TROUBLED INTERPRETATIONS: FEMALE ACADEMICS AS PRODUCED IN PRACTICE

by

ALLISON ELISE MCWILLIAMS

(Under the Direction of Sheila Slaughter)

ABSTRACT

Within the halls of the academy, women arguably have made great strides in the roughly 150 years since first gaining access to these historically white, male-dominated institutions. In today's four-year colleges and universities female students fill a greater number of seats within the undergraduate population than male students do, as well as within many graduate departments, and women can be found at all ranks of university administration and faculty. However, within these latter groups female academics are still largely outnumbered by their male counterparts and this is increasingly the case ascending the ranks. This disparity raises important questions about what is happening to women in faculty roles. Although there are quantitative comparisons of women versus men that identify the roles that women occupy within the academy, such number-counting does not explain why women occupy the roles that they do and does not get to the level of providing an explanation for the percentages. By examining the specific, lived experiences of women in the academy, through their own words, researchers construct a more complete picture of women's academic lives and can make recommendations for improving those lives and the opportunities for those who follow. This interpretive research study uses organizational socialization and feminist theories to explore how women in a Department of English, a Business School, and selected Departments of Science construct their

academic lives. The study concludes that women within higher education face challenges that include a pervasive bias towards women in their professional roles, difficulties balancing professional and personal demands, and an unequal burden of service, each of which contributes to women's marginalization within the academy, pressure to conform and to perform to standards that have been articulated for a "gender-neutral" employee, and hard choices between professional and personal lives.

INDEX WORDS: Discipline, Discourse, Feminist theory, Higher education, Organizational socialization, Relations of power, Structure, Women

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# CHAPTER 1

# TROUBLED INTERPRETATIONS AND A BEGINNING

## Introduction

Within the halls of the academy in the United States, women arguably have made great strides in the roughly 150 years since first gaining access to these historically white, male-dominated institutions. In today's four-year colleges and universities female students fill a greater number of seats within the undergraduate population than male students do, as well as within many graduate departments, and women can be found at all ranks of university administration and faculty. However, within these latter groups female academics are still largely outnumbered by their male counterparts and this is increasingly the case ascending the ranks[1] (*The Chronicle*, 2007; *2008-9 Almanac*, 2008). This disparity raises important questions about what is happening to women in faculty roles: What factors influence the career paths of women in the academy?; what roles do women enact and what activities do they undertake as they construct their lives as academics?; how are women socialized for academic careers and to what effect?; and, what is the influence of disciplinary culture on these career paths, roles, activities, and socialization? Although there are quantitative comparisons of women versus men that identify the roles that women occupy within the academy, such number-counting does not explain why women occupy the roles that they do and does not get to the level of providing an explanation for the percentages. By examining the specific, lived experiences of women in the

[1] A distinction must be made here between four-year and two-year institutions, as women in the latter comprise 49.3% of all faculty members at public 2-year institutions, according to 2003 statistics; however, 66.7% of all faculty members are employed part-time at these same institutions (National Center, 2008, p. 38).

academy, through their own words, researchers construct a more complete picture of women's academic lives and can make recommendations for improving those lives and the opportunities for those who follow. It is necessary "to go beyond gender as category, social role, or identity in order to understand how gender differentiation and women's disadvantage are produced" within these institutions, institutions which have been "defined by the absence of women" (Acker, 1992, p. 566-567). It is necessary to go beyond number-counting and role identification to reach the systemic and structural foundations that have produced and continue to produce those roles and that determine those numbers.

The importance of undertaking a study that examines the lived experiences of academic women is supported by other recent work that investigates the challenges faced by today's women within higher education. These challenges include a pervasive bias towards women in their professional roles, difficulties balancing professional and personal demands, and an unequal burden of service. Each of these challenges contributes to women's marginalization within the academy, the pressure they feel to conform and to perform to standards which have been articulated for a "gender-neutral" employee, and the hard choices they make between professional and personal lives. One example is a recent study by the Center for Work-Life Policy (Hewlett et al., 2008). The researchers learned that even though 46% of Ph.D.s in the biological sciences are awarded to women, and 41% of early career employees in science, engineering, and technology fields are women, 52% of these same women drop out of these professions between the ages of 35 and 40. This attrition rate is twice the rate for men in these same fields and is higher than the rate for women in law or investment banking. Clearly, something is happening to women in these fields, something that is not equally experienced by their male colleagues; it is certainly no coincidence that the age when this drop-out occurs is the

end of women's prime child-bearing years and perhaps reflective of the hard choices women in these fields are forced to make between family and profession. Another recent study conducted by researchers at UC Irvine (Monroe, Ozyurt, Wrigley, & Alexander, 2008) interviewed 80 women faculty on that campus between 2002 and 2006. That study's researchers discovered ongoing overt and subtle gender discrimination occurring on the academic campus at both individual and institutional levels through gender devaluation when women gain positions of power, an unfair burden of service, overt sexual harassment, and as a result of the difficulties of balancing professional success and family duties. The study suggests remedies that include redefining measures of success that allow alternative paths to tenure, rewarding service work and building community, and making policy changes that expand spousal hiring and daycare options. Finally, *Unfinished Agendas: New and Continuing Gender Challenges in Higher Education* (Glazer-Raymo, 2008), is a recently-published edited volume that further explores some of the more subtle challenges, such as additional service obligations, faced by women in today's academy.

This project extends and continues that important work by interviewing female faculty members holding assistant and associate professor ranks in a Department of English, a Business School, and selected Departments of Science at one research institution to discover how they construct their lives as academics. Although it was assumed from the beginning of this study that many, if not most, of these women do not see themselves as operating from a feminist epistemology, I have found feminist theories helpful in guiding the formulation of the research questions, and I have endeavored to use those theories productively in my interpretation of the data. At the same time, I must walk that very unstable tightrope of not forcing a theoretical frame upon another's life and be careful to assume neither an agency nor a lack thereof on the part of

my participants that does not exist. Indeed, part of my analysis necessarily is an investigation of my own role in the research process and the potential effects of my own subjectivity upon the participants and the data. In order to more fully examine the sources of disciplinary power imbedded within the institution of higher education, I turn to theories of organizational socialization to discover how these women have learned, and continue to learn, to perform their roles within academia and to question whether opportunities exist (and are needed) to disrupt that performance.

This interpretive project aims to answer the following research questions:

1. How does disciplinary culture affect the construction of women's academic lives?
2. What roles do women enact as they construct their academic lives?
3. What activities do women perform as they construct their academic lives?

Harding (1987) tells us that "in the best of feminist research, the purposes of research and analysis are not separable from the origins of research problems" (p. 8). The three research questions that guided this study developed from my own troubled efforts to understand how I might enact the roles and perform the activities of academic one day. Feminist theory looks for possibilities for new enactments and performances so that the roles and activities are not so constrained by the institutional discourse. Are new enactments and performances possible within the academic hierarchy? Is it possible to enact alternative versions of "success" other than those prescribed by the academic power structure, or are the processes of socialization to the academic profession so strong that, once inside the disciplinary power structure, it is impossible to see outside of that structure? In either case, it is important to examine both the structure and the processes and their effects on both the individuals and on the institution. It is important to question whether an up-or-out system improves the organization or whether it does little more than weed out those who look, sound, or act differently than everyone else.

Feminist theories also provide alternatives to traditional research methodologies that valorize quantitative, generalizable data in which the male is established as the norm for measures of comparison. Feminist methodologies explore women's lives, histories, and experiences from the perspectives of the women themselves, not as a lack in comparison to men, and valorize the specificity of those narratives as opposed to generalizing them as some essential experience relevant to all women. This study does not aim to analyze or critique any specific institutional policy, such as maternity leave or requirements for promotion and tenure; however, these policies have profound effects on the lives of women within academic institutions and how they decide to construct their lives. Therefore, this study indirectly analyzes the impact of current institutional policies on women's lives and how such policies may be better formulated for improved organizational functioning and individual success. The development of this study has been guided by the five elements of a feminist critical policy analysis proposed by Bensimon and Marshall (1997): (a) It poses gender as a fundamental category; (b) it is concerned with the analysis of differences, local context, and specificity; (c) the data is the lived experience of women, and the biases of the researcher are assumed to be a part of the research and subject to the same critical inquiry; (d) the goal is to change institutions (and not to just add women); and, (e) it is an interventionist strategy, "openly political and change-oriented" (p. 9-10). These elements prove useful not only in the analysis of institutional policies but in any feminist analysis that is focused on structural and systemic levels of change.

Although research on women and organizations is not entirely new, "studying them from the perspective of their own experiences so that women can understand themselves and the world can claim virtually no history at all" (Harding, 1987, p. 8). Even though Harding wrote those words more than twenty years ago, they unfortunately still hold true today; therefore, any project

which seeks to study women "from the perspective of their own experiences" assists in building and extending this brief history of women and the world. In this study I interviewed 21 women holding the ranks of assistant professor and associate professor in the Department of English, the Business School, and selected Departments of Science at Southern Research University,[2] a public research institution in the southeastern United States, using organizational socialization and feminist theories to interpret how these women construct their academic lives. Roughly one-third of the study's participants are drawn from the Department of English (total population: 4 female assistant professors and 8 female associate professors out of 46 total faculty members with ranks of assistant professor, associate professor, or full professor), one-third are drawn from the Business School (total population: 8 female assistant professors and 12 female associate professors out of 101 total faculty members with ranks of assistant professor, associate professor, or full professor), and one-third are drawn from selected Departments of Science (total population: 6 female assistant professors and 8 female associate professors out of 122 total faculty members with ranks of assistant professor, associate professor, or full professor). The actual breakdown of interview participants, of course, depended on who agreed to take part in the study; the numbers listed above represent the entire available population at the time of this study (Population by Department Table can be found in Appendix A).

One of the propositions of this study is that women in different disciplines based in different epistemological traditions have different concepts of what it means to be a woman in the academy and they will have been socialized in different ways to those subject positions. This socialization is also affected by the relative ranking of one's graduate program; those who attended highly-ranked programs will have been more effectively socialized, it is presumed, to

[2] In order to protect confidentiality of the study's participants, Southern Research University is a pseudonym for the institution under study.

the researcher role. The professors in the three academic areas represented in this study have also varied access to resources and are compensated accordingly. Professors of English have the least access to external resources and are paid the least, professors of science have access to (indeed, are required to seek) external funding through their research, and professors of business have opportunities to pursue external consulting work. Professors of science are paid more than professors of English but less than professors of business. It is expected, therefore, that these epistemological, educational, and resource differences will affect these professors' socialization and construction as academics (Table of Participant Characteristics and Table of Salaries can be found in Appendixes B and C).

Women with ranks of full professor were not included in this study. I assumed that those who have reached full professor status would have markedly different experiences and perspectives than those just beginning an academic career (assistant professor) or those who have more recently reached tenure (associate professor). Also, full professors may have an elaborated version of themselves as subjects that follows the script of academe given that they have successfully reached the full professor rank. Women holding ranks of instructor or lecturer and those in formal university administrative positions (deans, vice presidents) were eliminated for similar reasons (though, no doubt, having very different experiences and perspectives). The decision to exclude these groups of faculty and administrators is not an attempt to devalue the importance of hearing those disparate voices, but to argue instead for hearing them in separate studies.

## Disciplinary and Organizational Socialization

The activities and roles that individuals perform within organizations are related to how

those individuals are socialized to the organization. That socialization, in turn, is influenced by disciplinary culture. Culture can be defined as "a series of contested areas, discourses, and relations of power pertaining to the nature of reality" (Tierney & Bensimon, 1996, p. 15). It is also a "network of differentiated groups," a "common commitment to overarching principles," and an "institutional framework for both resolving conflicting interests and advancing common ones. Culturally, as well as structurally, the many and the one coexist, necessitating movement among modes of thought that illuminate a configuration of contradictions" (Clark, 1987, p. 109). Indeed, the institution of higher education may best be described as a "configuration of contradictions" made up as it is of thousands of individual institutions, each of which in turn is made up of hundreds to thousands of individual faculty members, staff, and students. Colleges and universities maintain a "common commitment to overarching principles," such as the value placed upon autonomy and peer review. But they also are structured by academic disciplines, each of which forms part of the whole institution, and which also exist separately as a network of, and may be governed by, external entities in the form of regional, national, and international associations. The academic profession, as Clark (1987) describes it, "is richly endowed with supreme fictions upon which academics draw to explain to themselves and others the value of what they are doing" (p. 140). But the disciplinary subcultures that make up this profession "strains the supreme fictions, turning a broad theology into a disarray of separatist doctrines" (p. 140).

This separation of disciplinary field of study from overarching profession of professor has implications for the socialization of its members as it becomes less about similar functions and common values across the institution, and more about "incremental overlap of narrow memberships and specific identities, with disciplines and institutions serving culturally as

mediating institutions that tie individuals and small groups into the enclosure of the whole" (Clark, 1987, p. 144). Professors, in other words, have a two-fold socialization: to the academic profession at large, but more importantly, to their disciplinary field of study. One is not just socialized as a professor but as a professor of English, a professor of science, a professor of business, and so on. And, further, one is not just socialized as a professor of business but as a professor of accounting, a professor of management, and so on. Although the roles of teaching, research, and service are common to all, the specific requirements to fulfill those roles are determined by disciplinary field. So whereas the emphasis within a department of English may be as much on the teaching role as on the research role, within departments of science and business the research role is emphasized over that of teaching. And tenure requirements vary as well; English departments require publication of a book, business departments require publication of scholarly articles, and science departments require publication of scholarly articles and securing external funding. Further distinctions may be found between subfields: the number of publications and the types of publications for a professor of accounting differ from those required of a professor of management.

The term discipline, like culture, has various meanings, suggesting, equally, "habits of work, boundaries of fields, and punishment should work habits be abandoned or boundaries infringed" (Slaughter, 1997, p. 14). Institutions of higher education impose discipline through standards and measures that determine success and failure, institutions of higher education are made up of disciplines such as English and biology, and they also serve to create disciplines, through certification, accreditation, rankings, promotion, and tenure. In other words, institutions of higher education impose discipline upon students through the assignment of grades and evaluations and upon faculty through the promotion and tenure process. The institution, as

previously described, is also structured by academic discipline or field of study. The academic disciplines, through the standards and measures of success and failure that those same disciplines have determined, also create disciplinary fields. The resulting professions, such as business, medicine, and law, which are created out of those disciplinary fields, rely on the institution of higher education for credentialing. Higher education provides the means of determining the gaps between those with the credential and those without it at the same time that it has created the need for the credential in the first place. One may call herself a doctor or a lawyer but without attending an accredited medical or law school and without passing the necessary exams, one is not a board-certified doctor or lawyer.

This process of credentialing is a means as well for the professions to ensure their continued existence: “the devout believer is the Church’s way of ensuring the survival of the Church; the loyal citizen is the State’s way of ensuring the survival of the State; the scientific apprentice is Physics’ way of ensuring the survival of Physics; and the productive employee is the Corporation’s way of ensuring the survival of the Corporation” (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979, p. 211). Not only does this expert professionalism serve a reproductive function for the professions, it also perpetuates the master narrative of the institution of higher education that provides professions’ credentials. As long as individuals believe that these credentials are needed to join a profession there will be a need for higher education to provide them. At the same time, these disciplinary practices have the appearance of leveling the playing field by creating uniform standards for admissions and for successful completion of a course of study, standards that exist outside of any family connections and subjective qualifications (Rossides, 1998). Anyone, supposedly, no matter her social class, can be admitted and successfully complete professional certification. Professionalization thus creates a new expert class, which in turn creates

increasingly hierarchical structures; those who possess the expertise (the credential) have power and mastery over those who do not (Larson, 1977).

But these hierarchical structures also allow people agency; indeed, structures "as rules and resources, are both the precondition and the unintended outcome of people's agency" (Baert, 1998, p. 104). Structures give power to individuals; "all relationships of dependence provide resources which allow the subordinated to influence the superiors" (p. 101). But at the same time, by drawing on the structure for this agency, "people cannot help but reproduce the very same structures" (p. 104). According to this view, the organizational structure provides both the rules and resources that give people, including women, agency but because the organizational structure has been created out of the patriarchy it also will result in the further reproduction of this same patriarchal structure. Women, in other words, are provided the rules and the resources to change the structure but by using those rules and resources help to reproduce that same structure.

