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Stephanie J. Jones

Texas Tech University, stephanie.j.jones@ttu.edu

Patricia Ryan Pal

Texas Tech University, tricia.pal@ttu.edu

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Social Role and Role Congruity Influences on Perceived Value of Women's Leadership at Southwestern Research Universities

Stephanie J. Jones, Ed.D.

Professor of Higher Education

College of Education

Texas Tech University

stephanie.j.jones@ttu.edu

Patricia Ryan Pal, Ph.D.

Part-time Instructor

Area of Management, Rawls College of Business

Texas Tech University

tricia.pal@ttu.edu

Abstract

This qualitative survey study, framed by social role and role congruity theories, explored the perceptions and experiences of 33 women faculty and academic administrators at doctoral-granting highest research-intensive universities located in the Southwestern region of the U.S. The purpose of the study was to expand on our understanding of how social role and role congruity theories can

explain and further our understanding of how women are perceived to be valued as leaders in the higher education space, and how society supports this continued valuation. For purposes of this study, social value is explored through the operational processes of higher education organizations. Findings from this study show that the participants perceived that women's credibility as leaders continues to be questioned, resulting in less perceived value; the accepted role of women as leaders in higher education continues to be influenced by greater society; society continues to perceive leaders should be men; and organizational practices continue to support systemic barrier to women's leadership success. By understanding the perceptions and experiences of women regarding their perceptions of value as leaders in higher education, we can begin to address and eliminate systemic barriers to further better support their advancement into leadership roles.

Keywords: higher education, leadership, women as leaders, value of leadership, gender, social role theory, role congruity theory



Lean in does not work in the South ...

—Chloe

The absence of women in leadership is not new, but something that history has reinforced (Klenke, 1996). As noted by Rhode (2016), “For most of recorded history, women were largely excluded from leadership positions” (p. 1), and are most noted in history for roles such as mothers, wives, mistresses, religious figures, or beauties (Klenke, 1996, 2018; Rhode, 2016). Although these roles often have a leadership component, it was not until the 1980s that women gained enough share in formal leadership positions to be seen as relevant (Klenke, 1996). Klenke (1996) attributes the lens that leadership has been historically viewed through with the “many great men” (p. 2) who have been the leaders and decision-makers. Though women have been gaining representation in leadership roles across industries, they are far from reaching parity with their men counterparts (Rhode, 2016). This is highlighted by Johnson

(2017, p. 6) who used the phrase “the higher the fewer” to further demonstrate the lack of women in higher education institutions who hold positions of power.

Women continue to be clearly underrepresented in leadership roles, as seen by just 5.8% of chief executive officers at Standard & Poor (S&P) 500 companies (Catalyst, 2020), 23.6% of Congress (25% of Senators; 23.2% of House members) (Center for American Women and Politics [CAWP], 2020), and 30% of college and university presidents (Gagliardi et al., 2017) being women. Based on these statistics, it would appear that women hold higher numbers of top leadership positions at colleges and universities than other sectors, but what is not clearly articulated is that though women fill close to a third of college and university presidencies overall, the largest representation is at associate and special focus institutions (Gagliardi et al., 2017; Howard & Gagliardi, 2018, p. 2), which are considered less prestigious. Research conducted by Pritchard et al. (2020) of 1,160 institutions and approximately 51,000 administrators from all institution types, found that women in higher education organizations continued to be represented in the lower levels of the institution in lower paid positions, and that they were paid less in nearly all administrative positions than men.

There is an abundance of research that explores the challenges that women faculty and administrators face in their career advancement in higher education (e.g., Ballenger, 2010; Hannum et al., 2015; Author, 2011; Authors, 2020). This research predominantly focuses on the tenure and promotion process for faculty (e.g., Cardel et al., 2020; Miner et al., 2019), and the challenges that women face in their career advancement due to institutional barriers such as patriarchal organizational structures and the power held by the dominant male gender in leadership positions (Author, 2016). There is very limited research that has been conducted within the higher education context that explores women's progress toward leadership equity through the lens of societal expectations of their roles that have historically categorized them as nurturers and caregivers.

The expectations of women's historical societal roles can also be explored through role congruity, which addresses whether women leaders are acting in a role that is not congruent to society's expectations of what their role should be (Eagly & Karau, 2002). The purpose of

this study is to expand on our understanding of how social role theory and role congruity theory can explain and further our understanding of how women are perceived to be valued as leaders in the higher education space and why they may be valued as they are. For purposes of this study, social value is explored through the operational processes of higher education organizations. The researchers assume that the value of women in leadership roles can be demonstrated through the analysis of perceptions and experiences of those currently working in higher education organizations, as well as the representation of women in leadership roles throughout the organization. The following research questions guided this study:

1. How do women describe the perceptions of and experiences with how women leaders are valued within higher education organizations?
2. How do women compare societal expectations and higher education practices in the demonstration of the value of women as leaders?

Gender and Societal Status

For women who do break through the *glass ceiling* and obtain leadership roles, gender continues to be part of the context through which they are evaluated and paid despite holding equal credentials as their male peers (Klenke, 2018). To further expand on our understanding of the role of gender within the leadership context, this study explored how women are perceived to be valued within higher education leadership positions at research institutions, the institution type that women were least represented in the most senior leadership roles (Gagliardi et al., 2017).

To understand how women leaders are perceived to be valued within higher education, it is critical to first examine how women are valued within society, since education is perceived to be a reflection of larger society (Denmark, 1993). Several researchers claim that a potential reason for the limited number of women in leadership roles across society may be the way that women are socialized (e.g., Babcock & Laschever, 2007; Denmark, 1993; Klenke, 1996, 2018), as well as the value that society places on gender and its social role. More than a quarter

of a century ago, Denmark (1993) suggested that women were not socialized for leadership roles, but instead for “domestic roles as wife and mother or lower level traditional jobs in the workforce” (p. 345). As previously noted, Denmark posited that education is a reflection of larger society, and in turn its values and beliefs, allowing it to reproduce differences based on gender. More recently, Parker (2015) noted that a significant shift had occurred and women had gained momentum professionally, but were still primarily responsible and expected to take care of duties such as childcare and supporting their partners as they advanced in their careers, further demonstrating society’s perceived expected role of them.

