as the appointment of Dean. Your participation in this study is requested in an effort to learn and record the challenges and successes of women who have earned the appointment of Dean. To qualify for participation in this study, you must identify as a White woman and currently hold the position of Dean.

Risks and Benefits: Benefits of this study include supplementing literature in order to reframe the current narrative of women academic leaders as well as call for more research on the successes of women in overcoming gender barriers within higher educational institutions. There are no anticipated risks regarding the participation in this study.

Voluntary Participation: Participation in this research is completely voluntary. There will be one audio taped semi structured interview held. Interviews will be transcribed and quotations from the interviews might be included in the dissertation, however, no identifying information will be included. Interviews will take place either in person at a location determined by the participant or over the telephone.

Confidentiality: Questions in the interview might be both sensitive and personal. To maintain your confidentiality, you will be assigned a new name and other identifying information you share will be replaced with pseudonyms. Your name will only appear on this consent form and will not be linked to your responses. Interviews will be recorded in private and the recordings will not be shared. Your responses will be transcribed anonymously and all information will be kept confidential to the extent allowed by law and University policy. The responses you provide will serve as data for this study.

Right to Withdraw: Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. At any time during the study are free to withdraw your participation agreement. Withdrawal will result in omission of any information collected from you and there will be not be any ramifications.

Informed Consent: I, __________________________ (print name), have read the description in its entirety, including the purpose of the study, the procedures to be used, the potential risks, the confidentiality, as well as the option to withdraw from the study at any time. I understand that interviews will either take place in person or over the telephone. The researcher has explained each of these items to me. All questions have been answered regarding the study and I believe I understand what is involved. By signing this consent form, I freely agree to participate in this qualitative study and have received a copy of this agreement from the researcher.

Investigators: Jacob Vaughn, 615-417-9192, jvaug30@gmail.com
Dr. Roland Mitchell, 225-578-2156, rwmitch@lsu.edu
If you have any questions, concerns, or comments regarding this study, you may contact Jacob L. Vaughn at (615) 417-9192, jvaug26@lsu.edu, or jvaug30@gmail.com. For questions or concerns about your rights as a research participant, contact the Institutional Review Board at Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803 at (225) 578-8692 or irb@lsu.edu.

________________________  __________________________
Signature                                             Date
Appendix E. Participant Demographic Form

Marital Status:

Occupation:

Age:

Years of experience:

Institution attended for doctoral degree:

Doctoral degree received:

Number of years taken to complete doctoral degree:

Number of higher educational institutions employed at:

Number of years to earn tenure ship:

Number of years to be appointed Dean:
Vita

Jacob L. Vaughn, a native of Pleasant View, Tennessee, earned his Bachelor’s degree from Centre College in 2009. Thereafter, he worked at Rhodes College as an Assistant Football Coach and soon decided to join the United States Coast Guard. While serving, he earned his Master’s degree from Northcentral University in 2013. He will receive his Doctorate degree in December 2018 and plans to continue his research along with working as an administrator in a college/university.