Through credentialing provided by the educational system, which gives access to the expertise needed to fulfill professional roles, individual professionals gain a small measure of control. As Brint (1994) puts it, "this technical autonomy creates a sphere of activity in which the individual worker, not the organizational hierarchy, is sovereign under normal conditions" (p. 24). However, she is sovereign only within the sphere of activity that the organization has prescribed. The organizational structure has the ultimate power in terms of defining the needed expertise, determining what acceptable behavior is, and disciplining that which deviates from those norms. Deviations from the norm will not be accepted nor supported by the hierarchy. So although individuals may feel they have acquired power or freedom as result of their expert

status, ultimately it is the structure that has the power by creating the need for such an expert in the first place and by defining the roles and activities an expert will enact.

Medicine and law are examples of professions that follow this sort of an expert credentialing process. By having a lengthy and uniform training process, the medical profession maintains an outward appearance of control over its work. Standards for admission to medical school determine required prerequisite courses as well as requiring "that the training phase start relatively early in the life cycle and continue for many years, full-time and uninterrupted" (Thorne, 1973b, p. 25). These standards regulate both which and how many aspiring doctors may enter the profession. New members discover that the medical profession, like other professions, is "in many ways a caste system" so that the process of becoming a doctor "is one not only of socialization, of learning the skills, knowledge, values, mores, life-style, and world view of the medical profession, but also of initiation into a club and brotherhood" (p. 85). They know what others do not; therefore, they, and only they, can adopt the professional identity of doctor.

Though the formal credentialing process in law takes much less time than in medicine, the legal profession also maintains an appearance of control over its work through standards for admission and a uniform curriculum. Indeed, the first-year curriculum at law schools across this country (torts, contracts, procedure, criminal law, property, and constitutional law) is still based on the Harvard curriculum from the early 1900s (Thorne, 1973a). During the standard three-year course of legal study, students are faced with "a set of rituals and experiences which serve as much to initiate and haze as to teach recruits the skills and knowledge of the profession" (Thorne, 1973a, p. 155). Much like students in medicine, law students find that they not only learn a profession, they join a brotherhood, the brotherhood of the law. It is not that one cannot

become a doctor or a lawyer without fulfilling those requirements. But how does society know one is expert enough to perform the roles of doctor or lawyer without the credentials?

The academic profession, while serving as the arbiters of these professional credentials for future doctors, lawyers, businessmen, and so forth, also aims to train individuals for faculty work and similarly prepares its members to join a brotherhood, the brotherhood of the academy. To become a professor requires extensive education, mastery of specialized knowledge, submission to peer review, and "licensing" via tenure. But what does all that mean? Is an associate professor with tenure more expert than an assistant professor without tenure? Is a professor who focuses on research a better professor than one who spends more of her time in the classroom? And preparation for the academic profession varies across the disciplines. Unlike law and medicine, within the academy the length of formal training is specific to the discipline and even sometimes the individual, depending on how long she chooses to take to complete the coursework and a dissertation. Academic training can prepare individuals for various professions, not just for the academy, further complicating the socialization process: "Is the scientist working in a university functionally in the same profession as the scientist working in industry? Or does the university scientist align himself more with professional colleagues in other universities while the industrial scientist aligns himself with his employing organization?" (Schein, 1972, p. 12-13).

Important questions thus are raised for the socialization of professors to their academic roles. As professional demands change, as the academy moves, perhaps, from a public good knowledge/learning regime to an academic capitalist knowledge/learning regime (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004), professors may be required to possess a different set of skills, behaviors, and even knowledge than they needed to be successful in the past. But convincing the institution that

such a change is needed may prove difficult. After all, “nowhere in the contemporary world do socially constructed fictions have more power than in the professions. And no profession – with the possible exception of medicine – takes its own professional imagery more seriously than the academic profession” (Rice, 1986, p. 13).

However, the norms and professional imagery that have served higher education so well in the past may not be the appropriate measures of success for the future. For instance, studies by Guinier, Fine and Balin (1997) and by Mason and Ekman (2007) demonstrate that the individuals who are entering professions today, including the academic profession, no longer look like those for whom the professions originally were structured despite the fact that “the universal person, the central subject of academic social and scientific inquiry, the active agent in history and diplomacy” (Slaughter, 1997, p. 6), is still assumed to be male. Indeed, with more women than ever entering graduate and professional schools, yet not reaching in equivalent proportion the top levels of those professions, it behooves the professions, including the academic profession, to question how women are socialized and whether that socialization prepares them for success within those fields.

Organizational socialization describes the process by which individuals learn how to become members of an organization (Van Maanen, 1977). At the beginning of one’s career, the individual is a stranger to the organization, an outsider. Over time, the individual learns to distinguish normal from abnormal behavior and thus is better able to locate herself within that setting. Although the term socialization often is used to describe how new or potential recruits learn a profession, the idea of being socialized *to* a career or a group can be misleading. It implies that “students are passive receptacles whom the socializers mold, train, and condition according to a preset model. But students are neither *tabulae rasae* nor essentially passive.”

Instead, whether they seem to or not, students “take an active part in their own education; they may resist or evade aspects of the formal training; evolve their own goals and directions of effort; and learn attitudes, values, and behavior from unofficial sources” (Thorne, 1973b, p. 91). These are, after all, human beings, with all the associated histories, experiences, thoughts, feelings, and attitudes that individuals bring to any situation. That said, “new members must be taught to see the organizational world as do their more experienced colleagues if the traditions of the organization are to survive” (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979, p. 211). It is in the best interests of the current members of the organization to mold and shape these new members in their image as much as is possible, in effect to erase the individual thoughts, feelings, and attitudes in favor of the collective. So, whereas on paper a professor’s role is to educate students, in order to ensure the survival of the academic profession “the most successful professors are expected to reproduce themselves, a process that is disparagingly referred to as academic cloning” (Rice, 1986, p. 18).

Socialization can trace its roots to Durkheim’s (1956) philosophy that “society can survive only if there exists among its members a sufficient degree of homogeneity; education perpetuates and reinforces this homogeneity by fixing in the child, from the beginning, the essential similarities that collective life demands” (p. 70). Socialization initially focused on “child-rearing practices and the transmission of the cultural heritage to the child” (Clausen, 1968, p. 139). Socialization in this view was defined as “the process (or, better, the sum total of processes) by which the organism is transformed into the person; the personality takes shape and is modified through the course of the socialization experience” (p. 139-140). Society has an identified structure, with identified roles, and it is possible to achieve a place within that structure through the socialization process. This view of the socialization process is based on the

assumption that individuals internalize and behave according to a set of normal expectations; indeed, “the normative order could not survive the easy discovery that no one believed in its validity.” As well, when individuals internalize institutional norms it “has the great social advantage of reducing the necessity of surveillance and discipline” (Moore, 1969, p. 868-869). It does not eliminate the necessity of surveillance, of course, particularly of the lower ranks. But, if everyone in the structure buys into the established norms of behavior as the way they should behave, it will not require a supervisor looking over subordinates’ shoulders as often, telling them what to do. They will just do it.

Socialization is not limited to corporate structures. Bell and Price (1975), for example, studied the socialization of state legislators to further develop and refine a model that is based on four time periods (further combined into two phases) and four processes. The authors discovered that “what the freshman knew of the rules before his legislative career appears not to be very important. What he learned during the first term appears to have been very important” (p. 83). This finding suggests that emphasis should be put on the socialization that occurs after individuals acquire new roles. This study will show that it is a similar experience to that of academics who learn more of the requirements for their academic roles once they have acquired those roles than during their formal preparation in graduate school. Further developing the literature around socialization, Van Maanen and Schein (1979) created a theory of the organizational socialization process across organizations based on six major tactical dimensions that they claim characterize the structural side of organizational socialization: (a) collective vs. individual socialization processes; (b) formal vs. informal socialization processes; (c) sequential vs. random socialization processes; (d) fixed vs. variable socialization processes; (e) serial vs.

disjunctive socialization processes; and, (f) investiture vs. divestiture socialization processes (p. 232-250).

Thus, organizational socialization theories can be situated within structural-functional theories at the more rigid end of the continuum, espousing an already-existing culture that creates individuals and provides them with their identity, and social constructionist theories at the looser end or perhaps outside the continuum altogether, describing a culture that is created by individuals and organizations in collaboration. On the more rigid end, individuals are expected to adapt in order to align with the norms and standards for behavior as prescribed by the organization. These norms and standards can be articulated and taught. Those individuals who successfully learn the rules and behave accordingly are allowed full membership in the organization. On the looser end, there are expectations to which both individuals and the organization will adapt in order to meet one another's needs. Although rules and norms for behavior still exist and can be articulated, they are not so firmly entrenched that they cannot be changed. But there are still standards for behavior and achieving success.

Prior to its examination as a site of socialization for organizational members, higher education was studied as an agent of socialization, as a means beyond high school to prepare young adults for participation in society and an extension of the student's family (Parsons & Platt, 1970). In this socializing role, the relation between the students and the university was one of subjection, whereby "it is clear that in the academic area students are almost completely powerless" (Becker, Geer, & Hughes, 1968/1995, p. 7). Students were expected to adopt norms and standards for behavior that were prescribed by the university. As the role of the university has changed, so has this relation between the university and students. Today's university and its faculty is less focused on preparing students for society in a holistic sense and more focused on

serving students' needs by providing specific job training. Other studies (Becker, 1961; Olsen & Whittaker, 1977; Reid, 1994; Schleef, 2006) have examined higher education as an agent of socialization in terms of preparing students for specific professions, including medicine, business, and law. More recently researchers (Weidman, Twale, & Stein, 2001; Austin, 2002) have examined the socialization process beginning in graduate school, acknowledging higher education as a profession that prepares future faculty members for organizational membership.

The examination of the academy as a site of professional socialization for faculty from the perspective of current faculty members is relatively recent. For example, researchers have examined this process of socialization from the perspective of adult and faculty development theory (Clark, 1986), as a source of cultural integration (Finkelstein, 1990a), for its effects on the marginalization of the traditional teaching role (Fairweather & Rhoads, 1995) as well as of public service activities (Jaeger & Thornton, 2006), for the effects of mentoring on new faculty members (Schrodt, Cawyer, & Sanders, 2003), for the prospects of continued institutional engagement by senior faculty members (Bland & Bergquist, 1997; Clark & Lewis, 1985), and for the socialization of African American faculty (Hendricks & Caplow, 1998). Hermanowicz (2002) has extensively examined the career paths of academic scientists, locating them "within the opportunities and constraints that their work cultures and structures present" (p. 141). Each of these studies provide important insights into the varied experiences of a diverse set of faculty members at a diverse set of institutions and makes clear both the commonalities of the profession of academic as well as the differences inherent in that experience to the individual and to the discipline.

Missing from the previous list of studies on the academic socialization process is an examination specific to female academics. This absence perhaps is due in part to the nature of

feminist research, which would be loathe to generalize across a so-called female academic experience, preferring instead to investigate the specific, local, individual experiences of female academics in hopes of not subjecting them to that experience. Traditional examinations of women within higher education have been based on positivistic number-counting: the number of women within the academy, their ranks, salary inequities, etc. in comparison to men (see, for example, Finkelstein, 1990b). Although it is a useful starting-place, such number-counting does not get to the level of understanding structural foundations, and more recent work has looked to the actual lived experiences of female academics in order to make sense out of organizational structures and systems. Twombly (1998), for example, examined the reasons for women's success (or lack thereof) in universities, arguing for a structural rationale versus one based on sex-role socialization because "sex role socialization and societal norms may explain how most women end up in certain fields, but it does not explain how they are able to rise to positions of leadership" (p. 384).

Other researchers (Aisenberg & Harrington, 1988; Aronson & Swanson, 1991; Christman, 2003; Collins, 1991; Forisha, 1981; hooks, 2000; Luke & Gore, 1992; Moore, 1988) examine inside-outsider positioning in terms of what women need to do to gain the coveted insider status and to move from margin to center. To move to the center women must allow themselves to be socialized in accordance with roles prescribed for them by the white patriarchy, either maintaining an inferior, "feminine" status or changing themselves in ways that makes them more like men. Although an analysis of inside-outsider positioning has its own set of problems, including an assumed complicity on the part of women in their own oppression, an implied lack of agency, and the binary nature of the argument, it proves useful as a way of looking at organizational systems and structures and the roles they play in socializing new

members. There is a set of identifiable norms and standards for acceptable behavior, norms and standards that can be taught to new members and that must be learned by new members in order to be fully integrated into the whole, in order for those individuals to be successful. Anyone who does not learn these norms and standards will not be allowed into the organization. Anyone within the organization who does not behave accordingly will be forced out. But it is possible to get inside as long as one follows the rules.

Disciplinary and organizational socialization theory informs the first research question of this study:

1. *How does disciplinary culture affect the construction of women's academic lives?*

## Women in the Academy: Role and Definition

Whereas organizational socialization theory provides a useful analysis of the influence of organizational structure and discipline on the construction of women's academic lives, feminist theory provides a critique of disciplinary and organizational socialization due to the fact that the roles and the structure are created by and for men that creates problems that women as members of the organization can not solve. Feminist theory helps in an analysis of the roles women enact within organizational structures, how they define themselves within those structures, and what it is they do there in the daily enactment of their lives. Feminist theory sees gender as a central analytic category that allows exploration of systems of power as manifested through patriarchal oppression, whether in organizational and political systems and structures or in the reproductive differences inherent in any female-male relationship. "Gendered institutions," means that gender is present "in the processes, practices, images and ideologies, and distributions of power in the various sectors of social life. . . . The law, politics, religion, the academy, the state, and the

economy are institutions historically developed by men, currently dominated by men, and symbolically interpreted from the standpoint of men in leading positions, both in the present and historically" (Acker, 1992, p. 567).

Within these institutions oppression is enacted through the aforementioned models of inside-outsider positioning: those on the inside of organizations (men) have the power, the privilege, and the knowledge, while those on the outside, on the margins (women), are power-less. Those on the margins "are dangerously near the edge, at risk of dropping out of the system altogether. At the same time, they may be drawn toward the center and the comfort of conformity, even when the price of that comfort is denial of their own subjectivity" (Aronson & Swanson, 1991, p. 159). To get to the center of the organization requires changing one's self, one's point of view, one's identity and subjectivity, in order to conform to the norm, which is (white) male-determined. To get to the center of the academic institution requires achieving tenure; indeed, those who do not are pushed out of the institution altogether. The standards for achieving tenure have been set according to male employees, who, historically, either have been single or have had stay-at-home wives to manage the household details. Because the academy has been created by and for men and is shaped to their values, beliefs, and behaviors, for a woman to succeed on the inside she must either adopt these values, beliefs, and behaviors, or risk being seen as a threat, "an anomaly and an exception, obviously a mistake, and hence is better tolerated cloaked in invisibility and lack of recognition" (Forisha, 1981, p. 17). This is, of course, an essentialist way of viewing women and organizations, leading to troubling binaries whereby women are always described in opposition to men (thus the inside-outsider positioning) and limiting the possibility for change of women, men, and organizations. It denies women's agency and prescribes them to fulfill roles and definitions as determined by the (male) structure. And

because women can never fully be men, it implies that women can never fully be successful and subjects women to a position of failure from the outset.

Such essentializing practices provide two choices for improving women's situation within institutions: either eliminating the power structure or attempting to improve it from within the structure. Applying a "specifically feminist analysis" to organizational structures helps to shed new light on "the subtleties of power and control" within those structures and provides "a nonbureaucratic vision of collective life" (Ferguson, 1984, p. 5). As a feminist view of the organizational socialization process, this analysis must take place not only at the obvious level of the organizational structure but at the deep levels of organizational discourse, in order to seek alternatives for both the structure and the discourse. Both the structure and the discourse are pervasive and incomplete, requiring ongoing reproduction in order to maintain their power and control as well as ongoing suppression of any resistance created through that reproduction. But it is by seeking out those points where the structure and discourse are reproduced and resistance is created that opportunities are found to alter and improve both the structure and the discourse. Academic institutions are the means by which such organizational discourse is created and perpetuated, which is reflected through the socializing activities, including formal education, that recruit individuals into organizational life. In order to resist oppression, therefore, one must do so from within the structure that has created and that maintains that oppression. Of course, once one is within the organizational structure and closer to the center, one has been socialized to the norms and behaviors that create and maintain that oppression and much less likely to resist it. Professors may speak of resisting the academic structure and discourse that constrains them; however, by electing to enter that structure in the first place they are upholding and perpetuating both its form and discourse.