When considering women in leadership positions, it is important to think about the socialization that occurs to get women into these roles. As early as pre-school, cultural expectations for men and women based on gender begin to take shape. Bian et al. (2017) found in their experimental study of 96 children aged five to seven, that by age six the stereotype of brilliance being associated with men and kindness being associated with women was reinforced. In an exploration of gender-segregated leadership camps for children in primary and secondary schools, Trumpy and Elliott (2019) found that despite intentions to break down socialized gender norms and expectations, camp counselors and leaders reinforced gender stereotypes and gender-typical behavior. The authors suggested that those charged with leading such initiatives approached them with ingrained gender socialization that attributed certain characteristics and behaviors with boys and others with girls. Denmark (1993) also referred to the example of athletics to explore reinforced gender norms, stating that men athletes were perceived to demonstrate traits that were valued by society for leaders including being “achievement oriented, competitive, and aggressive” (p. 346), whereas women often filled the role of cheerleader, demonstrating values that were typically tied to the domestic sphere, such as being supportive, nurturing, and caring. These examples show how the value of women in a number of social and cultural contexts leading up to adulthood may influence their leadership aspirations as well as how others view their potential as leaders.

Nominal characteristics, including gender and race, hold status value as determined by society and culture (Ridgeway, 1991). Ridgeway (1991)

noted that status value is determined by “consensual cultural beliefs [which] indicate that persons who have one state of the characteristics (e.g., whites or males) are more worthy in the society than those with another state of the characteristic (blacks or females)” (p. 368). The status value of gender within society has played an important role in how women are able to lead. Within society, gender inequality is reinforced through an “ordinal hierarchy between the average man and woman in valued resources, in power, and in status” (Ridgeway, 2011, p. 10), in which men are at the top of the hierarchy. Due to the way that individuals are socialized through play and behavior, including women, there is an acceptance of the role of woman as second-class members of society, something which impacts their self-confidence when pursuing leadership roles (Appelbaum et al., 2003).

West and Zimmerman (1987) proposed the concept of “doing gender,” which “involves a complex of socially guided perceptual, interactional, and micropolitical activities that cast particular pursuits as expressions of masculine and feminine ‘natures’” (p. 126). Both individuals and the society in which they are situated contribute to how gender is produced and reinforced, creating a clear hierarchical system (West & Zimmerman, 1987). Klenke (2018) suggested that this idea of doing gender is another aspect of context that must be considered when looking at leadership. She provided an example of men on corporate boards to make this point, noting that men practice homosociality – looking for individuals who are similar to them in experience, education, and leadership styles, which are typically associated with men leaders – and hire those who are like them, knowingly or unconsciously. In this practice, gender as a characteristic limits a woman’s ability to break into roles that society expects men to fill.

Gender is a status characteristic – a characteristic that serves as a basis for evaluation and beliefs about individuals, which is influenced by greater society (Berger et al., 1980). Social norms and embedded structures reinforce hierarchies and inequalities that exist based on status characteristics (Eagly, 1983). Status characteristics can either be situation dependent or diffuse, such as gender (Berger et al., 1980; Correll & Ridgeway, 2003), and they create a “basis of observable inequalities in face-to-face social interactions” (Berger et al., 1980, p. 479). These characteristics represent differences among people in society that are

tied to value, worthiness, and perceptions of ability (Berger et al., 1980; Correll & Ridgeway, 2003). Considering gender as a status characteristic, men are valued higher and perceived more effective in professional situations (e.g., leadership for an academic institution) compared to women who are often valued due to their role in the home (e.g., child-care, household duties). If women are viewed as lesser when it comes to leadership due to these societal influences and, therefore, not able to exert influence, they may be unable to lead or be viewed as leaders.

Influence and leadership are affected by the status beliefs held by a society (Ridgeway, 2001). Ridgeway (2001) highlights, "status beliefs affect many processes by which individuals are given access to rewards, evaluated, and directed toward or away from positions of power, wealth, and authority" (p. 638). Furthermore, in some instances, status characteristics are salient, those that differentiate the individuals involved in the situation or those that individuals involved believe to be important to the task (Correll & Ridgeway, 2003). According to Correll and Ridgeway (2003), "status beliefs ... are social representations that consensually evaluate one category as more status worthy and competent than another" (p. 32). Competency, as described by Ridgeway (1991), is the perception of an individual's ability to reach a desired goal. The more valued states of characteristics that one processes, the higher status that one has. The concern with this is that even those who hold lower status accept the lower value position as "societal fact," devaluing themselves and their contributions (Babcock & Laschever, 2007; Correll & Ridgeway, 2003, p. 32; Jost, 1997).

An example of this can be found in the research of Babcock and Laschever (2007) and Jost (1997) who identified that women have less entitlement compared to men in regards to the rewards that they expect for their work. According to Babcock and Laschever (2007), women do not ask for or expect things such as salary increases due to their lack of entitlement regarding salaries and professional needs due to their socialization as children in which they are taught to be polite or take second place over advocating for what they want or believe that they deserve. Appelbaum et al. (2002) asserted that by working for less and accepting that construct, women may be demonstrating a lack of confidence, which could impact how they are valued and subsequently rewarded in leadership situations.

Status characteristics and the value (or lack thereof) associated with them are influenced by interactions within society (Correll & Ridgeway, 2003). Based on the expectations associated with the status characteristics, patterns form in social situations. Higher status individuals often take on characteristics typically expected of leaders (e.g., directing, vocalizing opinions). Those with less status often fill the role of follower (e.g., listening, following the direction of others in the group, among others). As this continues over time, patterns and behaviors based on the status characteristics are reinforced and become the expected norm for both low and high status individuals. When individuals are evaluated, those with lower status characteristics (e.g., women, minorities) are held to stricter standards and harsher evaluations (Correll et al., 2007). Furthermore, women may be evaluated on other aspects of their lives, such as parental status, which can affect rewards (e.g., pay increases, promotions, among others). This may encourage women to remain in follower roles instead of pursuing leadership roles – something that aligns with their lower-status expectations due to their gender.

Moreover, when women do make it to senior leadership roles despite their status value, Derks et al. (2016) posited that instead of challenging the gender hierarchies that existed, they often reproduced them. In their review of the literature on the *queen bee phenomenon*, these researchers highlighted how women who ascended to leadership roles, particularly at male-dominated organizations, may adjust their behavior and try to conform to masculine gender expectations and leadership styles, which was also found in the work of Author (2011).

Dominici et al. (2009) conducted a study to examine “gender stereotypes that inform cultural assumptions about leadership potential and effectiveness” (p. 1). Through focus groups with 27 senior women faculty at a major research university, the researchers found that for women in academia, leadership positions were not highly desired due to the 24/7 nature of the roles. Participants in their study reported that men who took on leadership positions often had wives who stayed at home, taking care of the domestic responsibilities. Once in the participants perceived that they were evaluated harsher than men, not receiving the same level of respect on campus despite being leaders in their field nationally and internationally. Even when they found success outside of the institution, such as bringing in external funding, they were underappreciated for their work.