Because women have only recently entered the workforce in large numbers and become organizational members, early work that examined various forms of gender inequality tended to focus either on the "private" domestic sphere or on larger structural issues in society and not on the impact of any specific organization (Witz & Savage, 1992). The result was that "organization theorists were not particularly interested in gender, and feminist writers had little interest in organizations, except insofar as they provided examples of a more general set of patriarchal practices" (p. 7). This perspective changed as women's roles as wives and mothers in the family and their roles as workers in the factory and office changed (Ferguson, 1984). Because of these redefined familial and organizational roles for women, there developed "the growing recognition that social structures do not exist in some abstract sense, 'out there,' but only insofar as they are instantiated in specific practices" (Witz & Savage, 1992, p. 7). Women's experiences in organizations, in other words, provide meaning both for the analysis of women and of organizations. Recently, therefore, organizational and feminist theorists have begun to analyze the role of women within organizational structures to develop a "systematic theory of gender and organizations." This work examines those institutional practices that lead to segregation of labor, income, and status, in order to understand the part that gender plays in organizations and to make organizations "more democratic and more supportive of humane goals" (Acker, 1990, p. 140). Organizations, this work finds, assume that both jobs and hierarchies have no gender. The ideal is "the abstract, bodiless worker, who occupies the abstract, gender-neutral job, has no sexuality, no emotions, and does not procreate" (p. 151). This assumed lack of sexuality, emotions, and interest in procreation both hides and reproduces gender relations in organizations. It is not that jobs are gender-neutral; it is that the ideal worker is male and segregation of labor and income maintains this ideal-worker status. Indeed, understanding how this "appearance of gender

neutrality is maintained in the face of overwhelming evidence of gendered structures is an important part of analyzing gendered institutions" (Acker, 1992, p. 568).

Of course, women (and men) do have sexuality and emotions, and do procreate, which affects their roles and their activities within organizations. Kanter's (1977) examination of "Industrial Supply Corporation," in *Men and Women of the Corporation*, illuminates "the ways in which organization structure forms people's sense of themselves and of their possibilities" (p. 3). Men and women are segregated into management and secretarial roles, respectively, maintaining and perpetuating that ideal (male) worker status. There is a "masculine ethic" associated with effective management practice: "a tough-minded approach to problems; analytic abilities to abstract and plan; a capacity to set aside personal, emotional considerations in the interests of task accomplishment; and a cognitive superiority in problem-solving and decision-making" (p. 22-23). These are characteristics assumed to belong to men; managers tend to be men, so these characteristics are used to exclude women from management jobs. Women are considered "too emotional" for management; therefore, the routine office work is "feminized" (p. 25). Women occupy the lower ranks of the organizational structure, and secretaries are tied to their (generally male) bosses in a sort of marriage relationship. This "working woman" loses her individuality to the organizational structure and discourse: "The women were visible as category members, because of their social type. This loaded all of their acts with extra symbolic consequences and gave them the burden of representing their category, not just themselves" (p. 214). They are not individuals, but secretaries, wives, mothers, etc. These images of and beliefs about men and women within organizations, Acker (2000) explains, do not have implications only for gender relations, but also "legitimize, reinforce, and even help to create class relations.

Gender images are intertwined with representations that have class and race implications" (p. 207).

The historical linkage of secretaries with women and managers with men has established the discursive norm for the secretarial role, Pringle (1989) argues in *Secretaries Talk*, which creates problems both for female secretaries and for female managers and male secretaries: "Not only can a woman not have a wife, but the discourse casts doubt on whether any woman can fully be a 'boss.' Can a boss take up the 'feminine' position and still be a boss? In our culture these unconscious meanings go deep" (p. 1-2), meanings that are reflected in reservations that women have in working for other women and that men have in filling the secretarial role. In this view meanings and definitions are tied to categories instead of to individuals. The particular cultural and organizational discourse in which "secretary" is embedded is reflective of that in which "woman" is embedded as well, and is relevant to all women no matter their role or definition: "If secretaries are represented as women they are also represented almost exclusively in familial or sexual terms: as wives, mothers, spinster aunts, mistresses and femmes fatales. The emphasis on the sexual has made it easy to treat the work itself as trivial or invisible" (p. 3). These definitions of women "have been produced for so long, and in such a variety of contexts, that alternative positions may be literally unthinkable" (p. 5). Can the organization envision a woman as "professor" instead of as "teacher," or as "employee" and not also as "wife" or "mother"? Can the organization envision "secretary" as male and "manager" as female? Of course, definitions of women's organizational roles are not fixed and must continually be produced and reproduced within the organizational discourse and structure in order to be maintained, which also provides opportunities for resistance and transformation of the roles and

definitions: “Tables can be turned, roles reversed, outcomes changed. . . . However solid the ‘structures’ might look they are not set in stone” (p. 28).

Other research on women and organizations considers additional ways that organizational structures and organizational discourse subject women to roles and activities within the structure and discourse. For instance, Bellas (1994) examines issues of comparable worth within the academy and finds that faculty in disciplines with higher percentages of women earn less than those in other disciplines. In other words, faculty, “whether they are women or men, are penalized for doing work that is typically done by women and are paid less than if the work were typically done by men” (p. 807). As a result, performing the role of professor of English is not equivalent to performing the role of professor of business, even though the actual activities performed by each are similar – teaching, research, and service. Bellas identifies three possible explanations for this disparity: some disciplines may pay less “in part *because* they are disproportionately female”; because there are fewer opportunities in those disciplines for employment outside the academy; or because of differences in the qualifications of faculty in those disciplines and the work that they do (p. 808). The first explanation “rests on the theoretical premise that because women are socially devalued, so too is the work that women do” (p. 808). Even though a professor of English and a professor of business perform similar roles, because English is a feminized discipline faculty in that field are paid less than those in business. The second explanation reflects the reality that there are more opportunities for a professor of business than a professor of English to find high-paying work outside of academia; therefore, in order to compete, faculty salaries in schools of business must increase. Also, there are fewer available academic jobs in English and a larger labor pool to fill those jobs. The third explanation rests on the assumption that women are less productive workers than men; therefore,

"the lower pay in disciplines with higher concentrations of women could simply reflect the aggregation of women's characteristics relative to men's" (p. 809).

In the end, all three explanations contribute to the discrepancy in faculty salaries, which warrants greater research and examination of salary structures as possible sources of gender discrimination within colleges and universities. Recent figures show that this discrepancy still holds true: full professors in business administration and management, on average, made 146.5% of the average salary of a full professor of English language and literature in 2005-06 (compared with 115.2% in 1985-86); full professors in the physical sciences, on average, made 112.1% of the average salary of a full professor of English language and literature in 2005-06 (compared with 108.0% in 1985-86); assistant professors in business administration and management, on average, made 201.9% of the average salary of an assistant professor of English language and literature in 2005-06 (compared with 148.5% in 1985-86); assistant professors in the physical sciences, on average, made 118.4% of the average salary of an assistant professor of English language and literature in 2005-06 (compared with 116.6% in 1985-86) (*AAUP*, 2007). At Southern Research University there is a similar, and even greater, disparity: comparing average women faculty salaries, assistant professors of science make 119% of assistant professors of English while assistant professors of business make 370% of assistant professors of English; full professors of science make 148% of full professors of English while full professors of business make 241% of full professors of English, according to January 2008 figures (Table of Salaries for SRU faculty can be found in Appendix C).

Beyond salary differences, women face other challenges when they are intruders in the traditional male domain of bureaucratic organizations, which Witz and Savage (1992) label the "paradox of women's organizational experiences": women must "behave like men but not *be*

men and behave unlike women and yet be women" (p. 53). It is a "double oppression" whereby their behavior is regulated by the bureaucracy, yet "as women they are excluded as equal organizational participants by patriarchal structures and processes" (Ramsay & Parker, 1992, p. 259). This culture of oppression is embedded, not just within formal barriers to progression to senior levels, but also in "more concrete material codes within organizations which reinforce the taken-for-granted nature of the bureaucratic solution," including building design, the internal positioning of space, clothing, and even organizational language (p. 265-267). Again, it is the challenge posed by inside-outside positioning; to be successful women must adhere to organizational codes and rules of conduct which were inscribed for and by the men. However, women can not ultimately be fully successful, because they are not men.

As women increasingly have moved into organizational structures, including the academy, as well as into higher organizational ranks, other issues have been brought to the surface, most notably the work-motherhood balance (as, in fact, they lack neither sexuality nor the interest in procreation). As women increasingly are in position to compete with men for the management and senior-level positions, they find they once again face the familiar inside-outsider problematic: how to become "one of them" when it is never fully possible. The ideal-worker norm in our society is male, one "who works full time and overtime and takes little or no time off for childbearing or child rearing," the result of which is the marginalization of those who do the care-giving, female or male, "thereby cutting them off from most of the social roles that offer responsibility and authority" (Williams, 2000, p. 1). Historically this ideal-worker – caregiver split has been reflected in the public – private sphere split, whereby "men 'naturally' belong in the market because they are competitive and aggressive; women belong in the home because of their 'natural' focus on relationships, children, and an ethic of care" (p. 1). This ideal-

worker – caregiver split results in few women holding the top professional positions because women are still saddled with home obligations (lacking stay-at-home wives of their own), and because the peak career years conflict with prime childbearing years. “Seeing that the game is devised for family-free people, some women lose heart” (Hochschild & Machung, 2003, p. xii-xiii). The lack of women in the top organizational positions is not, says Williams (2000), due to a pipeline problem. Indeed, as Crittenden (2001) points out, in the sciences alone it best can be described not as a pipeline but “a leaky pipe: a roiling Amazon of smart graduate students at one end reduced to a trickle at the other. . . . Only a handful of female graduate students make it to tenured positions in academic science departments.” Examining 1995 data, Crittenden finds that women hold less than 10% of full professorships in science and engineering, up from 3% of tenured professors in 1973. Further, “a review at MIT found that as of 1994, there were 252 men and 22 women in the six departments of science combined. Of the 17 tenured women scientists at the university, only 7 had children” (p. 39-40). Although the number of tenured faculty with children, male or female, at Southern Research University can not be accounted for, there is a somewhat better, though still deplorable, percentage of women versus men in the selected Departments of Science in this study at all levels as of 2007-2008 (25 women out of 122 total faculty, or 20%).

Williams (2000) points to two reasons for women’s difficulties ascending the organizational ranks. The first are glass-ceiling practices that include “different treatment of men and women with respect to job assignments that lead to advancement, initial placement in relatively dead-end jobs, and lack of mentoring for women” (p. 69). The second reason is the maternal wall, which is composed of a group of practices that includes “the executive schedule, the marginalization of part-time workers, and the expectation that workers who are “executive

material" will relocate their families to take a better job," but also "old-fashioned stereotyping of women who are capable of performing as ideal workers along with the men" (p. 70). Women, in other words, due to their competing role as mother, are unable to fulfill these professional expectations in a manner equivalent to their male counterparts. Instead of changing the expectations, these organizational practices marginalize women and prevent their success. The solution, according to Williams, is to change expectations of the work-family relationship to benefit women and men so they can better perform both roles. Indeed, while traditionally the work-family balance is seen as a problem specific to women, one of the consequences of having more women in the workforce is that fewer men have stay-at-home wives to take care of domestic issues. This means that men may encounter some of the same organizational roadblocks to their career progress as do women as they try to balance the roles of ideal worker and family man. One of the primary organizational roadblocks for both women and men is the lack of child care and maternity benefits for working parents in this country and in particular within the academy. It seems that to be successful in both professional and personal roles requires "extraordinary ambition and energy, full-time domestic help and an unusually supportive husband: this is the blueprint for achieving superwoman status" (Mason, 2002, p. 146-147). Perhaps it is time to redefine what this sort of success looks like, both within organizations and in larger society. "Superwoman," after all, is little more than a fairy tale.

Feminist theories which analyze women's roles, definitions, and activities within organizations inform the second and third research questions of this study:

2. *What roles do women enact as they construct their academic lives?*
3. *What activities do women perform as they construct their academic lives?*

# CHAPTER 2

# METHODOLOGICAL MOVES

## Introduction

This qualitative research project uses organizational socialization theory and feminist theory to interpret how female assistant and associate professors construct their academic lives. Qualitative research "seeks to discover participants' perspectives on their worlds, views inquiry as an interactive process between the researcher and the participants, is both descriptive and analytic, and relies on people's words and observable behavior as the primary data" (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 7-8). Feminist theories have expanded definitions of qualitative research, opening up possibilities for new ways of thinking about individuals and organizations as well as new ways of thinking about research and the research process.

Of course for a project such as this, submitted as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree, it is still necessary at least to try to define the research, to account for how I will know when I have arrived, or better, how I will know when to stop. So I will try to describe the process undertaken, to acknowledge methodological issues of objectivity and positionality, to articulate who these women are (as if it were possible) and the site chosen for study, without, I hope, betraying the women's confidence in me as the researcher, as the guardian of their stories. I do all of this to give the reader confidence in me as the researcher as well, and to let you know that the project was undertaken as it should have been. For any such project, in order to determine the ending one must begin at the beginning, with an idea, with a question, and with theory.

The theoretical frameworks that guide this study – organizational socialization and feminism – certainly guide the methodology as well. Interpretative researchers, in general, hope to shed light on some aspect of their participants' lives and researchers working out of a critical framework such as feminist theory specifically hope to use the data that they gather – the lived experiences of the participants – to highlight an aspect of the site under study that needs changing; indeed, it is hoped that the process of research will cause that change to come about (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). The researcher using a feminist theoretical framework is concerned with identifying aspects of society and culture which are forming the basis for oppression and creating opportunities or presenting alternatives for social change (Reinharz, 1992). Theories of organizational socialization help to illuminate the places and spaces in the structure where such oppression might occur as well as places and spaces where that structure might be loosened up a bit, to allow for change to happen.

The subject of a feminist research project is enmeshed in a power structure built from patriarchal oppression. As DuBois (1983) describes it, it is in peeling back the layers of that oppression, looking beneath, between, and around the silence and invisibility that "has been confirmed and perpetuated by the ways in which social science has looked at – and not seen – women," that we might find "the potential for new understandings and constructions of ourselves and our world. To address women's lives and experience *in their own terms*, to create theory grounded in the actual experience and language of women, is the central agenda for feminist social science and scholarship" (p. 108). This research project, therefore, has the potential to expose the ways in which women are (and are not) seen within traditional research, and to construct new visions of the female experience. How does one begin such a project? "We must first, quite literally, learn to *see*. To see what is *there*; not what we've been taught is there, not

even what we might wish to find, but what is. We literally *cannot see women* through traditional science and theory" (p. 109-110) because that science and theory has originated out of that same patriarchal power structure, defining both who women are and how we will see them. How do we envision a new female academic subject when using terms such as "female," "academic," and "subject," which have been constructed within a traditional humanist discourse? What follows is a description of *a* process, of *a* method, which was necessarily determined in advance of this research project, but then even more necessarily was amended and adapted during the actual doing of the research project. The method is, after all, the description of the researcher's perspective on the world and not the participants'. That belongs to the data.

## Ethnography

This research project is based on in-depth interviews as opposed to ethnographic research, although certainly many of the skills used in producing ethnography – observation, writing field notes, interviewing participants – prove useful and applicable to this study as well. Ethnography requires not only observation but experience, so that as the researcher I would live the life of a faculty member to learn "what is required to become a member of that world, to experience events and meanings in ways that approximate *members' experiences*" (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995, p. 2). Traditional ethnography developed through practices of cultural anthropology, in projects such as Dennis Tedlock's *Breath on the Mirror* (1993), one of many works describing his study of the Mayan people, Kamala Visweswaran's study of her family's Indian heritage, *Fictions of Feminist Ethnography* (1994), and Clifford Geertz's considerable life's work in many cultures. This type of research requires true immersion in the site of study

for an extended period of time, often years, in order to acquire the thick description that is necessary to describe a culture and community.

These are not the goals of this study; however, as I am part of the higher education community at large, it can be argued that ethnographic research is, and has been, ongoing. I am, first, a student of higher education, and have been one for the completion of a bachelor's degree, a master's degree, and now a doctorate, for a total of more than ten years of experience in a higher education environment; six of those years were spent at a research institution. Consciously or not I have spent some of that time observing faculty behavior both male and female as well as observing the culture of the higher education community. Ask me what a university looks like, acts like, feels like, and I can describe it. I can describe what happens in a classroom, in the library, at sporting events. I can describe the inside of a professor's office, and the smell of the hall outside, walls of painted cinderblock, floors of linoleum, the florescent lights overhead. I am also, more specifically, a student of higher education in that I am pursuing a doctorate in higher education administration, which allows me to speak more fully to financial issues, political realities, and the historical precedents of the institution of higher education. And, finally, I work in higher education, as an administrator for service and outreach programs, which provides yet another view on the day-to-day functioning of a university.

So in a way I always have been doing, and continue to do, ethnographic research on higher education. At the same time I have never been, and never will be, these women faculty. I can enter their offices and lab spaces, but I never will be a professor of English, business, or science. I never will teach or write articles on Dickens, accounting, or fruit flies. Although one might presume to do ethnographic research, it is important to question whether it is fully possible. How close must you get to truly know your participants' experiences and their lives?

As Fay (1996) asks, do you have to be one, to know one? And if so, is it then still possible to step outside and analyze what one is?

Ethnographic research offers important lessons for doing other forms of qualitative research. Writing field notes or keeping a researcher's log is a crucial part of the research process in terms of documenting what the researcher is doing and feeling "as these factors shape the process of observing and recording others' lives" (Emerson, Fretz, & Shaw, 1995, p. 11). It is important to remember the potential power relationships involved: "fieldwork represents an intrusion and intervention into a system of relationships, a system of relationships that the researcher is far freer than the researched to leave" (Stacey, 1988, p. 23). Simply by entering my participants' offices and asking the questions, I disrupt their lives. I may leave after an hour or two, but what lasting effect might I have? This intrusion extends beyond the field of study, as "an ethnography is a written document structured primarily by a researcher's purposes, offering a researcher's interpretations, registered in a researcher's voice" (p. 23). As Sprague and Zimmerman (1989) go on to point out, "where the researcher interprets or reinterprets the views or behavior of women, then it is the researcher and not the woman who is privileged. . . . Even if we just point the microphone, we are pointing it somewhere and not all the other wheres" (p. 74). I may aim to discover the participants' perspectives on their worlds, but it is I as the researcher who interprets those perspectives, who decides what is important and what is not, who presumes to introduce meaning into their narratives. And when all is said and done this document will be printed, and bound, and accessible in hard copy and electronically, for others to read and in doing so to introduce their own meanings. It is an intrusion, indeed.

## Oral History

Similar to ethnographic research, although this study is not an oral history the skills of oral history research can have a positive impact on the interviewing process. For example, Seldon and Pappworth (1983) provide important warnings regarding the limitations of participants and oral evidence, which can prove unreliable due to memory, distortion and the influence of hindsight, limitations of the oral history interviewer and various forms of bias, and limitations of the oral history interviewing process itself, including time, money, participant selection, and the impossibility of capturing "true" communication. Oral history research "reminds us that we desire to make sense of our lives, that we construct and reconstruct our personal histories based on new events and knowledge" (St. Pierre, 1995, p. 172). Memory is not infallible. History is perspective. Memory "is not to be relied upon; memory always indexes a loss" (Visweswaran, 1994, p. 68). Where, St. Pierre (1995) asks, "is the truth in oral history?" (p. 174).

Traditionally, oral history research was performed both by and with men, to uncover the history of men's lives, and particularly of those in some position of power (of course, oral history outside of the academy has gone on for generations by both men and women as a means to pass down information, to pass on life stories). More recently, as women have entered the research arena both as participants and as researchers, oral history has emerged as a way to capture the stories of women's lives.[3] But, just as with ethnography, it is important that we recognize the inherent power differentials in such research and the potential for subject/object positioning, and try to balance what we as researchers think is important and "what the women we are

[3] Oral history is also a useful tool when the researcher is interested in discovering something of personal interest (Thomas, 2002). It is not necessary, to do such work, that the participant see herself as a feminist, and more than likely she will not. It can still be a feminist project if it creates a new type of material and a history on women and women's experiences (Gluck, 2002).

interviewing think was important about their own lives" (Gluck, 2002, p. 7). As Armitage (2002) instructs, "in any interview, some parts matter more to the narrator than others. . . . Regardless of our agenda in the interview, we must recognize these nuggets as the things that matter most to the narrator" (p. 67). If we pay attention, "we can find out how women shaped their lives. If we listen carefully, we will hear meanings that will allow us to reconstruct the world of the female subculture" (p. 68). And as always we must remember what happens in the retelling of those lives, that interpretation is always a distortion, a snapshot rather than a moving picture.

## The Interview

Just as the results of any interpretive research study are constantly shifting and sliding, moving in and out of focus, one of the benefits of qualitative research is that it allows room for change; responses by individual participants help shape and form the research design as much as the researcher does. Rubin and Rubin (1995) liken it to planning a trip without a fixed itinerary: you know where you want to go, but not, necessarily, how you are going to get there. For some of us, such a lack of structure is nerve-wracking at best, and potentially terrifying. But once we let go of that need for structure we find that opportunities exist when we turn left, when we would rather turn right. Sometimes, in fact, the best things can be found around unknown corners.

This study relied upon in-depth interviews to capture, as fully as is possible, the lived experiences of the participants, in their own words and based on their own interpretations (Interview Protocol may be found in Appendix D). According to Glesne (1999) the intent of the interview is "to capture the unseen that was, is, will be, or should be; how respondents think or feel about something; and how they explain or account for something" (p. 93). Additionally,

interviews provide insight into the meanings that people hold for their everyday activities (Marshall & Rossman, 1999). Such was the goal of this study's interviews, to talk with the participants about their experiences as women in the academy, to investigate the paths of their professional lives and to gain at least a partial view into what that "means" to them. Each interview began with a question meant to identify the participant's theoretical positioning and to initiate the conversation around role and definition. The participants were asked to react to the following quotes:

> The grand narrative of the University, centered on the production of a liberal, reasoning, subject, is no longer readily available to us. . . . None of us can now seriously assume ourselves to be the centered subject of a narrative of University education. (Readings, 1996, p. 9-10)

> The shift from a public good knowledge/learning regime to an academic capitalist knowledge/learning regime "requires us to rethink the centrality and dominance of the academic profession." The academic capitalism knowledge/learning regime "sees the economy rather than the polity as central to the citizenry's well-being. This approach affects the kinds of students, types of education, and types of research that we fund." (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004, p. 10, 37)

> Culture is the sum of activities in the organization, and socialization is the process through which individuals acquire and incorporate an understanding of those activities. Culture is relatively constant and can be understood through reason. An organization's culture, then, teaches people how to behave, what to hope for, and what it means to

succeed or fail. Some individuals become competent, and others do not. (Tierney, 1997, p. 4-5)

Although I entered into the research process with a set of interview questions, it was important that I remain flexible and willing to change those questions depending upon the path of the conversations with the participants, to hear their perspectives on the world instead of just getting their thoughts on my perspective of the world (Merriam, 1998). The ideal interview situation would be one where there is a true, equal partnership, so that "the relationship of interviewer and interviewee is non-hierarchical" (Oakley, 1981, p. 41). The reality is that does not happen. Generally speaking, in interview situations the researcher holds a certain amount of power over participants in that she is asking the questions, she controls the direction of the interview and the interpretation and the representation of the data. A researcher in this sort of power relationship has considerable potential to do harm to her participants, to coerce them to do or to say things they may not be ready or willing to do or to say. In this case, however, I am entering the field as a student and my participants are faculty and skilled and experienced researchers. In this relationship they hold the power, with potential to shape the interview to their particular needs. As Marshall and Rossman (1999) point out, this situation poses problems for gaining access and may even affect the interview itself, as "the interviewer may have to adapt the planned-for structure of the interview, based on the wishes and predilections of the person interviewed" (p. 113-114). Certainly, a few of the participants in this study dove in with questions of their own, altering the direction of the conversation before I even had a chance to ask an initial question.

As skilled researchers the participants in this study had the ability to manage the construction of their identity and image as it was conveyed through the research process. No one

was forced by me to participate in the study and certainly there were those who refused and more who just never responded. Some, perhaps, lacked the time or the interest. They were quite cognizant of issues of confidentiality, and several declined to participate due to these issues, and several others who agreed to participate spoke openly of their concerns regarding confidentiality and noted that they were choosing their words carefully. Easily, any one of the participants or potential participants could have derailed the entire project with a phone call to my advisor or to the human subjects' office. It is not, of course, the intention of this study to do harm, but I must admit that I would not mind if it shook things up a bit, if it made the academic structure a little bit looser and not so confining. I am, after all, like my participants, a woman in the academy. Their stories are part and parcel of my own. And if they lack a bit of confidence in me or in my study, who am I to begrudge them that? From where I sit, looking at where they sit, well, I would lack some confidence in things happening as they should, too.

This project is, at its heart, an attempt to hear the stories of academic women's lives, to hear how those lives have been constructed and are constantly being reconstructed through the retelling, and then to make some further reconstruction through the interpretation: "We not only live our lives as a story, as we tell our stories we relive, reconstruct, and reinterpret our experiences for later retelling and further reconstruction and reinterpretation. Stories both reflect experience and are constitutive of experience" (McCormack, 2000a, p. 286). It is potentially dangerous territory, both for the participants and for me as well, and the opportunities for missteps along the way are great. But as Foucault (1984/1990) reminds us, it is often these times of uncertainty and danger that provide the greatest value: "There are times in life when the question of knowing if one can think differently than one thinks, and perceive differently than one sees, is absolutely necessary if one is to go on looking and reflecting at all" (p. 8).

## Objectivity/Positionality

Interpretation of the data is not an activity that occurs in isolation from the research process. It is ongoing, continual reflection, throughout the study, beginning even before the study when the idea of a question is first conceived. There can be no strict timeline: first I read, then I interview, then I interpret (Creswell, 2003; Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Indeed, as I am a member of the culture under study, the institution of higher education, both as a student and as an employee, it can be said that interpretation is always already occurring as I bring prior knowledge and assumptions about the culture under study to the work. This is not an innocent, or even an easy, position to fulfill, as St. Pierre (1995) describes in her work on older southern women. Not only do I study my participants, but, necessarily, I study myself. It is vitally important that I interrogate this space as well. What does it mean when the study at hand is about women and I am a woman? What does it mean when the study is about women in the academy and I am a woman in the academy? It becomes even more important that I pursue a continual process of reflection on the study and on my own role within it.

Traditional humanist research advocates a separation between "the observer and the observed, the knower and the known" (DuBois, 1983, p. 111) while feminist research argues that such a separation is not in fact possible. If women are to follow "the methodological principle of a value-free, neutral, uninvolved approach, of an hierarchical, non-reciprocal relationship between research subject and research object" they must then "repress, negate or ignore their own experience of sexist oppression and have to strive to live up to the so-called 'rational' standards of a highly competitive, male-dominated academic world" (Mies, 1983, p. 120-121). Following this methodological principle does not, and will not, allow us to explore women's lives and to see them outside of the relations of power created and perpetuated by male

oppression. Therefore, feminist researchers, instead of striving for objectivity, instead strive to account for what they see and how they see it and the possible violence in those visualizing practices (Haraway, 1988; Cook & Fonow, 1990). Feminist researchers note the importance of acknowledging that we "are not simply subjects, but we are subjects in dialogue with the Other" (Madison, 2005, p. 9). The process of the research study itself, the conversations between researcher and participants, is as much a part of the construction of their lives as is the retelling of what has come before. The epistemological questions shift, from "What can I know?" and "How do I know it?" to "What counts as knowledge in this particular instance?", "How was it produced?", and "What are its effects?" (St. Pierre, 1995, p. 81-82). Not only are the participants in this study producing themselves in practice, creating and recreating their lives in the retelling, but I too am producing them in the representational choices that I make. And, I too am producing myself and am being produced through the process of the research. The line between subject and object, between self and other, blurs indefinitely.

By recognizing our positionality, we acknowledge "our own power, privilege, and biases just as we are denouncing the power structures that surround our subjects." We ask, "what are we going to do with the research and who ultimately will benefit? Who gives us the authority to make claims about where we have been? How will our work make a difference in people's lives?" (Madison, 2005, p. 7). Positionality, Madison argues, is more than subjectivity. Positionality "requires that we direct our attention beyond our individual or *subjective* selves. Instead, we attend to how our subjectivity *in relation to the Other* informs and is informed by our engagement and representation with the Other" (p. 9). The feminist researcher can not deny or ignore the authority and power that exists in the researcher-researched relationship, even as she

strives to encourage cooperation, sharing, nurturing, and giving voice to the silenced. Nor can she deny or ignore how she may be subjected by her own study.

The representation of research data thus can be fraught with peril. Although I may harbor some illusions about the potential for alternative forms of representation, in a project such as this, the doctoral dissertation, ultimately it is necessary that I write my interpretations down, that I present findings as based on some form of reality I claim to have discovered. I must, therefore, constantly remind both myself and the reader that this reality is nothing more than a construction, an interpretation, that these are "stories about stories, views about views" (Geertz, 1995, p. 62). I must remember that behind each one of the stories is a person, and that "ethical and accountable research demands that when we write these stories we do not write research participants out of their lives" (McCormack, 2000b, p. 312). At the same time, "even though the text we construct may enable different interpretations, we, as researchers/authors, still initiate the project, define the questions, play with theory and practice, stage the text, choose the words, and use rhetorical devices to inscribe and erase. We cannot escape responsibility for our own constructions" (St. Pierre, 1995, p. 305). I cannot avoid both the impossibility of and the necessity for the research report that lies ahead, and I long, perhaps, to put the entire project under erasure.

## Method

For this research study I interviewed 21 female professors at Southern Research University, a public research institution in the southeastern United States. Eleven hold the rank of assistant professor and 10 hold the rank of associate professor. Six are professors in the Department of English, eight are professors in the Business School, and seven are professors in selected Departments of Science. While these were the only sample selection criteria for the

study – female, rank, department – additional characteristics emerged during the course of the study related to educational background and current relationship status. The effects of these characteristics will be discussed in the chapters that follow (Table of Participant Characteristics can be found in Appendix B). The English department head, the dean of the Business School, and two senior faculty gatekeepers in the Departments of Science were contacted by email to inform them of the study prior to the initiation of contact with participants (Department Head/Dean's Letter can be found in Appendix E). Again, it should be noted that I am unaware of any coercion of participants on the part of these individuals either to or not to participate in the study.

Thirty-eight potential participants were contacted by email to invite them to participate in the study (Participant Letter can be found in Appendix F). Eighteen of these potential participants hold assistant professor rank and 20 hold associate professor rank. Eleven of the potential participants are faculty in the Department of English, 13 are faculty in the Business School, and 14 are faculty in selected Departments of Science. These numbers represent the entire population of females holding the ranks of assistant professor and associate professor in the Department of English, the Business School, and selected Departments of Science at this institution at the time of this study.[4] The 38 potential participants received the initial email invitation and then either a follow-up email or a telephone call several days later. From these initial contacts, 21 professors agreed to participate and 6 declined the invitation. Eleven individuals did not respond at all (Population by Department Table can be found in Appendix A). Interviews took place beginning in October 2007 and concluding in May 2008. Each of the

[4] One potential participant who currently holds a university administrative position and five potential participants who are considered "teacher educators" as opposed to research faculty were removed from the potential participant pool due to an expectation that their experiences within the academy would vary dramatically from the rest of the participant pool.

interviews lasted 1-2 hours. Each of the interviews were conducted, digitally audio-taped, transcribed, and analyzed by me and served as the primary texts for data analysis. I examined these texts for common themes, feelings, and experiences across the participants; additionally, the texts were analyzed for that which was different. Despite my previous assertion of the importance of continual reflection, for the purposes of this document the chapters that follow will first present the women in their own voices, separated by department, before presenting my final analysis, interpretation, and reflection both on the data and on my own role in the research process.