Theoretical Framing of the Study

Social role theory and role congruity theory are integrated to frame this study. Social role theory posits that shared gender stereotypes exist in society and are based on a division of labor that aligns with gender (Eagly, 1987). These cultural stereotypes guide behavioral differences based on gender and the social roles that result from them, which are ingrained in individuals from a young age (Eagly & Wood, 2012; Eagly et al., 2000; Ridgeway & Correll, 2004). Expectations for labor are gender based (e.g., men in the workplace and women at home); therefore, there are different skill sets that men and women have and the gender-differentiated behavior is reinforced in society (Eagly, 1987, Eagly et al., 2000; Eagly & Wood, 2012, Ridgeway, 2001).

Society expects women to take on the roles that “require predominantly communal behaviors, domestic behaviors, or subordinate behaviors for successful role performance” while men are expected to take on the behaviors that are agentic, resource obtaining, and dominant (Eagly et al., 2000, p. 127). When individuals stay within their expected gender roles, they are rewarded. If they stray from the norm, they are punished within society (Eagly & Wood, 2012).

Eagly and Karau (2002) expanded on Eagly's (1987) earlier work on social role theory through the development of role congruity theory. This theory supports that women will be evaluated positively when assessed on characteristics that align with societal views of their social role, but harshly in roles that do not align with societal expectations of a specific gender (Eagly & Diekmann, 2005). Eagly and Karau (2002) state that:

Prejudice toward women leaders occurs because inconsistencies exist between the characteristics associated with the female gender stereotype and those associated with the typical leadership. A role congruity theory of prejudice toward female leaders proposes that perceived incongruity between the female gender role and leadership roles leads to 2 forms of prejudice: (a) perceiving women less favorably than men as potential occupants of leadership roles and (b) evaluating behavior that fulfills the prescriptions of a leader role less favorably when it is enacted by a woman. One consequence is that attitudes are less positive toward female than male

leaders and potential leaders. Other consequences are that it is more difficult for women to become leaders and to achieve success in leadership roles. (p. 1)

These two theories were used in conjunction with one another because they explore the gender stereotypes that exist within society which are applied to expectations for roles (e.g., leader, caregiver) (social role theory), and how those expectations and misalignment with them affects the evaluation of individuals (role congruity theory). As predominantly patriarchal organizations, higher education institutions are interesting environments in which to explore women's leadership through the lenses of social role theory and role congruity theory because there is still an expectation that individuals will align with traditional gender roles ascribed by society, and a penalty during evaluation for those who stray from these expectations. The theories provided a lens through which the data was analyzed, and the findings were presented.

Methodology

This qualitative survey research study was conducted through a naturalistic paradigm, which allowed the researchers to explore the multiple constructions of reality by women faculty and administrators in higher education (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). According to Salmons (2015), online interviews (e.g., conducted through surveys, video conferencing) "may help some participants to be more forthcoming in response to questions. As a result, participants may be more willing to discuss sensitive or personal matters" (p. 40).

Data was collected through a 21-question researcher-developed qualitative survey, researcher journals, and institutional documents. The survey included demographic questions and a group of open-ended questions surrounding the perceptions of and experiences with how departments, colleges, and institutions value women leaders; the role of women in leadership at their institutions; challenges that women face in their leadership progression; and the role of society in how women are valued as leaders. The survey instrument was validated with a pilot study with eight higher education professionals (faculty, administrators, graduate students), and was also face validated by three higher

education leadership researchers. Minor revisions were made to the survey based on feedback from the pilot study and higher education experts, including the need to revise some of the open-ended questions for clarification. The researchers' journals served as a point of reflection throughout the research process, included notes on the research process itself as well as hunches and thoughts during the data analysis process. Institutional documents, such as websites and operating policies, were utilized to better understand the contexts of the institutions and to help understand participant experiences.

The three Southwestern universities at the center of this study are classified as *R1: Doctoral Universities – Very high research activity* under the Carnegie Classification (Indiana University Center for Postsecondary Research, n.d.). The institutions were selected due to their similar size, research activity level, and geographic location in the Southwestern region of the U.S. It was assumed that them all being located in the Southwestern region of the U.S., they would share similar cultural norms.

Once Institutional Review Board approval was received, participants were identified through university websites based on their roles (e.g., faculty and/or administrator). The recruitment email was sent to 45 individuals (15 at each university) who met the inclusion criteria of being employed at a public, highest-research intensive university located in the Southwestern region of the U.S. Within the email was a link to complete the survey through Qualtrics. The recruitment email also asked the potential participants to forward the study information to others who they perceived would be interested in participating. A follow-up reminder was sent out two weeks after the initial invitation to the original list of potential participants. Due to the use of these recruitment techniques, it was not possible to identify the response rate to the survey.

Participants for this study included 33 women in faculty and administrator roles, with all three study institutions represented. Participants included non-tenure track faculty; assistant, associate, and professors; chairs, directors, deans, and vice provosts. They came from a variety of academic disciplines, including agriculture, arts and sciences, business, education, and STEM (science, technology, math, and engineering). To analyze the data, it was unitized into the smallest meaningful piece of data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), and coded using open and axial coding in Microsoft Excel to establish themes and subthemes (Saldaña,

2016). Trustworthiness of the study was ensured throughout the study through the use of thick, rich descriptions, peer debriefing, researchers' reflexivity, and audit trails (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Positionality of the Researchers

We are both women who approach higher education with a variety of roles, experiences, and perspectives, which serve as the lenses through which this study was conducted. We have had opportunities to serve as leaders within different types of higher education institutions, including a research-intensive university, which is considered prestigious and is among the hardest category of institution for women to ascend to leadership. Similarly, we have both encountered road blocks in our career pathways that we attribute to a gendered perception of leadership. Because of our experiences and prior research, we are continuously trying to understand why women still face challenges reaching parity within higher education institutions, and what can be challenged to help pave a pathway for women's success. However, it is important to note that we also come from a place of privilege as White women, something which factors into both our experiences and lenses when studying the issues that women experience as leaders in higher education.