## The Field

There is perhaps no one better suited to describe the experience of entering "the field," that nebulous space where research is thought to occur – is it more so in my participants' offices than when I am by myself, in a café, walking across the quad, sitting in front of this computer – than the anthropologist Clifford Geertz. Field research, Geertz (1995) says, "is not a matter of working free from the cultural baggage you have brought with you so as to enter, without shape and without attachment, into a foreign mode of life. It is a matter of living out your existence in two stories at once" (p. 94). I am both researcher and researched, both graduate student and potential future academic, both of and outside the study at hand. It is a schizophrenic existence to say the least, and as I asked my participants questions regarding the multiple identities they are forced to juggle I too was forced to recall the self I was choosing to be in that moment. It is impossible to divorce yourself from your self, as Geertz describes it: "You may set out to isolate yourself from cosmopolitan concerns and contain your interests within hermetical contexts. But the concerns follow you. The contexts explode" (p. 95). So now I will try to describe this place,

this Southern Research University, so similar to so many other institutions across the country and yet so individual. I will try to do so without, in the process, betraying my participants' trust and confidence, which was given so willingly to me, and which I now hand over to you. I hope that by doing so you will get a better sense of this place that has figured so prominently (and yet so tangentially) in the construction of these women, and that you will be better prepared for the stories which are to come.

The site of this study is Southern Research University (SRU), a public, four-year, doctoral-granting institution located in the southeastern United States in a quintessential "college town." The university effectively dominates the politics, economy, and social life of the town's inhabitants. SRU has a tri-fold mission that includes teaching, research, and public service, a mission that now extends beyond the town's and the state's borders, and even overseas. The campus has that typical college look and feel: green, tree-lined quads, red-brick buildings, the sense that something important is happening there. It is a "football school" and each fall the campus and town alike are consumed with the big Saturday game. The town meets the campus at its borders and the two effectively merge together into one to the casual observer. To those who live in the town the separation is far more distinct, and the two sides – the town and the gown – keep a respectful, if wary, eye on one another. Each day that I conducted an interview, I would cross these borders, walking through the downtown, across the threshold of the campus, moving, as it were, from civilian to academic. Afterwards, I would reenter the town's environs, perhaps to sit at a café and process my thoughts, reflecting upon the conversation that had just taken place, feeling as I did the campus slide off of me a little bit, as if I had a limited time to capture what had just happened, as if I did not get it all down, it would just go away, just disappear. And then, just like that, it did.

## Limitations and Possibilities

All studies, despite the theoretical frame or the methodology employed, have limitations, and this study is no different. Certainly, "part of demonstrating the trustworthiness of your data is to realize the limitations of your study" (Glesne, 1999, p. 152). When using qualitative methods the researcher sacrifices the ability to generalize from the data; this study can make no further assertions than what it has uncovered about these particular women in these particular departments at this particular institution at this particular time. Although it is hoped that any lessons learned may be applicable elsewhere, scientifically speaking, at least, that statement can not be made. Qualitative methodology necessarily sacrifices breadth for depth; what may be lost in generalizability is gained in intensity.

That being said, "qualitative interviewing is warranted whenever depth of understanding is required. It is also the way to explore the broader implications of a problem and place it in its historical, political, or social context" (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p. 52). It is my opinion that this study is both needed and important. It explores the construction of the academic lives of women, a growing yet still minority population within higher education faculty, staff, and senior executives, even as the number of female undergraduates surpasses that of males. The experiences shared with me by the women of this study, although limited to each as individuals, at the same time can be interpreted as speaking to larger issues within the academy, issues related to preparation for the academic role, fulfilling that role, and work-life balance, issues which are addressed in the final chapter of this study. However, the study is constrained by its narrow focus on a limited number of departments within just one institution, a constraint based on factors of time and money. This is neither an ethnography nor an oral history, nor is it a survey. Methodological choices were both informed and necessary; indeed, "a crucial factor is

not the number of respondents but the potential of each person to contribute to the development of insight and understanding of the phenomenon" (Merriam, 1998, p. 83). I believe that you will agree with me that these women far exceeded that potential for this study.

This project provides room to ask questions such as: What possible lines of flight might be discovered when female academic is no longer who I am but instead just one of the ways that I produce myself in practice?; what might that place look like, if it is no longer a place of subjection, and its members are no longer constrained to the discursive boundaries of the patriarchal academic institution?; and, keeping in mind Bensimon and Marshall's (1997) guidance to be "change-oriented," what are the possibilities for the community of higher education if those discursive boundaries and that institutional structure were allowed to open up, just a bit? Is it possible to imagine new ways of organizing, not based on academic discipline, new ways of measuring success, not based solely on research output, new measures of reward and even discipline, not defined by either up or out? Is it possible that a more productive organization might be found where community is honored over competition? I think you will find at least one answer to these questions here, here among the strong, smart, talented, caring women of Southern Research University. These are just some of their stories. The rest I leave to them.

# CHAPTER 3

# THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

*"I don't have a hard life. Hard is when you have to get up in the morning and work three jobs and be worried about what kind of child care you have for your kid. I don't have as hard a life as my mother, I don't have as hard of a life as my grandmother. I have a good life."*
*Ellen, Associate Professor of English, Southern Research University*

The Department of English at Southern Research University is part of the university's College of Arts and Sciences and is found in a large, older red-brick building that sits on the edge of the historic section of the campus. It is one of only a few departments on campus that touches every single student at some point during their university careers due to core curriculum requirements. At the time of this study, the Department of English had 46 full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty members, 19 of whom were women (41.30%), which was the largest percentage of women found in the departments under study here. On average, female assistant professors in the Department of English at SRU make $43,513 and female associate professors make $64,088 (Table of Salaries can be found in Appendix C). Six of these women agreed to participate in this study: four assistant professors, Jane, Lucy, Debra, and Kelly, and two associate professors, Margaret and Ellen.[5] Their stories follow.

## Role and Definition: The Academy and the Individual

My first interview is with Jane, who is small in physical stature but a spunky and friendly

[5] Names of participants in this study and certain identifying characteristics have been changed to protect confidentiality.

assistant professor. Jane's office is representative of those belonging to the other assistant professors of English in this study: simple, small, and fairly uncluttered. The bookshelves are only half-filled and there is only one personal photo on display. It appears as if she may spend limited time there or that she does not want to reveal too much about herself. More likely, she has not had time yet to fully occupy the space; at the time that we talk Jane has only been at SRU for a few months. Or perhaps, as SRU is her second tenure-track position since getting her Ph.D., she has not fully resigned herself to staying there for the long-term. She left her previous position, she says, in part due to frustrations with a heavy teaching load that allowed little time for a life outside of the academy: "I decided that if I didn't get a job I was quitting the academy, I was going to do something else. Because the hours were just killing me. There's only so long I can survive off of four and five hour nights. It was just too much." When we speak it is too soon to tell if the academic lifestyle at SRU will be better suited to her needs; however, the frustrations Jane describes are echoed by many of the participants in this study regarding the academic career: the hours are long and the personal costs are high, leading for some to poor health, marital problems, and difficult choices between family and tenure. These challenges relate to how these women define themselves within the academy and how they are defined by the academic organizational discourse and structure. Although they may try to identify and define those roles for themselves, the relations of power found within the academic structure are deeply embedded and are difficult to resist.

In order to begin this conversation around how the women define themselves within the academy, each is asked to select between three quotes the one that most adequately reflects how she sees the institution of higher education and her role within it. The quotes, from Bill Readings, Sheila Slaughter and Gary Rhoades, and William Tierney, reflect diverse but

commonly-held views about the current and future state of higher education in the United States: that the modern university is "in ruins," no longer able to support a metanarrative of creating the rational man; that the university has moved from a public good knowledge/learning regime to an academic capitalist knowledge/learning regime; or, that the university continues to exist as a humanist, modernist institution, transmitting stable values and norms of institutional culture through the process of socialization:

> The grand narrative of the University, centered on the production of a liberal, reasoning, subject, is no longer readily available to us. . . . None of us can now seriously assume ourselves to be the centered subject of a narrative of University education. (Readings, 1996, p. 9-10)

> The shift from a public good knowledge/learning regime to an academic capitalist knowledge/learning regime "requires us to rethink the centrality and dominance of the academic profession." The academic capitalism knowledge/learning regime "sees the economy rather than the polity as central to the citizenry's well-being. This approach affects the kinds of students, types of education, and types of research that we fund." (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004, p. 10, 37)

> Culture is the sum of activities in the organization, and socialization is the process through which individuals acquire and incorporate an understanding of those activities. Culture is relatively constant and can be understood through reason. An organization's culture, then, teaches people how to behave, what to hope for, and what it means to

> succeed or fail. Some individuals become competent, and others do not. (Tierney, 1997, p. 4-5)

Overwhelmingly, the women of the Department of English agree that universities have shifted in their purposes along the lines of Slaughter and Rhoades' analysis, reflecting both their position within the institutional structure as outsiders to such a model and the resulting pressure that they feel, therefore, to resist it. It is a shift that proves challenging for professors in the humanities, who lack the resources to engage with the economy in that way. And yet, they argue, they do participate in that model by teaching students the skills that ultimately will help them to get jobs. More importantly, says Jane, as English professors their role is to get students to think critically, which "both participates [in] and disrupts that trend." Critical thinking is a much-needed skill in today's workforce, but she says she hopes that those who do choose to uphold the consumerist model described by Slaughter and Rhoades will do so "with their eyes wide open, about what the larger implications of that move are."

The larger implication for the professors of English is that this move within the academy affects their interactions with students. In today's academy, the students are the customers and there is an underlying expectation that professors will provide good grades in exchange for tuition paid. Debra, an older assistant professor from outside the United States, describes this tension between faculty and student expectations related to the role of higher education as an ongoing struggle: "I'd like to think that we were here to sit around and think big thoughts and solve the problems of the world, but I'm constantly confronted with this idea that there are grades to be awarded, there is success and there is failure." Kelly, another assistant professor whose young and casual appearance could easily belong to one of her students, agrees that college has become little more than job training or a hoop that students must jump through to

gain employment. The institution caters to this view of the student as consumer by allowing class shopping and providing late withdrawal dates and creating facilities that attract students and cater to their desires, all of which places the importance on their wants and needs as opposed to placing it on the value of receiving a quality education. As a result, Kelly says that "often we're fighting this losing battle but you're constantly trying to make students understand that they've gotta view their education in the long term or rethink the way that they think about things in general. That's what humanities education is all about." Again, it is the tension between expectations. The professors of English feel the need to try to participate within a consumer-based model and at the same time feel obligated to try to disrupt that model.

It is not just the assistant professors who are struggling with this move. Both of the associate professors of English in this study, Margaret and Ellen, agree that the university is shifting towards a consumer-based model and both say they perform ongoing acts of resistance towards this model. Indeed, these acts of resistance, Ellen says, are what keep her participating in the academy because she does not believe the current model is "necessarily inevitable. Or forever." That being said, it is questionable how much resistance she is providing, considering that she has achieved tenure and served for a time in a (departmental) administrative role, both of which uphold the current discourse and structure. And Ellen believes that "if you're going to try to contest the system, that's where you have to be. . . . if you really want to make big policy changes, you have to be an administrator."

Both associate professors recognize that the Department of English as a whole must be more proactive in seeking out external funding to more effectively participate in the move towards academic capitalism, and that there is an increased need to explain, for instance, the economic value of freshman composition classes to their students. But even in the latter, says

Margaret, a former activist, there still can be resistance: “I really talk to [students] in terms of their professional visions and their professional desires. . . . and I’m hoping that where they want to go is some place more than making money.” Of course, these professors of English have done just that – they are paid the least of the three fields represented in this study; however, if they realize this, or if it affects them, they do not acknowledge it directly. Not one of them says that they are not paid enough for their roles, and several note that they are “lucky” to be paid to do what they do. They focus instead on the institutional, as opposed to the individual, realities of a move towards an academic capitalist model that prescribes certain roles for individuals within that model and requires that they find ways to compete with those who have greater access to resources. But there is still room for resistance to that move; indeed, it is part of their roles as professor both to provide and to point out opportunities for that resistance to their students.

These English professors, both assistant and associate, define themselves within the academy as teachers first and foremost. But they also see themselves as agents of change who get their students to think more critically about the larger world around them. Two of the professors in particular discuss their personal leanings towards feminist political and social activism and how that work impacts what happens in their classrooms. Jane, the assistant professor in her second tenure-track position who opened this chapter, says that she personally contributes to protests and to feminist and civil rights issues and requires that her classes read activist literature. It is useful, she thinks, “to teach people that they don’t have to live with the status quo. They don’t have to live with discrimination. There are new ways to imagine relating to each other.” It is another way that the humanities can contribute to students’ success in the real world and another possible way to resist that definition of success as well.

Margaret, one of the two associate professors, worked for various feminist causes before embarking on an academic career and uses those activist experiences in her discussion of literature with her classes. Perhaps due to those experiences, Margaret is the only participant in this study who explicitly notes the social class issues that arise when one joins the academy as a professor and enters the professional managerial class, a move that provides a sort of "cultural privilege," no matter one's social class of origin. Several participants in this study acknowledge their own working-class backgrounds as the first of their family to go to college; that and the resulting entrée into this professional managerial class provide another source of tension for them. Margaret describes her own decision to pursue academia as "a kind of class betrayal" of her grandparents, none of whom made it through junior high school. And even though both of her parents were college-educated, she also describes feeling betrayal of her own mother. She recalls that she and a friend delayed completing their dissertations "because on some level it would be to betray our mothers, both of whom would have wanted to do this and couldn't have because of their class of origin." Margaret, who is now tenured, has achieved a measure of success within the academy and does not seem to struggle anymore with these issues. But for some of the younger participants these class tensions have affected their ability to fully adopt the identity of professor.

In addition to their roles as teachers, the English professors also contribute to and expand the field of knowledge through their research. But this latter role seems to be something they realize that they have to do, in order to fulfill the role of professor that is prescribed by the academy, whereas the former is what truly drives them and sparks their passions. As Ellen, one of the associate professors, says, "being an academic is continuing to learn myself and then, not just teaching people information but I hope to teach them passion and love and the real delight of

learning." Even when describing the administrative role she recently performed Ellen talks about the joys of teaching students through advising and "helping them negotiate massive bureaucracy." There is a disconnect at times between the competing demands of the academic profession, between what they have to do according to the academic structure and discourse and what they want to do, a disconnect that for some seems to become evident to them only as we are talking. Debra, for example, the older assistant professor from outside the U.S., reflects with an air of surprise, "It's weird, isn't it? Most of the research and the prep has to do with me, on my own, with a stack of books. And yet the thing that's driving all of that is the face to face interaction with the students." She says it with a tone that implies that she wishes there were more of the latter and a bit less of the former. Margaret, the former activist, and as a tenured associate professor better able, perhaps, to pursue her own agenda, identifies herself as "a teacher, first, and an academic, second," yet voices frustration at not having enough time due to the competing demands to do her work, by which she means her research. At times, she says, she feels like a "cog in the corporation," reflecting again the institution's move to a consumer-based model. Other times, she says, "I feel like I'm part of an active community. And one that's really vital."

Although several of the women within the Department of English point to the "freedom" allowed by the academic profession – freedom to teach how they want, freedom to interact with students how they want, freedom to study what is of personal interest – as one of the perks of the academic career, by and large it is those teaching moments, those "aha" moments with students, that they identify as the moments of "real pleasure," as Jane puts it, that "makes it all worth it." Margaret is one who talks about feeling "so lucky" to be able to perform the role of academic: "I sit there reading a Charles Dickens novel and laughing out loud and I think, this is what I'm

doing for a living? You know, I can't believe I'm getting away with this! It's just so incredibly satisfying." So much so, she says, "for all my complaints about it, and I have endless complaints, everybody does, I love it. I would not, I don't look back for a second. You know? I really don't."

But many of the English professors, Margaret included, reflect on moments that they have questioned their decision to enter academia and other career paths they would have, or could have, pursued. Both Jane and Margaret, for example, mention alternative professions, both real and imagined, that would better encompass their activist leanings. Lucy, a petite assistant professor from outside the United States who is still in her first year at SRU, imagines a whole host of other careers ranging from government jobs to writing to running a bakery. "One has fantasies," she says, "fantasies of other jobs. Jobs you know with rigid schedules, or jobs with no schedule at all. You don't have to teach at all." Like many of the professors of English, she did not plan to become a professor and says she thinks about "giving it up every week." She then wonders aloud, somewhat jokingly, "Doesn't everyone?"

There is a fair amount of internal conflict on the part of these English professors regarding the roles of professor. It is conflict that is not equally seen among the professors of business or the professors of science. The professors of English are caught in the organizational structure and discourse in a field in which they believe but that perhaps is not equally valued by the university any longer. They must perform the role of researcher that at times seems at odds with the role of teacher they themselves value. They view part of their role is to point out opportunities for resistance to the structure and discourse to their students, but they do not necessarily question their own participation within that structure and discourse. In other words, none of the English professors indicated they would refuse to fulfill the requirements for

promotion and tenure as dictated by the disciplinary structure, even if they might fantasize of other career paths they could have followed.

Their internal conflict with the roles of professor in part may be due to the fact that the path to academia was neither orchestrated nor necessarily easy for these women. The discipline of English generally requires many years for credentialing without particularly great chances for a tenure-track position upon completion. Though highly-educated, an individual with a Ph.D. in English is not necessarily well-prepared for alternative professions, unlike professors of business and even science who have employment options in their fields within the private sector. Though passionate about their fields of study, the career path of the English professor seems to be one of chance; none of the women knew that this was her chosen profession from an early age. Jane, for example, the assistant professor who self-identifies as a feminist and an activist, recalls as a young girl wanting to be a teacher "to help people" and because "you get your summers off and all your holidays off and you're in school at the same time as your kids are in school," which seemed quite practical to her at the time. In college that desire "to help people" was clarified when she was introduced to political and feminist literature and she realized "that I wanted to help other people like me feel comfort, not feel so alone, not feel so isolated. And, have strategies for dealing with the prejudices that they encounter." It is that desire for building community that led her not only to her activist work but also to the professorial role.

For several of the participants becoming a professor has required that they learn how to perform a role. Debra spent several years doing office work in her home country and even though she describes literature as her "first love" it was not something she could envision as a career. It was not until she saw her younger siblings go to college that she realized that, even though neither her parents nor her grandparents had done so, she could in fact be a college

student. But she still was not thinking of becoming a professor. It was not an identity – teacher – she could imagine for herself. As she moved into that role she became more comfortable with it and with "talking to a bunch of students, going to big lecture halls, going to international conferences, facing twenty or thirty international scholars, who I now know to be human beings." Before, in other words, a scholar was something other-worldly and certainly did not constitute a real, legitimate profession in her eyes. For instance, during both her bachelor's and master's degrees Debra considered pursuing library or museum studies, "because I thought of them as being real jobs," as opposed to studying English. Margaret, too, points out this conflict with what qualifies as "real" work when she talks about the "crisis" of doing her activist, and in particular anti-violence, work "and feeling as if people were dying. And why was I going into the classroom to teach poetry when people were dying?"

Becoming a professor was not a foregone conclusion for any of these women. Both Ellen, one of the associate professors, and Kelly, the youthful assistant professor, went to the universities in their hometowns for their bachelor's degrees, which were experiences that strongly influenced their future career paths. Kelly only went to college under threat of being cut-off financially by her parents, but discovered when she was there an interest in continuing her education. It was one of Ellen's college professors who put her on the path towards a Ph.D. but who also warned her, "you know, do it, and you're going to be really poor, all your friends are going to buy houses and have babies and they're going to do all those things so you have to be aware that this is a career path that is hard, it may not end in a job, and requires sacrifice." During graduate school she was positively influenced by female professors who helped her following a time of personal crisis and subsequent poor treatment by the school's administration. It was, she says, a "key moment" in her academic career path: "That was the moment where I

almost left the academy, where I really had a moment of severe doubt. But I think in the end I ended up feeling more confident and more, if you remember your humanity, you know, you can make a difference." She felt that it was possible, in other words, to create change from within the academic organizational structure and discourse and that she too could make a difference to others if she followed the academic career path.

## Socialization

The socialization to the career of professor of English occurs mainly on-the-job with little formal training or formal mentoring past graduate school. Ellen, the associate professor who reports such strong influence by mentors both in college and graduate school and who was advised on the personal challenges she might encounter as a professor, recalls not knowing or understanding how to accomplish basic tasks when she first arrived at SRU such as how to get a parking permit or what to put on a syllabus, the things that, she says, everyone just assumes that people know: "I always felt like you were in a fraternity or a sorority without getting the documents." It is a form of socialization that makes the academy more difficult, not less so, yet seems to be the norm across the fields in this study. Based on that experience, Ellen says, she now tries to teach other new faculty those things, with the understanding that not everyone feels comfortable enough to seek out assistance about what they do not know. Indeed, new faculty may not even know what it is they do not know.

Jane, the assistant professor who is now in her second academic position, also describes lacking critical knowledge when she first decided to pursue an academic career, particularly in terms of career options for someone with a Ph.D. in English. Like Ellen, she recalls that her college advisors told her not to go to graduate school, although without the specifics that Ellen

received: “They said, graduate school is miserable, and you’re going to be totally unhappy and you’re a nice person and we don’t want to see that happen. And that’s it! And there was no real information about what field this was, the difficulty of getting jobs, exactly what made graduate school so tough and miserable, there was no discussion of that.” Based on that experience, Jane says, she too works hard to make sure that her students are better informed than she was so that they really understand what they are getting into and so that they know there is a possibility that they might be unemployed at the end of graduate school. Again it is an attempt to improve the socialization process for future members of the academy.

A couple of the assistant professors of English were fortunate to receive some formal training as part of their graduate school programs, although certainly this training was neither uniform nor mandatory to reach professional status. Jane, for instance, took a class on dissertation writing as well as a class on teaching composition. Her graduate program also provided get-togethers to answer questions about job interviewing, publishing, and developing a CV. Lucy, one of the assistant professors from outside the U.S., also had formal training related to the academic profession and pedagogy during her doctoral program; of course, because her training occurred outside of the U.S. it did not necessarily train her for the professorial role in American universities. She also took a course on teaching in higher education that was offered outside of the department of English, and she says that additional support was provided through a center on teaching and learning. Despite this formal preparation, and despite what she calls “a very easy transition” to the academic role, she still says she thinks about giving the profession up every week. So, does the formal preparation really make a difference, and, how difficult is the transition for those professors not so well-prepared and for those who did not choose to take

advantage of optional support that may have been available to them? Perhaps the on-the-job learning is more important to professional success.

Debra, also an assistant professor from outside the U.S., was not so fortunate and says she "picked up bits here and there of formal training. But no kind of structured training program in how to be a teacher." As a result, Debra describes her experience in the classroom as "modeling things on what I've seen, and trial and error." It is a less-than-ideal process of learning and leads to further conflicts within the professional roles: because she was trained outside the U.S. all of Debra's courses at SRU have been new preparations and require a considerable amount of her time and therefore cut into time she feels she should be spending on writing and research. She is better-prepared, it seems, for that researcher role, which she says she has learned how to do throughout her higher education career. Interestingly, it is because of that ongoing, almost subtle learning, process that Debra experiences the internal conflicts with identifying with the roles of professor, even with that role for which she should be better-prepared: "I don't know exactly when I started thinking of myself as a person who could actually do research and put it out there. . . . I think it's been a gradual progression, I don't think I've ever had an epiphany and said, you know, *now* I am."

Debra in particular talks about the progression in her own thinking of what, or who, can be a professor. It has evolved from perceptions she held as an undergraduate, when "I just believed that everybody who was teaching me was a fully qualified, however that might be, a qualified person to teach," to her current thoughts on the individuals who inhabit that role: "They're like me, they're people who are doing their doctorates and just, you know, working on a part-time basis and teaching whatever courses need to be taught. Or they might be distinguished professors in their field but they may not be doing the cutting edge research

anymore." As she has grown to accept these diverse identities of the professor, including ones who are "like me," and struggled with the sometimes competing demands of the teaching and research roles, she has been forced to adjust her thinking regarding what identity she too wants to adopt: "Certainly the attitude within academia, as I've always perceived, is that to be a serious professor you need to be within a research-intensive university, you need to be in a research active position, and teaching is very much something you have to do, something that gets in the way of your research." When she started looking for jobs she felt compelled to adopt this identity of "serious professor" and to find a position at a good research institution. Now she finds that her thinking has adjusted to which roles and which institution types might make her happy. It is her own form of resistance to the discourse of the academy; she has come to the realization that the institution's concept of what makes a "serious professor" and her concept of what will make her happy might not be one and the same.

The women of the Department of English also have had varied experiences with professional mentors and have different feelings about the value of mentoring for their own development. Jane, for example, who has already described the lack of relevant information her college mentors provided, has had several "great" female mentors, all of them informal, throughout her academic career, people with whom she says she still is in contact. But she also describes how she was advised in her previous tenure-track position by a senior colleague who had not published anything in twenty years and says she has experienced "people who were very aggressive, and wanted to be my mentor, and wanted to give me a lot of advice, and then you know would express disappointment at me if I didn't take their advice." Debra, on the other hand, says she has benefited from positive mentoring relationships with her colleagues within the department. Margaret, one of the two associate professors, recalls that she was actively mentored

in her early years in the department by “a lot of really strong feminists” who, she says, “made all the difference” in her own socialization to the academy. This was, of course, at a time when the department was not as gender-balanced as it is today. As a result of that positive experience, there was a time when Margaret says she worked to actively mentor younger women within the department. But now she sees a shift in the departmental culture: “I think we’ve reached a kind of critical mass, I don’t think it’s as hard to be a new woman faculty member in our department as it used to be.” Now, she says, when a junior colleague comes to her seeking her advice she is aware that “there were fourteen other people she could have gone to, for the same thing.” This is a unique situation among the departments under study here; many of the professors in the Business School and within the Departments of Science are the only women in their departments, or one of only a few, which makes the search for positive female mentors particularly challenging, but also makes the younger women in those departments much more attuned to the challenges women in today’s academy face. Women in the Department of English are not so isolated, which brings its own set of challenges.

Ellen, the other associate professor of English who says she works to inform her newer colleagues of some of the specifics of academic life, has a similar ability to reflect upon the progression of an academic career and its associated learning curve: “I think when you start off you are just so focused on survival that you don’t have time to think about big things. And that’s *the* joy of being tenured. You know that imposter syndrome that everyone has unless they’re totally arrogant, it goes away. It really does go away.” She describes the moment that her own professional achievements moved from “getting that lesson planned, getting that book written,” doing, in other words, the day-to-day activities required for survival and for reaching tenure, to realizing she had gained “mastery over material in such a way that I was able to make new leaps.

Like, I realized that I could keep learning." She has moved from performing a role to adopting the identity of professor. Before getting to that point of mastery, though, she recalls the non-tenured, assistant professor time as particularly frightening, in part, she says, "because then you're in it, then you want to be here. Usually, not always, but I did. And I was like, if I don't get this book published, this career's gone. And I'm just starting to see it's potential. You're just starting to see it's potential right at the moment when you're going up for tenure." In other words, one is just figuring out the academic career, just becoming socialized to it, just starting to adopt that identity, at the point that it could all be taken away. Of course, if it is taken away then perhaps one was not truly socialized to the norms and standards of the academic structure.

The career of the English professor is not a given nor is the path to get there. That being the case, says Jane, despite her own less-than-successful experiences with mentoring what is important is that role models, both female and male, exist within the academy. Female students "need to see women in positions of power to imagine that they too could be in that same position of power, that they too could be a faculty member or a scientist or a researcher or an activist." It is, says Jane, one of the important things that female academics contribute to the field in addition to teaching and research: "Just by being. Just by being visible as a female academic, they could be inspiring or helping their female undergraduates to look at the world differently." Similarly, having women in the academy has the potential to adjust the perspective of male students: "If men learn that they need to treat women with respect, that a woman has power over them because she's their teacher and has their grade, that might also change the way men look at the world as well." It is just one more way, in other words, that female academics might resist the discursive boundaries of the academic structure.

## Performing Gender

Because they are women in the academy, all of the professors in this study, no matter their disciplinary area, define themselves both as academics and as women, definitions that are affected by the discourse and the structure of the institution of higher education. Being women in the academy has various meanings for these English professors related to their positions within that discourse and structure. Debra, the assistant professor who went back to school after working in an office, notes that there is a perception that women will be "more empathetic" than their male counterparts due to their gender "and therefore given the choice, lots of students gravitate towards female professors as their sort of pastoral advisor." This perception of inherent empathy puts an extra burden on female faculty, both for those women who are not so empathetic and therefore have to perform yet another role and because there are fewer women to share that burden within the academy. In addition, Margaret says, echoing Ellen's comments on the imposter syndrome experienced by assistant professors generally, "women in the academy know what it's like to be interlopers, still. Not every woman, but I think a lot of women know what it's like to work through the imposter syndrome." Clearly, the professors of English in this study are no stranger to this syndrome as they struggle with adopting the various identities of professor. It is the familiar inside-outsider positioning: until they can adopt the accepted norms of behavior they will be seen (and will see themselves) as interlopers and imposters, not quite up to the standards for performing the professor role.

Echoing Debra's comments on women's perceived empathetic nature Margaret says that women are trained, as women, "to have a broader understanding of what people bring into the workplace in terms of other life issues. Because we're trained to be the caretakers, we've been disciplined, whether we want to be or not, to notice more when someone is in mourning or is ill

or is otherwise conflicted. We are raised to do emotional caretaking." As a result she finds herself encountering students in ways that are different from her male colleagues: "I've had a woman I've never met come into my office and start weeping about how one of my male colleagues is treating her, and she didn't know me! I think it was just that I was a woman and I was sitting there with the door open, and then boom! You know, there we are." It is a never-ending circle: women are perceived as emotional caretakers and thus are saddled with the extra burden of caring for students' emotional needs; and, because they are positioned in these encounters to care for their students' emotional needs they are perceived as emotional caretakers. Whereas a male colleague would be better able to refuse such positioning (indeed, would not be so positioned in the first place), a woman who similarly refused would be labeled as cold, unfeeling, or worse.

Margaret is, she says, "performing gender all the time in different ways than my colleagues are. You could talk about it endlessly. My students notice my clothes! You know, from that kind of frivolous level, they notice my clothes, they notice whether I'm happy, they worry about whether they would be happy doing something like I'm doing. So yeah, there's a sense in which you kind of know you're always on the line there." This sense of being a role model, of constantly being watched, was further reinforced when she learned that there was a male colleague in her department who was telling the female graduate students that if they wanted to be serious academics they would never have a satisfying long-term relationship. Suddenly she realized her students were examining her to see if she had a satisfying long-term relationship.

Margaret also reflects upon how this burden of gender is enacted in other ways related to her position as a female associate professor. For example, when she is asked to serve on

university-wide committees very often she is the only woman in the room or one of only two. And, she says, “the more power the committee has, the more likely that is the case, which is why it’s so difficult to turn committee assignments down.” She refers to this burden of service as feeling responsible to be a “good girl.” Because there are so few women in the institution she feels she can not refuse service assignments when they are offered; it is important to have women in the room. But because there are so few women in the institution it means women are burdened with more of the service load, which takes time away from their ability to produce research, which therefore diminishes their role as serious academics within the eyes of the institution that has so burdened them. At the same time, however, Margaret recognizes that being a minority within the institutional structure can provide women with an extra layer of mentoring and networking that the men may not have: “I have an all-girls’ network by now. . . . I’ll walk into a room, very often, and there will be women from all over campus and you know we kind of recognize each other.”

This is a situation that may be changing as more women enter the academy; not only may that burden be reduced but so might the associated benefits. Margaret reflects on a time before she arrived at SRU when “the old guys” in the Department of English made the mistake of going after the women to try to prevent then from advancing within the academy, “not just most of them, but all of them. And the result of that was even women who wouldn’t have felt themselves particularly in solidarity with other women were forced into solidarity.” By the time Margaret arrived at SRU the other, older women made sure that she did not have a similar experience and actively mentored her and pulled colleagues aside when they behaved in the way that some of those older men had done to make sure that sort of behavior was not perpetuated. It is, again, the potential positive aspect to being in a minority status; there is a within-group protection against

the forces outside. Now, Margaret notes, “women in my department are much less in danger than we used to be, and the support is less concentrated and active and, um, reliable than it used to be, too. We have the luxury of not getting along! And we have some people who’ve come in, since, who just don’t identify in that way.” It is a positive thing, of course, to have that luxury. But the danger is that these younger women may not realize that they are still, in fact, a minority within the institution and in need of that support.