Limitations to the Study

There are several limitations within this study. First, it was conducted at public research universities in the Southwest region of the U.S. It may not have transferable findings to other institution types or ones in culturally different geographic regions. The qualitative online survey was utilized to give participants a place to be completely open and honest, but it limited the type of follow-up data that could be collected. Further, with open-ended survey questions, we knew that participants could be hesitant to participate due to the time commitment, and anticipated a lower response rate compared to other types of surveys as a result. This study only explored individuals who identified as women and did not take into account other gender identities or intersections of identity. Although data was collected on race/ethnicity, the overwhelming majority

of participants in this study identified as White, and the findings may not be representative of women faculty and administrators of color.

Findings

Of the 33 participants, eight were non-tenure track faculty (non-TT), six were assistant professors, 10 were associate professors, and nine were professors; with several of these individuals holding administrative roles. Their disciplines included: Arts, Humanities, or Social Sciences (AHSS) (9); Agriculture (5); Education (5); Business (3); STEM (2); Law or other professional degree (1); Media and Communications (1); Design (1); and Community Development (1). Five of the participants chose not to identify (DNI) their academic fields, and several chose not to identify their administrative role due to the potential to be identified. Profiles of the participants can be found in Table 1.¹

Perceived Value of Women as Leaders

The first research question explored how the participants described their perceptions of and experiences with how women are valued as leaders within higher education organizations. Two themes emerged to answer this question: (1) women's credibility as leaders continues to be questioned, resulting in less perceived value; and (2) the accepted role of women as leaders in higher education is influenced by greater society.

The majority of participants perceived that women were not always valued as leaders within their institutions, and struggled to be perceived as such. While there were spaces that they noted women were valued in their leadership roles, the study institutions were described as having patriarchal structures and norms in place that continued to support men as being valued more in their leadership roles than women. This point was emphasized by Natalie (assocprof; AHSS) who noted that "women are still secondary," and Aria (prof; DNI discipline) who identified that women at her institution continued to be "underrepresented, devalued, dismissed, [and] disrespected."

1. Pseudonyms were used to identify the participants in Table 1 and throughout the findings section to protect their identity

Table 1 Participant Profiles

<i>Name</i>	<i>Age Range</i>	<i>Race/Ethnicity</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Administrator Role</i>	<i>Discipline</i>
Emma	45-54	White	Associate Professor		Education
Olivia	25-34	White	Non-tenure track faculty		Business
Ava	45-54	Hispanic, Latina, Spanish	Associate Professor		STEM
Isabella	35-44	White	Non-tenure track faculty		Other
Sophia	35-44	White	Non-tenure track faculty	Asst/ Assoc. Director	Education
Mia	25-34	White	Assistant Professor		Arts, humanities, or social sciences
Charlotte	65+	White	Professor		Law or Other Professional Degree
Amelia	35-44	Asian	Assistant Professor	Prefer Not to Identify	STEM
Evelyn	65+	White	Non-tenure track faculty		Agriculture
Abigail	25-34	White	Non-tenure track faculty		Education
Harper	35-44	White	Assistant Professor		Arts, humanities, or social sciences
Emily	25-34	White	Assistant Professor		Agriculture
Elizabeth	65+	Prefer not to identify	Non-tenure track faculty	Program Director	Education
Avery	45-54	White	Professor		Prefer not to identify
Madison	45-54	White	Professor		Arts, humanities, or social sciences
Scarlett	35-44	White	Assistant Professor		Agriculture
Victoria	55-64	White	Non-tenure track faculty		Business
Aria	45-54	Hispanic, Latina, Spanish	Professor		Prefer not to identify
Grace	35-44	White	Associate Professor		Prefer not to identify

<i>Name</i>	<i>Age Range</i>	<i>Race/Ethnicity</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Administrator Role</i>	<i>Discipline</i>
Chloe	45-54	Multi-racial	Associate Professor	Asst/Assoc Dean	Media & Communications
Camila	35-44	White	Associate Professor		Arts, humanities, or social sciences
Penelope	55-64	White	Professor	Prefer Not to Identify	Other
Riley	35-44	White	Non-tenure track faculty		Arts, humanities, or social sciences
Layla	45-54	White	Associate Professor	Prefer Not to Identify	Agriculture
Lillian	35-44	White	Associate Professor	Chair	Prefer not to identify
Zoey	35-44	White	Associate Professor		Agriculture
Aubrey	65+	White	Professor	Prefer Not to Identify	Prefer not to identify
Hannah	35-44	White	Professor		Arts, humanities, or social sciences
Addison	25-34	White	Assistant Professor		Arts, humanities, or social sciences
Eleanor	55-64	Other	Professor	Sr. Vice Provost	Education
Natalie	65+	White	Associate Professor		Arts, humanities, or social sciences
Savannah	45-54	White	Professor	Director	Arts, humanities, or social sciences
Brooklyn	45-54	White	Associate Professor		Business

Even though some participants noted that their institution had women in leadership roles, these were lower-level positions — department or college-level instead of institutional leadership. Victoria (non-TT; Business) claimed that “While women have assumed leadership roles at the university, you do not see women in the highest positions. As with many organizations, top leadership roles are held by men.” This was echoed by Riley (non-TT; AHSS) who noted, “I generally feel that there are fewer women in leadership roles at the highest levels. Dean level and up is really woman unfriendly.” She went on to say that “... women who are in charge are rarely listened to.” Eleanor (prof/admin; Education) had noticed that at her institution women were losing share in some of the most senior leadership, noting that “in recent years, it appears that women and people of color diminished in number on the president’s cabinet.”

Scarlett (assistprof; Agriculture) also discussed women serving in lower-level, support-type leadership roles, emphasizing this was not just within institutions of higher education and reflecting on expectations of society:

Women are valued as leaders at lower levels [at her institution]. As a generalized example, society expects women to be valuable teachers and thereby leadership at a K-12 institution is not a concern and can even be applauded. However, leadership at a [major research university] is much rarer, and resultantly suspect. My perception is that society is accepting of women in supportive leadership roles, but still prefers that the ultimate leadership is provided by men. Women are considered worthy of providing guidance or giving advice, but the decision is still more readily accepted when it is made by a man.

The challenge with women being valued in positions of power at research universities was further explored by Savannah (prof; AHSS), who shared her thoughts:

I think women have very, very limited roles in leadership at the level of upper administration...I feel women have somewhat more visibility in leadership roles at lower levels of administration and in some departments. I think it is no

accident that women in leadership roles are ridiculously uncommon in STEM departments and that [study institution] has increasingly defined itself as a STEM university, paying little more than lip-service to the humanities.

This idea was further supported by Sophia (non-TT; Education):

I think society values women in leadership positions when those positions do not have too much power, are in fields we are used to seeing women present, and when the women look and act in ways stereotypically associated with being female.

Grace (assocprof; DNI discipline) and some of the other participants discussed their perceptions of value based off of their own experiences. Grace claimed that gender equity in leadership was nonexistent at her institution, sharing:

Men are generally the default choice for leadership positions. When women are selected, they face an uphill battle. I say this because I (a woman) served in an administrative position for a year. I quit after I was publicly humiliated by a male administrator.

Her value as a leader was undermined by a man who challenged it. Some of the other participants shared similar thoughts as Grace. Savannah (prof/admin; AHSS) noted, "In my college, there is a growing subset of men who undermine any woman who they perceive as smart or capable." Hannah (prof/admin; AHSS) shared that although women are in leadership roles at her institution, men still held significantly more roles and that women were "the outliers." She went on to share an example that though she was in upper administration, "Frequently, I am the only woman at the table." Furthering the discussion on women holding leadership roles at mainly lower levels, Ava (assocprof; STEM) stated that women do hold leadership roles within her institution, but "most are perceived as not having any true power to achieve change."

Not all participants perceived that women leaders were valued differently than men leaders at their institution. For example, Victoria (non-TT; Business) perceived that women were valued as leaders within her institution, citing examples of a woman dean and a leader of an

innovation center who she noted were supported in their leadership by faculty as well as upper administration. Similarly, Mia (assistprof; AHSS) and Amelia (assistprof; STEM) gave examples of women in dean and provost positions as support that they were valued within higher education. Evelyn (non-TT; Agriculture) also perceived that women were valued at her institution, noting, “Women in leadership roles at my institution are respected, heard, followed, and encouraged. Women with leadership goals at my institution are only limited by themselves and available positions.” Although these examples provided some support for women being valued in leadership within the study institutions, they were limited and at times seemed to be based on quantity versus actual value of their serving in a leadership role.

The representation of women in leadership roles was a discussion throughout this study. Elizabeth (non-TT/admin; Education), for example, perceived that women were still underrepresented in many fields (e.g., elected officials, Fortune 500 companies, traditionally male-dominated fields), but acknowledging that she perceived “gains are being made, though.” She further explained that as more women come into leadership roles, “it becomes more expected that either males or females can be qualified leaders.” In explaining how society has come a long way in how it values women in leadership roles, Emily (assistprof; Agriculture) perceived a shift in how women’s leadership characteristics were assessed, noting, “we are starting to value women’s characteristics as strengths and not weaknesses in leadership roles. That is huge! It’s a great start!”

Victoria (non-TT; Business) perceived, similar to Elizabeth (non-TT/admin; Education), that women attaining a greater representation in leadership roles would help to shift perceptions of their value, noting, “I see more women advancing to higher positions. I think to an extent society values women as leaders, and I think as more women attain leadership roles the societal value will increase.” She did acknowledge, though, that women were often restricted in their leadership opportunities, which may make it hard to shift the value perceptions. Victoria noted that “Still, women are often not found at the highest levels of leadership roles. There are many organizations where women are left out of higher positions.”

Differences in Expectations

The majority of participants perceived that women faced different expectations in regards to their leadership than men, and were evaluated by higher standards. Participants identified behaviors and characteristics that women leaders were evaluated based on that either were not considered to the same extent for men (e.g., appearance, tone of voice, family) or women were held to a different standard entirely (e.g., assertiveness). Natalie (assocprof; AHSS) shared an example of the differences in evaluation that women faced, "Men move forward for being assertive, women are reported as too aggressive. Men are valued for their feedback, women are told it is pushback." In another example of differences in evaluation and expectations, Olivia (non-TT; Business) explained the way appearance expectations affected women, "We live in an image-conscious place: making sure your clothes, shoes, make-up, hair, etc., are fashionable without being too much of one thing or the other is a distraction."

Avery (prof; DNI discipline) shared her experiences with having to balance women's leadership expectations and being heard as a leader. She noted:

I do know that when I'm in a meeting, people make more eye contact with male colleagues and look to them to make verbal contributions. I doubt this is intentional. But I've also learned to be pretty forceful in meetings in order to be heard. I think that makes me a bit off-putting to some and likely inhibits my being seen as leadership material beyond my current position, but it does enable me to get my job done.

Even though she did not perceive colleagues turning to men instead of women for contributions as intentional, the consequences had affected her as a leader because she perceived she needed to act in a way that was contrary to women gender norms to be involved in or lead the conversation. Though this decision allowed her to get her current work done, it could pose problems for her when it comes to advancement.

Some participants discussed that men may benefit from the higher valuation of their leadership in terms of advancement, salary, and workload. Emma (assocprof; Education) went on to explain, "Men move up

quicker, are paid more, and work less. It is that simple. I am a female. If I [were a man] I would be paid more and do less. It is exhausting.” She also shared examples of symbols of value, such as men being promoted without even asking when “women have to beg,” which may be due to the different expectation of roles for men and women.

Layla (assocprof; Agriculture) perceived that women who do make it to senior leadership positions face harsher evaluations from both men and women, stating:

The perceptions of women leaders...comes from both women and men. I don't know why we like to tear down women in power, but until we get that figured out, advancement of women in leadership positions is going to remain at a trickle.

The perception that women face, according to Layla, is one marked by criticism and judgement. She explained:

They judge them harshly. They get attacked because they aren't putting enough time in and are spending too much [time] with their family, they aren't putting enough time in with their family so they aren't good mothers, the pitch of their voice is too high, they are bitching....

Participants perceived that the judgment of women leaders went beyond their ability to do the job, but included external aspects such as their roles as mothers and wives, which is the historical societal expectations of women's roles. Women are judged from all angles while men were assessed on skills and actions that were typically associated with leaders. Savannah further expanded on this:

Women are automatically assumed to be less competent than their male counterparts, they must publish more, do more service work, and get higher teaching evaluations just to be considered equal; their private lives, marital status, and number of children are scrutinized in ways no male faculty or administrator has to experience; and they are caught in the double-standard all women experience: men are leaders, women are bossy; men are organized, women are picky. In meetings, the same idea is dismissed if it comes from a woman, applauded if it comes from a man.

Based on the perceptions of participants, the value of women and men in leadership roles is evaluated using different metrics and standards. Women are evaluated by both men and women on every aspect of their identities (e.g., leader, mother, wife), while men are evaluated primarily on the gender-normed expectations of men leaders.