Interestingly, some of the younger faculty in this study reflect this change when they note that, as Kelly, the youthful assistant professor puts it, “people are so sensitive to gender issues in the humanities, or at least in English, in my experience, that if anything I almost think that they take pains to be inclusive and to make sure that you’re not discriminated against . . . I never felt that [being a woman] was an incredible liability in my career, at all. Maybe at times it was an asset.” She goes on to say that, because there are so many women in English departments, “on a daily basis I’m not that reflective about gender, about my own gender, and my job.” However, she then talks about needing to “play things a little differently than a male colleague might have to in dealing with students,” as well as conflicts she has experienced between her roles as an academic and her role as a mother. And, despite her assertion that she is “not that reflective about gender,” Kelly thinks that “women are probably a little more reflective about these gender issues than men are. And they’re probably more reflective about things like what aspects of your personal life you should or shouldn’t note publicly. . . . I think women probably have to do a little more self-censoring in the way that they talk about their lives.” So it seems that maybe things have not changed so much, except that perhaps the younger women have not yet had to struggle so hard and so the issues are not so immediately apparent. Or, potentially, these women

feel the need to assert that gender is not a factor in their lives as to do so would be to admit it as a potential hindrance.

Ellen, one of the two associate professors, feels some of the traditional gender roles are changing, so that "women know they can't just say yes to everything anymore in that traditional gendered way." But she can still point to examples of how women continue to be burdened with service roles: "If you ask a male assistant professor to serve on something and a female assistant professor you are way more likely to get a yes from the female assistant professor. Is it coincidence that all the administrators in my department are women? I don't think so." It is the good girl syndrome to which her fellow associate professor Margaret referred. Ellen also describes the burden of being the "smart girl," an identity that was a reason for mockery as a child but now gains her entrée into the institution of higher education, although does not always prove socially attractive: "I had two epiphanies in grad school. Never wait til the night before to start a seminar paper, and, definitely break up with a guy who doesn't like to see you read when you're an English Ph.D. student." These diverse identities are confusing for women in the academy: be the good girl and accept the extra service burden, but the good girl will not be rewarded by the academy; be the smart girl and become an academic but the smart girl is not well-liked by society. No wonder they feel like imposters. It is the inside-outsider problematic all over again.

While all of the women in the Department of English in this study address gender issues in one respect or another, three overarching themes emerge from the interviews: issues of gaining respect, spousal issues, and, issues related to children. The assistant professors in particular discuss at length issues of respect they have encountered with their students, related perhaps to their ongoing conflicts with adopting the identity of professor; the two associate

professors are simply more experienced and more comfortable with this identity. The assistant professors have learned to adopt different personas when in the classroom in an attempt to gain that respect, even to the point of changing their style of dress. Jane, for example, in her second tenure-track position and no novice to the teaching role, compares herself with her husband, who is also an academic, and how his larger physical stature gives him "a certain mantle of respect" from the first day he enters a classroom that she has to "work a little harder to gain" from her students. And though she feels that she has relaxed somewhat since she first started teaching she recalls that in the beginning she dressed "really well, often wearing a suit jacket, or a sport coat, and acting really authoritative to try and gain their respect." She compares this behavior with putting on a performance "in drag": "Now it's time for me to perform professor with a capital P." After several years in the role she says she dresses less formally now and she tries to be less authoritative, though "I still would not teach in tennis shoes the way some of my male colleagues do."

Lucy, Debra, and Kelly all relate to this issue of changing clothes to perform the role of professor as well. Debra, the older assistant professor from outside the U.S., recalls adopting "a more conservative mode of dress" when she started teaching as opposed to the men for whom "it was quite fine to go into a classroom in jeans and a t-shirt and teach but there was certainly some kind of intangible feeling out there that you would be taken less seriously as a woman if you went in dressed in that manner." Kelly, who looks so much like a college student herself, describes the potential to come off as a pushover, "where students don't take you as seriously, or they treat you as kind of a mom figure or something like that. So I really hate artificially distancing myself from my students but I try to do little things to set up professional boundaries. Like, uh, I don't think I dress that formally but I have a no jeans rule for myself when I go into a

classroom." And Lucy, the petite assistant professor from outside the U.S., talks about having to "toe the line more, perhaps, as a woman," both with the students and colleagues. Because they are perceived as soft and more empathetic it is important that they create physical boundaries to prove that they are not.

Kelly provides other examples of how she has encountered the respect issue again perhaps related to her student-like appearance. Undergraduates sometimes call her Mrs. instead of Dr., which she says she finds offensive on several levels: "My husband has a different last name than me, I'm not Mrs.[X], I've got my Ph.D., call me Dr. [X] or Professor [X] when you're my nineteen-year-old student." She wonders if they would make the same assumptions if she were male and says that as a result she has put a signature line on her emails that blatantly states her title so "they don't have to look me up to figure out what my credentials are." At the same time, however, she struggles with this same distinction with her doctoral students who are not much younger or less accomplished than she is: "It feels really weird and artificial to me that here's someone who's almost done with their dissertation, there's no difference between the two of us, and I feel ridiculous encouraging them to call me Dr. [X]. But at the same time I think, if everyone else in the department is called Dr. So and So, there's no way you can feel less serious than if you're the new, young, female professor and you let people call you Kelly." Her assertion that there is "no difference" between herself and someone who has not completed the requirements for their degree reflects not only the struggles with gaining respect but also the issues with credentialing within higher education.

Several of the participants, both assistant and associate professors, identify issues related to their home life and specifically with their spouses, which are affected by their role as a woman in the academy. Jane, for example, who is married to an academic, talks about having to

"constantly negotiate" their relationship due to the choices they have made to follow her career instead of his: "It's difficult to have gender roles reversed, or traditional gender roles reversed, where the woman is making more money, is the primary bread-winner, and the guy is following her career." Kelly, similarly, is married to a fellow aspiring academic, which she says has made her life in the academy both easier and also more difficult. Her husband keeps her focused on her work, she says, and is able to understand her and the work that she does and how she does that work in a way that a non-academic most likely would not. At the same time, she identifies "spousal issues" as "the most stressful aspect of the academic life." He is completing his doctoral degree and they are striving to find two academic jobs in the same place, which may not be at SRU. She calls it "an extreme worry in our lives for the last couple of years." Ellen's spouse, on the other hand, is not an academic but she finds they have a similar issue due to her chosen profession, which keeps them in a town that is not particularly friendly to his career as well. The academy, Ellen says, respects fame over experience, which limits mobility for those professors, like her, who are in the middle ranks and may have made it through tenure but have not achieved a level of fame that makes them attractive to other institutions. Therefore, although she loves her job at SRU she feels somewhat stuck there in her tenured position, and, unless they want to have a long-distance marriage, so too is her husband, because "a person with absolutely no experience just coming out of grad school has a much better chance of getting a job than I do." In other words, newly-graduated Ph.D.s in the hot field of the moment are more attractive than a mid-level professor whose potential may have already been realized; also, she lacks the ability to compete with salary compression.

Although the respect and spousal issues are not unimportant, the issue that seems to loom the largest for these women is that of deciding if, and when, to have children. Jane, despite her

childhood visions that becoming a teacher would allow her to have time off with her children, has decided not to have children until after she is awarded tenure due to the heavy publishing demands required of junior faculty. Indeed, she says these demands make it so that "the odds are stacked against" female professors who want to have children before tenure, because "we all have the same 24 hours in a day, [and] you have to determine where you're going to pull that time. Are you going to pull the time to do the research away from a baby and a more nuclear family home life or are you going to pull away from time spent sleeping? Time spent grading papers? Time spent working out?" Margaret, who notes that she is old enough now to be her students' grandmother, says that her decision to become an academic was "one of the first things that made me step forward as an independent woman." The academy, she says, is "central" to her "life's happiness," but due to the decisions that she made along the way, "the time that it took me to become an academic and to get tenure stretched on so long that by the time that I had any kind of economic self-sufficiency it was pretty much too late for me to be serious about having a child." She does not say this with more than a small twinge of regret; it is what it is.

Ellen, on the other hand, did make the choice to have children and says that she was fortunate to have a dissertation advisor who showed her how to be successful as a professional academic with children, a role model that many other women say they are lacking. Although Ellen confesses that, "my husband and I just decided, let's have a baby, and there wasn't a lot of thought put into it." And then in a similar fashion they decided to have a second child as well. But when it came to having a third they decided that "now is the time to stop having babies. Because I do want to have a long career. . . . Because I think having a third would disrupt the balance, which I think I'm always unconsciously looking for. That's why I had a baby. I was

unconsciously looking for balance." Children, then, actually provide balance to the demands of the academic profession for Ellen.

The children issue extends beyond the decision to have or not to have one or more. Those who do have children are then faced with a lack of paid maternity leave, child care issues, and a perceived bias against women with children within the academy. Jane points out that all of these challenges are based on long-standing traditions that view women's place as in the home taking care of the children, so that now organizations, including the academy, must rethink policies, behaviors, and attitudes related to women and men. And that, she says, is essential not only to women but also to the future of the academic profession: "If they don't come along quicker there are people who will choose not to be a female faculty member because they don't want to be stuck in the position that I and many other faculty are stuck in where they're trying to imagine, in these sixty, sixty-five hour work weeks, how they're going to fit children in." Indeed, the numbers show that women already are making that choice across the academy.

Those women who have had children can point to specific examples of bias, blatant or otherwise, that they have experienced as professors both from colleagues and students. Kelly, who has a young child, laughingly describes a teaching evaluation she received when she was pregnant that "said that I had too much on my plate trying to be a mommy to also be a college professor." Ellen, who chose to have children to add balance to her life as an academic, describes perceptions women with children face within the academy versus their male counterparts, a sentiment that is repeated many times by women in each of the disciplinary areas in this study, that men with kids are doing something more whereas women will end up somehow doing less: "I don't think it's immediately assumed that if you have kids you won't be as strong of a researcher or a scholar or a member of the department. But they're always looking for it. So if

somehow you fall back then I think they're apt to be well, it's the baby, or the kids, or whatever. And you know what? It *is* harder when you have a baby or kids, but why should that stop you from doing anything?" But she recalls that when she had her first child she was careful not to bring him to faculty meetings or even to be on campus with him. "And then when one of my male colleagues had a baby, all of a sudden he just brought him! To a faculty meeting! And oh, isn't that great, what a good father. Now if I had brought my baby to faculty meetings, I don't think it would have been, oh what a good mom. It would have been, oh, she can't quite handle it." On another occasion Ellen recalls a male professor who "pretended not to recognize me because my son was with me. He said, oh I didn't even recognize you with your child hanging on your skirts. Which, by the way, I was wearing pants."

At the same time that she has encountered these sorts of challenges, Ellen admits that she was fortunate to have had a female department head at the time that she was pregnant who gave her extended time off when she had both of her children. As well, she and her husband have the financial resources to hire in-home care for the first few years of their children's lives, a luxury that certainly not all, or even many, other female professors can afford. But for some professors, like Kelly, the rigors of academia actually provide a different sort of luxury when it comes to child care: "I think that bizarrely being an academic has been helpful in my life with my kid, because the flexibility of schedule, that kind of thing, you know, for the first year of her life she was never baby sat or anything like that, because we could always arrange our schedules in a really nice way." And so, whether adding balance to their lives or another layer of stress, children are just one of the many ways that these professors' roles as women are affected by their roles as academics and vice versa.

## Searching for Balance

One of the largest challenges faced by these English professors, indeed by nearly all of the faculty members in this study no matter the disciplinary area, is finding an effective means of balancing the competing demands of the profession and then balancing those demands with the demands of their lives outside of the academy. For several of the assistant professors of English, it is a matter of learning skills of motivation and time-management; although the autonomy and flexibility of their new professorial roles are a blessing, they can also be a curse, particularly when there is little instruction or mentoring on how to do them better. Lucy, for instance, who has called the move from graduate student to professor a "very easy transition," also notes the difficulties of balancing the "change of pace and intensity" between the "performance" of teaching and the solitary research role. And although most assistant professors are protected from the added demands of committee work and service, the assistant professors in this study are cognizant of the fact that it will be an added burden on their time in the future and an additional role to manage. For the associate professors this burden has become a reality. Margaret, who previously discussed the pressure to be a good girl when it comes to fulfilling service obligations, describes her biggest challenge within the academy as "balancing my responsibilities to my students and the institution with getting time to write." But she recognizes that the time she has spent on departmental and university committees has provided her with "institutional credit" even though many of those committees, she says, have little real impact. Because there are so few women in the academy to serve in that capacity, she says she sees the same women being moved from committee to committee, and despite her earlier assessment that this service burden builds a network of female mentors it is clearly a burden that is wearing on her as she says it is on all of the women in this position. The paradox of reaching tenure, as a woman, is

that she has reached a point of being able to say no, yet, because there are so few women to serve, she is still, she says, “on too many committees. It’s a problem for women, it’s particularly a problem for women of color. That’s how women of color get eaten alive.” As much as women generally are burdened by their minority status within the academy, women of color are even more so. Ellen, the other associate professor of English, also has served in an administrative capacity that she says was a valuable learning experience but also “a huge drain on both my personal life and my professional progress. If you define professional progress as publishing.” And her biggest challenge, despite the added balance she says her children provide, is managing a level of personal stress experienced by many of the professors in this study. For Ellen, it is “just struggling with the demands of my real life, you know, my real life includes this office, but also home, and just getting everything done in a day without losing my mind and yelling at my kids.”

Other members of the Department of English experience stresses associated with the ways that the profession affects their family life. As mentioned previously, Ellen and Jane, along with their spouses, have chosen to follow their careers to the potential dissatisfaction of their spouses. Kelly and her husband are facing a similar quandary as he enters the academic job market. Lucy and her husband currently live in separate locations due to their professions. Jane also struggles with the fact that she is prevented from living in the same state as her family by her profession. Because jobs in English are so scarce, she cannot choose where she wants to live and work. Indeed, she says that if pressed “to try to choose between a place that enriched me intellectually and academically or a place that allowed me to be closer to my family. I don’t know. I might choose the family. But luckily I haven’t had to make that tough a decision.” Arguably, of course, all professions require such a commitment, but there is an unspoken rule

within academia that individuals go where the jobs are, particularly in disciplines such as English where academic positions are often hard to come by. Of course, despite Jane's assertion that she has not yet had to choose between family and profession, it seems she already has. And for now at least she has chosen the profession.

Adding to the personal stress of balancing work and life are the realities of the academic workload. Debra, the assistant professor who is struggling to reconcile her view of what makes a serious academic with the life that would make her happy, describes that workload as ever-present and unrelenting: "If I'm not thinking about tomorrow's class then I'm thinking about planning next week's class or I'm thinking about wondering what I'm going to do next semester, and then beyond that, when am I going to get some publications written. And so there's never ever any downtime, it's constant. If I'm not doing something I'm worrying about what I should be doing or what I'm going to have to do in the future." Adding to this pressure for Debra in particular are new preparations for all of her courses, but she is not alone in this sentiment. It is a workload that does not stop at the office walls but often extends into the home so there is very little downtime. Kelly, early into her academic career, provides advice for future faculty members: "Just stop viewing every week as this just heinous, ridiculous, stressful week and it's going to pass at some point and just accept the fact that this is the way that life is. If you don't like it, you're in the wrong place." Even Ellen, who has achieved tenure and speaks of the balance she has achieved that allows her to have "a life of the mind, and a life of the body, and a life of being a mom," acknowledges that some of that balance is provided by external forces: "I'm on drugs! I'm on Lexipro and I'm a much happier person for it. That has helped me to get balance. I just happen to be in a really happy time in my life." And she points out that as stressful as the academic life might be, it could be worse: "I don't have a hard life. Hard is when you have

to get up in the morning and work three jobs and be worried about what kind of child care you have for your kid. I don't have as hard a life as my mother, I don't have as hard of a life as my grandmother. I have a good life."