Many participants perceived that men, in particular, valued other men when it came to hiring leaders. Since men were often the ones in power, they were seen as perpetuating the continuation of the *good old boys* network in which they supported the advancement of others who they perceived to be similar to them, supporting homosociality. Grace (assocprof; DNI discipline) shared that "Appointments are typically made by people in power, and they are typically White men who like to appoint others like them. I think it is obvious how this may present a problem for the advancement of qualified women." Savannah (prof/admin; AHSS) posited, "of course it hinders women since humans tend to choose people most like themselves. Men choose other men because they feel like men are more like them, so they'll be more comfortable working together..." Aubrey (prof/admin; DNI discipline) noted, "Males are more likely to hire males with hegemonic masculinity alive and well on campus."

Other participants explained that the *good old boys* network persisted due to commonly accepted practices within the institution, creating a situation where women could be left out entirely. For example, Hannah (prof; AHSS) explained that men colleagues often turn to one another when they need something instead of turning to her:

The default here is to go to a man first. And, because there are significantly more men in leadership positions to begin with, that cycle is perpetuated. So, as a woman, I have no doubt my colleagues think I'm very qualified, but they can tend to simply consult with each other on matters related to administration. That ends up not only leaving out a woman's voice completely, but suggesting that a woman is not necessary to the conversation.

The process of men valuing men in this case may contribute to women being devalued, even if unintentionally. In other cases, some participants perceived that women were intentionally devalued. For

instance, Ava (assocprof; STEM) explained, “There are some men around that are, quite frankly, scared of women being in positions of power, since they feel that they will be threatened. This is the main obstacle.” From her perspective, men may not support the advancement of women because they are afraid it will change things from the status quo – if a woman gains value, then maybe a man will lose it.

Some participants perceived that in order to advance in their roles or leadership positions within their institutions, they had to work harder than their men peers. Women’s work was not perceived to be as valuable as men’s. An example of this was shared by Emma (assocprof; Education):

I am in the field of education and there are a lot of women. You’d think it would be equal – it is not. I had to work twice as hard and do much more than the men who went up for tenure with me. There is no equity and it is absolutely exhausting being a women in higher education.

Despite working in a field that is dominated by women, Emma perceived that her work was not valued as much as her male colleagues. She went on to share that although she saw women in leadership positions, they worked harder and for less pay than their men colleagues, a symbol of value. Further, she noted that men received benefits like “release time” when they were leaders, while women were expected to do more work by adding the leadership role on top of their other responsibilities. Emma’s points were also voiced by Eleanor (prof/admin; Education) who said:

We [women] are valued because we are work-horses! We produce more than our male colleagues despite that we are typically playing many roles (e.g., third shift) or parent, caregiver, student, etc. And women were paid 77.9 cents to men’s dollar in 2018. So we are a good economic value in what has become an output focused society.

From her perspective, women’s value is directly tied to the fact that they will work harder for less money.

Grace (assocprof; DNI discipline) shared her perceptions of the overall impact of women needing to work harder and to be better to be valued as leaders:

Considering the examples of horrendous sexism faced by a very qualified female candidate for President [of the U.S.], who lost to a very unqualified candidate for president, I think the message society sends to women seeking leadership positions is that they must be 100 times better than male candidates, and they will still be judged harshly and unfairly. In an extremely conservative area such as this one, academic women will find it even harder to move into leadership.

Overall, the participants perceived that in order to combat the differences in expectations and evaluations, women needed to work harder and be substantially better than men to be valued.

When assessing how value was determined, participants turned to the cultures and climates, not just of their institutions, but of the regions in which they existed (e.g., South, conservative). The cultures and climates surrounding women's leadership had a direct perceived influence on how women leaders were valued. While some participants perceived institutional cultures supported women in leadership, like Evelyn (non-TT; Agriculture), most perceived that cultures and climates contributed to the devaluation of women leaders. For example, Abigail (non-TT; Education) shared how expectations for women and men in leadership roles were determined by the culture of the institution:

This is very cultured – women as leaders are expected to be nicer and more collaborative than men. And if they make hard decisions and strive to lead in a way they view as appropriate, they are attacked more for not being collaborative and promoting democracy.

In this case, the culture of the institution perpetuated the differences in valuation that men and women experience.

Aria (prof; DNI discipline) shared how a culture that lacks transparency promoted the devaluation of women and others from underrepresented groups, "Invisible procedures are designed to hinder less powerful groups...lack of transparency hinders women and others. In fact, as a senior woman, I have no idea how to navigate the ladder [because] the steps are entirely invisible to me." This was echoed by Brooklyn (assocprof; Business) who perceived "The male administrators in my college undermine most women at every opportunity. When called out

on it, some of them don't seem to recognize what they are even doing." Similarly, Grace (assocprof; DNI discipline) also perceived that culture and climate affected the value of women leaders, noting, "To weather the lack of support here, I think a woman leader must be a full professor with nerves of steel."

In reflecting on the culture at her institution, Hannah (prof; AHSS) noted that women in leadership roles were valued, but getting women into the leadership roles (initial value) is still a significant challenge. She explained:

The culture at my institution defaults (probably unconsciously) to a maintenance of the status quo. That is, because there are some women in leadership positions, there was not from my perspective a sustained effort to actively and deliberately recruit and prepare MORE women into and for these roles.

In addition to institutional cultures and climates, some participants claimed the culture of their region also affected how women were valued as leaders. For instance, Eleanor (prof/admin; Education) discussed how the lack of value for women's leadership in her region was seen based on who the governor of the state appointed to the Board of Regents (all men). She further elaborated:

There are elements of southern culture in [state]. This results in traditionalism and female stereotyping. So the fact that my institution is in the south is combined with the political conservatism of...[state]. These two elements — Southern culture and political conservatism — create a climate that is less than welcoming for women in leadership roles. Particularly for those women who work at senior levels with the [system leadership and board members], there are a fairly traditional expectation for female behavior and appearance.

From this perspective, the value of women leaders was directly tied to the regional and institutional cultural expectations for women. Chloe (assocprof; Communications) summed up the challenge that women faced in being valued as leaders within conservative regions, stating, "lean in does not work in the South."

Societal Expectations and Higher Education Practices

The second research question explored how the participants compare societal expectations and higher education practices in the demonstration of the value of women as leaders. Two themes emerged through data analysis to answer this research question: (1) society continues to perceive leaders should be men, and (2) organizational practices continue to support systemic barriers to leadership advancement for women.

Society Continues to Perceive Leaders Should be Men

The majority of participants perceived that women were not valued the same as men (or at all) in leadership roles in society, and that this was reflected in higher education organizations. Scarlett (assistprof; Agriculture) captured this sentiment when she stated:

Higher education mirrors society in that the roles that women are recognized in need to fit our cultural mindset. Dean of Students, absolutely. Athletic Director, absolutely not. Societal stereotypes are still mirrored in higher education. The women who are valued as leaders in higher education are the same “types” of women who are valued as leaders in society. If they are bold and brash and even take strides to appear “anti-feminine,” they may be shunned at the same level as women who are viewed as “too pretty” to be smart. Society and higher education both are more comfortable [with women] that excel in all areas but do not dominate in any.

Camila (assocprof; AHSS) perceived that “Society is improving—slowly—but without major changes in the way our society supports families (through family leave, etc.), we are at an impasse.” From her perspective, there continued to be restrictions within the structures in society, which limited how women were valued and the speed at which they would become more valued as leaders. Brooklyn (assocprof; Business) agreed with Camila’s thoughts, stating “Society has gotten better about women leaders. I wish I worked at an institution that does [value women leaders].”

Avery (prof; DNI discipline) perceived that “society at large has a serious problem.” Citing examples such as a neighborhood association president who referred to women by playful monikers, double standards that women faced in politics, women being judged for their appearance instead of accomplishments, and women’s rights being decided by men primarily, Avery supported her assertion that society did not value women:

Society overall continues to devalue females as leaders. Whenever some females “breakthrough” to achieve CEO or vice president roles, they are touted for their achievements. They better be competent and successful, however, because if they fail, second-chances seldom come their way, unlike for males. Society perpetuates a double standard and persists with second-class status for females. Maybe within the next century these will disappear, but advancements are likely to occur very gradually, including in higher education.

From her perspective, women were not valued as leaders, and when they did attain a leadership role despite the devaluation, they were held to a higher standard. This was echoed by Abigail (non-TT; Education), “We remark on women’s clothes, appearance, hair, and tone rather than her thoughts, ideas, policies, insights. It’s hard to find female role models who are not cut down time and time again by society.”

Sophia (non-TT/admin; Education) perceived that higher education institutions should lead the way for society, but instead often fall into the same patterns as what we saw in greater society. She explained:

I think it is our duty as an institution, not to wait for changes in society, but to provide a model for society of how to approach and support these changes; and this is not something that is clearly happening here. As an institution of higher education, we should be providing an example of how to support women in leadership roles as well as supporting women in their paths to leadership, but it seems that some private industries have far surpassed us on women in the pipeline to leadership. Unfortunately, it is my impression that my institution more closely aligns with how I perceive our government to value women in leadership roles (which is not positive).

Ava (assocprof; STEM), on the other hand, perceived that “If society values women leaders then I think that educational organizations will.” Despite differing perspectives on who needed to lead the way, the majority of the participants in this study noted there were connections between society and educational institutions in how they valued women as leaders.

Organizational Practices Continue to Support Systemic Barriers to Leadership Advancement for Women

Participants noted a lack of commitment on the parts of their institutions and administrators to create a pathway to increased leadership representation, symbolizing a lack of value in promoting women leaders, and the continued support of a patriarchal organizational structure. Layla (assocprof/admin; Agriculture) described her institution's approach to diversifying leadership, “They give lip-service to diversity, including gender, but it is more of a general hand-wavey approach rather than having specific goals and focusing effort on making things more equitable.” Aubrey (prof/admin; DNI discipline) noted that “the rhetoric about equity is louder than the reality of hires into top positions,” citing limited mentorship and financial support to help women develop leadership abilities that were valued. Many participants noted an absence of resources or programs at their institutions to combat the devaluation of women. If programs existed, they were often planned by women and did not have support from the greater institutional perspective. Addison (assistprof; AHSS) noted a need for “support/resources” especially when it comes to women “know[ing] their worth and encourage[ing] them to pursue advancement.”

Despite participants acknowledging the need for networking in order to advance, this was identified as a challenge for women leaders. Eleanor (prof/admin; Education) perceived that networking was critical to a woman's success in being valued as a leader, stating, “Women need more networks than men in the institution's community—such as familial relationship with significant donors, significant alumni roles, power and influence outside of the institution.” However, she described this as a “hidden culture” in which advancement “is highly dependent on relationships,” suggesting that “we need to teach women to consider how to

develop relationships in the greater community as well as within the institution if she wants to advance.” Addison (assistprof; AHSS) perceived that just the way that women networked could cause them to be devalued, noting, “a challenge for women with regards to networking is the appearance of being flirty instead of just being social.”

Finally, Abigail (non-TT; Education) noted that there was no encouragement for women to pursue leadership positions at her institution:

As a woman working here, I have never been encouraged to take on any sort of leadership role. I am encouraged to be an effective teacher and community citizen. I don't think there is any thought to encourage me to take on a leadership role. I don't think this acts as a hindrance per se, but when the expectation is never there... when there is no emphasis placed on someone to represent departments and other faculty (when the majority of faculty are women) it does a disservice.

This was echoed by Ava (assocprof; STEM) who said, “I do not see an effort to promote women's leadership, even if a woman expresses an interest in leadership.”

When women do make it into leadership positions, a lack of support in preparing for it may have a negative effect on their success. Natalie (assocprof; AHSS) explained, “They have women leaders but they are women who are untrained at leading so they make lots of mistakes and they return to their first positions.” She further elaborated on this saying, “There is no role model for women leaders.”

Discussion and Implications for Higher Education

Social role and role congruity theories were used to frame this study, and their premises continue to be supported by its findings even though conducted in a different context of most research that explored these theories. The value of women as leaders in higher education continues to be a challenge, as seen by the lack of representation of women in the presidency and other senior-level leadership roles at colleges and universities (Gagliardi et al., 2017; Howard & Gagliardi, 2018). Through the

voices of the participants in this study, the imagery is of women leaders continuing to be devalued in their roles at the study institutions, which may be in part due to society's continued perceptions that men's roles are as leaders and women's roles are as followers (Eagly & Wood, 2012, Eagly et al., 2000; Ridgeway & Correll, 2004). When thinking about higher education leaders, many continue to envision the "many great men" (Klenke, 1996, p. 2), not the few women who have attained a leadership role. These women are anomalies, outliers. Despite working harder and combatting gender-based stereotypes about the value of women leaders that are reinforced by society (Heilman, 2012; Trumpy & Elliott, 2019), if a woman breaks through, she may be the only woman at the table or hold little power or influence (Ridgeway, 1991).

The participants in this study perceived that the devaluation of women as leaders was still very much a reality and that the female gender is not fully accepted in leadership roles. Gender as a status characteristic leads women to be viewed as less than, and they have fewer opportunities for advancement than men, who may have equal or even lower qualifications (Berger et al., 1980), which may be due to society's perceived roles of men and women based on gender (Eagly, 1987; Eagly et al., 2012). Women are evaluated harsher on every aspect of themselves, even those that are not directly related to their jobs, such as the type of mother they are, how their voice sounds, or if they are wearing the correct thing (Correll et al., 2007). Instead of expecting women to be a voice in the conversation, many of the participants in this study perceived that the ones who had attained a leadership position had to conform to the societal expectations of being a woman first and foremost. The performance expectation for leadership is still very much tied to the masculine identity, which is supported by multiple researchers and social value and role congruity theory (e.g., Berger et al., 1980; Correll & Ridgeway, 2003; Eagly, 1987; Eagly & Diekmann, 2005; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Eagly et al., 2000; Eagly & Wood, 2012).

Homosociality continues to be practiced by men in higher education leadership positions in which men leaders are looking for individuals who are similar to them to hire (Klenke, 2018). Although this might not be intentional, it is still something that perpetuates the devaluation of women by applying greater value to those who have the same status characteristics as those who are already in power as social role theory

and role congruity theory support, society expects women to take on the roles that involve communal behaviors, “domestic behaviors, or subordinate behaviors for successful role performance” (Eagly et al., 2000, p. 127). When women stay within their expected gender roles, they are rewarded, but if they stray from the norm, they are punished within society (Eagly & Diekmann, 2005; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Eagly & Wood, 2012), and it appears also within their valuation as leaders within higher education institutions. Even when it comes to informal leadership, Hannah experienced situations where men would seek out answers from other men instead of including her in the dialog. She noted that the men knew that she was qualified, but it was still happening. Men were leading with other men, while participants in this study noted that they were expected to defer to men (even when they had a higher ranking position).

Participants in this study also noted that when women were able to gain leadership positions despite being undervalued in the process, they often had to conform to men’s expectations of women and leaders to be successful, potentially reproducing the same gender hierarchies that they had to fight to reach their leadership role (Derks et al., 2016). The participants were often limited as to where they could lead – in disciplines that were not men-dominated or in more supportive leadership roles, aligning with a caution that Derks et al. (2016) had regarding women leaders. The authors suggested that the lack of value that disadvantaged groups may perceive, could create a sense of identity threat – leading individuals to try to compensate with positive gender-stereotypes (e.g., being collaborative instead of authoritative). As a result, women may be limited as to the types of positions that they can attain, often those that are seen as more feminine in nature (e.g., education, humanities).

Overall, the participants in this study indicated that the lack of perceptions of value of women leaders was not a problem of higher education alone, but something that very much continued to be present in society, which could be predicted based on social role theory and role congruity theory, which do not stipulate that organization type matters in the societal expectations of roles based on gender. It was more than two decades ago that Denmark (1993) indicated that education is a reflection of greater society, but this is still present today. As society struggles with how to include women in leadership without penalizing

them for straying from the traditional status hierarchies (Berger et al., 1980; Correll & Ridgway, 2003; Ridgeway, 2011), so do academic institutions, which still have deeply rooted patriarchal structures and cultures that promote men's leadership over women's leadership (Author et al., 2016). Despite some participants perceiving that women were gaining ground with how they were valued as leaders in society and in their specific institutions, the gains had been small and were coupled with a number of hurdles that needed to be overcome.

Participants were split as to which had to change first – society or educational institutions – but they agreed that there needed to be a shift in how women were valued as leaders. In order for higher education institutions to change, however, they need to first address the cultures and climates that support gender differences and reinforced value associated with status characteristics like gender or race. Cultural stereotypes that exist on our campuses today guide the behavior and role expectations of members of each institution (Eagly & Wood, 2012; Eagly et al., 2000; Ridgeway & Correll, 2004). Gender-based expectations of labor in higher education not only relegate women to support roles, but they make it so that when they stray from the accepted stereotypical roles, they are judged inequitably and on a wider array of criteria than their male peers (e.g., being judged for both the professional and personal aspects of their lives) (Babcock & Laschever, 2007; Berger et al., 1980; Correll et al., 2007; Correll & Ridgeway, 2003; Eagly & Wood, 2012). As supported by role congruity theory, women continue to be punished for straying from what society and the cultures of our higher education institutions see as the leadership norm (Eagly & Diekmann, 2005; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Eagly & Wood, 2012).

Institutional leaders must assess what opportunities currently exist to combat gender stereotypes and a negative culture for women leaders on campus. They need to consider how women are valued by looking at what is happening on their own campuses, and assessing if women in leadership roles are valued for their contributions or are they merely tokens. Participants in this study perceived a spoken interest in diversifying leadership to include women, but not one that was supported with actions on behalf of the institution and administration. There was a lack of resources and supports to advance in women into higher education leadership positions, something that may be perpetuated by the

value placed on having women leaders. Yet resources, networks, and intentional efforts to support women are exactly what are needed to initiate change. A good starting place for institutional leaders to consider may be what currently exists on their campuses to break down gendered stereotypes and help women to succeed.

Further, since men come from the gender which society expects to fulfill leadership roles, men, particularly those in positions of power along the career pathway of women, need to understand that women leaders are valuable to the overall institutional success and challenge the devaluation of women leaders. Men need to self-reflect and consider if they are unintentionally (or intentionally) devaluing women in leadership roles. There may be an opportunity for men to break the cycle of homosociality and help change the narrative regarding women in leadership roles from the exception at the highest-level research institutions by becoming advocates for women in leadership, and challenging those at their institutions who are imposing outdated gender stereotypes about women. However, unless men, the group that historically has filled leadership positions on university campuses, are willing to participate in achieving gender equity in leadership roles, it will be challenging for women to break the stereotyped gender role expectations, which limits their opportunities for advancement into leadership roles.

Higher education institutions are the starting points for many of our leaders in greater society. If we can address how women as leaders are valued within them, perhaps it will be reflected in what we see out in the political and corporate sectors. What students see on university campuses in regard to women in leadership roles has the potential to challenge what society has led them to perceive about gender-based social roles. Observing women who are valued for their leadership as opposed to criticized for it may motivate women to see their own leadership value.



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