Perhaps increasing the professional stress for these women are the various aspects of the academic life for which they feel they were not well-prepared. Jane, for example, who left her previous position in part because of the heavy workload, says she wishes someone had prepared her for the amount of work that the academic profession entails, so much so that she says had she known then what she knows now she does not know that she would have become a professor. Both Debra and Margaret, referencing the already-discussed internal identity conflicts, have been surprised by their ability even to perform the role. Margaret says she had a fantasy of quitting when she first started: "There was this really nasty English department secretary during those days, she was you know notoriously mean, and I had this ongoing fantasy of going in and putting my grade book down on her desk and saying, all right, I'm an imposter, I admit it. [laughs] . . . Why it was her, why I thought she could see through me, I don't know." And even though she is surprised by "how deeply satisfying and exciting" she finds the academic career, she also has been surprised by the slow learning curve for gaining proficiency. So much so, she says, "I actually think if they hadn't given me tenure I would have been perfectly cheery and would have gone and done something else and I think I would have considered it a release. I really do. I think that my narrative had I done that would have been, oh thank God they didn't give me tenure, what a miserable life, I'm so glad I'm at this next thing." The academic identity, in other words, was never a foregone conclusion.

To deal with the various stresses and challenges of the academic life, these women have developed strategies that, like the rest of their professional roles, they seem largely to have

figured out on their own and through a process of trial and error. For some it is carving out at least a day per week that is protected time for doing research. Others have developed time management strategies such as grading rubrics. Kelly notes that perhaps her best time-saving strategy has been the birth of her child, that she says "amped up my productivity so much, because it was the first time in my life that I had to kind of schedule and make sure that things were happening at the right time and all of that, and it made me a lot more productive."

Margaret, considerably further into her career than Kelly, has adopted various strategies over the years, some to better effect than others. For example, she recently tried a practice of writing every day, to the point of making herself sick from lack of adequate rest. She says she has learned over the years to acknowledge those things she does well as opposed to only acknowledging those things that have gone wrong and how to make them better. She keeps a teaching diary, not only to highlight those positive experiences, but which will often spark an idea for her own research. Personally, as well, in order to bring some stress-relief to her life she practices yoga and makes sure that every night before she goes to sleep that she gets half an hour of "pleasure reading" time. And finally, she says, she has developed a mantra which she recites when she feels she is getting "too overwrought, which goes something like this: I did not get into this profession in order to. I didn't get in this profession in order to please these people, I didn't even know who they were. So stepping back and thinking about why you're doing this job, that can really, really help. You get enmeshed and you just need to step back."

Margaret and Jane, the two feminist activists, also acknowledge the importance of building community and cultivating friendships to create balance. For Jane, the academic life supports her decision to be a feminist and makes her feel, she says, "not so alone." This community is a help within the university, which she says can be a very lonely and isolating

place, particularly when one first starts to do independent research as a graduate student and no longer is surrounded by fellow classmates. Margaret also describes the importance of building community and cultivating and honoring academic friendships: “I think that there are ways that departments can end up like dysfunctional families, and do. But there are also ways, there are kinds of intimacy that one can have in academics that are probably very hard to have anyplace else. And I think that’s one of those things that we don’t talk about much, and in not talking about it, we don’t give it full credit.” Building such communities and cultivating and honoring such friendships, along with the other strategies these professors have developed, are some of the ways these professors are taking care of their selves within the often isolating, stressful university environment.

Despite the challenges, the surprises, and the stresses of the academic career, most of these women from the Department of English envision themselves remaining in the profession long-term, although, as Jane puts it, that may be less of a reflection of their commitment than of their resignation: “I mean, frankly, the amount of time that we put into graduate school sort of makes it hard for us to be prepared for another profession.” Even so, Jane describes the academic career as a “good fit” for her values and for the lifestyle to which she aspires: “I like that I get to be involved in intellectual endeavor everyday. I wish the hours weren’t as long. But it’s a nice lifestyle. It’s nice to be able to read and think for a living. Not too many jobs allow that.” So, yes, she says, “I’m still going to be an academic twenty years from now. I’m just going to better prepare my graduate students for the reality of what they’re entering into. So that they’re going into it with their eyes wide open.”

Debra, on the other hand, to a certain extent wonders if she is cut out for the competitive nature of academia and how it defines success. “To me success is just being happy in what I’m

doing day to day," she says, and claims that she really has not looked down the road, long-term. But then she considers her advisor, who was "a hugely ambitious woman," as well as colleagues "who have climbed higher on the ladder, more publications to their name, all of those kinds of things." And with a laugh she says, "Oh dear, what a loser I am!" A loser, that is, by the organization's definition of success, which she has, perhaps, started to adopt as her own even as she pushes away from it. And for at least one of these participants, Margaret, that definition of success has moved her to look for employment at other institutions that promise increased time for research, even though by all institutional standards she is already successful. What is driving her now and "driving her crazy" as Margaret puts it, is not having the time to do her work, her research, and her writing, because of the additional burdens she is asked to shoulder. She does not want to leave SRU, she says, "but if there is an offer I will be very tempted to take it for that reason. Because [of] having a *chance* to take time off and write." To have the chance, in other words, to construct the academic life that she would like and not one that is prescribed by the discourse and the structure of the institution.

# CHAPTER 4

# THE BUSINESS SCHOOL

*"I would not do this job for the money the humanities professors get paid. There's no way I'd put up with this much stress for that money."*
*Janet, Assistant Professor of Business, Southern Research University*

The Business School at Southern Research University is housed in a sprawling, maze-like complex that is found in the historical heart of the campus. This prime location reflects the school's value to the university both as a money-maker through revenue-generating professional programs and as a form of external relations, maintaining as it does ties to well-connected donors and corporate executives around the state. There are nine departments within the school, serving undergraduate, master, and doctoral-level students. At the time of this study the school had 91 full-time tenured and tenure-track faculty members, 17 of whom were women (18.68%). On average, female assistant professors in the Business School at SRU make $150,870 and female associate professors make $116,318, a discrepancy which may be accounted for by the particular departments within the Business School these women represent and salary compression (Table of Salaries can be found in Appendix C). Eight of these women agreed to participate in this study: five assistant professors, Katrina, Janet, Christy, Brittany, and Virginia, and three associate professors, Elise, Karen, and Lori. Many of their views about their professional roles and how they enact them are reflections of this split between assistant and associate professor. Additionally, two of the associate professors, Elise and Karen, have been trained professionally

as lawyers and do not hold doctorates in a business field. The distinctions between their roles, activities, and socialization as professors of business are shared in the stories that follow.

## Role and Definition: The Academy and the Individual

The women of the Business School were given the same three quotes by Bill Readings, Sheila Slaughter and Gary Rhoades, and William Tierney, and asked to identify which one more adequately reflects their views of the academy and their role within it:

> The grand narrative of the University, centered on the production of a liberal, reasoning, subject, is no longer readily available to us. . . . None of us can now seriously assume ourselves to be the centered subject of a narrative of University education. (Readings, 1996, p. 9-10)

> The shift from a public good knowledge/learning regime to an academic capitalist knowledge/learning regime "requires us to rethink the centrality and dominance of the academic profession." The academic capitalism knowledge/learning regime "sees the economy rather than the polity as central to the citizenry's well-being. This approach affects the kinds of students, types of education, and types of research that we fund." (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004, p. 10, 37)

> Culture is the sum of activities in the organization, and socialization is the process through which individuals acquire and incorporate an understanding of those activities. Culture is relatively constant and can be understood through reason. An organization's culture, then, teaches people how to behave, what to hope for, and what it means to

> succeed or fail. Some individuals become competent, and others do not. (Tierney, 1997, p. 4-5)

One might expect women in a professional field such as business to hold common world views in line with either the second or the third of these quotes; however, quite surprisingly, four of the Business School faculty members – Lori, Janet, Elise, and Christy – are quick to distance themselves from the quotes entirely or to point out that none of the quotes "resonate" with them, an overt attempt to remove themselves from the discourse and structure of the academy within which they are so well-rewarded. The remaining three participants, in line with expectations, either select the quote referencing the move to academic capitalism by Slaughter and Rhoades or the quote on organizational socialization by Tierney as reflective of their views of the institution of higher education.

A perceived move by the university towards academic capitalism supports these women's chosen fields and should align with their personal values, assuming that their professional choice also aligns with their personal values. They are, after all, professors of business and a move towards academic capitalism reflects values related to capitalist society. It also reflects changes that two of the professors, Brittany and Karen, see occurring in the ways that today's academy interacts with students. Unlike the professors of English, however, these are not changes that the Business School professors see as requiring resistance. The professors of English, after all, are resisting a move which oppresses them within the institution; professors of business, who have greater access to external resources through their research and consulting activities, are privileged within the academic capitalist institution. For Brittany, an assistant professor who is several years into her time on her tenure clock, this move indicates a shift in institutional and societal perceptions from requiring knowledge for knowledge's sake to requiring knowledge as a

means to an end, so that no longer is there a split between who goes to college and who does not; rather, “pretty much everyone’s going to college, period.” She notes that in her teaching and in the conversations that she has with her students she hopes to provide them with tools that will allow them to “compete with other people, other countries, other folks for limited resources.” In that sense she sees her classes as somewhat vocational in purpose.

Karen is an older associate professor who was a practicing attorney before she came to the academy. She is colorful – in attire, in office décor, in language – and unafraid to speak her mind. She also describes the shift in the academy towards an academic capitalist model in terms of her relation to students in the classroom. She says this move has increased her awareness of the market’s influence on what she teaches and to whom. She notes as well that it has led to departmental debates over what courses and topics should be included in the curriculum, debates between those who would maintain a traditional core curriculum and those who argue that the faculty of SRU should “provide the state with what it needs,” in other words, an educated and prepared workforce. Because she teaches business law her own courses would fall in this latter, nontraditional category within the Business School; the Business School as a whole would fit in this category on the SRU campus. Karen also notes that the shift to academic capitalism affects the type of work that will attract external funding, although this may be a reflection of what she sees happening in the larger higher education environment more so than in the Business School. Or it may reflect how the move towards academic capitalism has impacted Karen’s personal work as she indicates that she spends an extensive amount of time engaged in external consulting to support her academic salary.

Three of the assistant professors – Christy, who at first comments that none of the quotes “resonate” with her, as well as Katrina and Virginia – agree that higher education as an

institution serves as a site of organizational socialization in that it produces objective, articulated standards for achieving success and that some will succeed and others will fail in meeting those standards. For students those standards are articulated and measured through grades and examinations. For faculty the standards are articulated and measured through the promotion and tenure process. For both the standards are known and are achievable through a combination of intellect, hard work, and dedication. Katrina, a young assistant professor who was born and raised outside of the United States, argues that within the academy success depends both on creating ideas and contributions to the field and also learning to follow the rules associated with organizational politics. Knowing "how to behave," she says, improves one's chances of success within the academic environment. That knowledge is certain, there are rules, and as academics they have been socialized to acquire that knowledge and to adopt those rules for behavior.

Christy, also a young assistant professor, is the only one of these three who has prior experience in the corporate sector, where standards for climbing the corporate career ladder are clearly defined and quantifiable (neither Katrina nor Virginia spent time in the corporate sector before graduate school). Christy seems at times to measure her words as if she does not want to jeopardize her ability to succeed by saying the wrong thing in this study that might be traced back to her. She argues, in line with the quote by Tierney, that there are expectations within the academy that can be observed and delivered by a "reasonable person." Success in the academy, she says, can be achieved through "a lot of hard work and focus. And usually, I don't see luck playing a big role in it. Those who don't make it didn't deserve to make it and those who make it, worked their butts off." The people who do not make it, who do not get tenure, she says, "are the people who don't work hard." Although they are not yet successful by higher education's standards as untenured assistant professors, both Katrina and Christy seem to argue why they

deserve to achieve that measure of success: there are rules that must be followed in terms of research, teaching, and service and they have followed those rules. Further, those rules have been defined by and for "reasonable" people and both Katrina and Christy are reasonable, and those rules say that working hard will result in success and Katrina and Christy work hard. Therefore, they deserve to be successful, they deserve to be awarded tenure. It is the classic, humanist view of organizational socialization: it is possible to get to the center as long as you know and abide by the organizational norms of behavior. For Christy in particular this move from outsider to insider also reveals personal struggles she has had to overcome to fully inhabit the role of professor. She finally sees herself as "legit" and not, as she has in the past, as someone who is "dumbing down" the academy. She finally sees herself as someone, in other words, who deserves to be there and who no longer is an imposter.

Virginia, on the other hand, another young assistant professor who seems quite enamored with her chosen profession, has not experienced these same struggles with adopting her professional identity perhaps because she chose to follow this path while still an undergraduate: "There's a part of me that thinks this is who I am. Like, I am a researcher. I am a social scientist." She has fully inhabited the professorial role. Virginia also selected the Tierney quote, which closely aligns with areas in which she does research. But she is rather quick to note that it does not reflect her view as an individual because she thinks that "how people are socialized into academe is not very healthy for women and minorities." That being said, she clearly has accepted this socialization process and does not offer further evidence of resistance to it.

Unlike the professors of English, who seem to have arrived at their chosen profession somewhat by chance, many of the Business School professors in this study entered the academic profession by choice, after pursuing careers in the private sector, although as previously

mentioned, Virginia and Katrina, the two youngest professors of the group, followed traditional academic paths from college straight to graduate school. For the others, although it may have been a choice it was not necessarily an informed choice as they "kind of stumbled into" academic careers, as Janet puts it, after pursuing other options. Janet, like nine of the other women in this study and five of them in the Business School, is the first in her family to go to college at all. Dissatisfaction with her private sector job led her to consider pursuing an MBA; however, after accompanying a friend to a graduate school expo she changed directions and decided instead to pursue a Ph.D. Brittany, the assistant professor who talks to her students about being prepared to compete for limited resources, is also a first-generation college student and says she went to college assuming not only that it would be difficult but that she might not be successful there. She knew that she could only afford to be there for four years and so she chose to major in business because she thought it would be the degree most likely to get her a job if she did succeed. But she enjoyed the university environment more than she thought she would and continued on for a master's degree. She worked in the private sector for ten years before she elected to return to school to pursue a Ph.D.

Much like Janet, Christy also decided to get an MBA due to dissatisfaction with her private sector job: "I just kept finding people at higher levels at whatever institution I was in who were, you know, total idiots. . . . I never found a mentor. I never had a mentor. That was any good. I never found anyone I respected. Women were the worst offenders in that category." People above her had managed to succeed, not because they deserved it, not because they followed the rules, but by other means that fell outside of the established rules. During her MBA program Christy did find a mentor who guided her towards Ph.D. programs. And she says she was accepted into one of the top programs in the country in her field thanks to a mentoring

relationship she developed with a faculty member there: “So I just was really fortunate, I believe, to have, just been able to, you know, be mentored by this remarkable person who was so patient and so kind and gave me this amazing opportunity that I never felt that I deserved.” Again, there is an internal struggle with adopting the identity of professor that is also experienced by the professors of English; although Christy was accepted into one of the top programs in her field she did not feel that she “deserved” to be there, perhaps because she felt she did not get there on her own merit, and she had to work to overcome the feeling that she was “dumbing down” the academy.

Katrina is one of four professors in this study and the only one from the Business School whose path to the academic profession began in another country. She had hoped to find a job in the financial sector in her home country after receiving her bachelor’s degree, but says she could not get hired because she did not have experience or a degree in economics. She pursued jobs in the corporate sector, and although she met both the experience and the educational requirements, says she could not get hired because she was female. As a result of her inability to find a job, she decided to get her master’s degree. That degree eventually led to her pursuit of a Ph.D. at a program in the U.S, which she did for the opportunity to “see the world” more than any other reason. But it was during her doctoral studies that she realized that she could make a professional contribution through academic research and that doing so would be interesting to her. And so, she says, “that’s how I became a professor. But it started when they said no because you’re a girl. So for me, discrimination was actually a positive thing.”

The three associate professors from SRU’s Business School had equally varied paths to the academic profession. Elise, another first-generation college student, was a practicing attorney until she realized that she would rather be a professor. Karen also was a practicing attorney when

she was asked to teach on the university level. Although she had some prior experience teaching as an adjunct during graduate school, it was not something that she was comfortable with or ever seriously considered as a profession. So, she says, “I really just kind of backed into it. And as it turned out it was absolutely what I was born to do.” But it was not a conscious choice and she was not looking for something else to do at the time. Lori, also the first in her family to go to college, worked for a couple of years following her undergraduate degree before going back to school at night to get her MBA. “And I thought, wow! I could either work in one organization as a manager, and have kind of that impact. Or, I could have a much larger impact by going and getting my Ph.D. and teaching others to be better managers, and teaching others about effective leadership. So I could impact more. So that was what kind of drove me to go get my Ph.D.” These paths to the academic career are evidence of one of the key differences between the Business School professors and the other professors in this study: whereas the other professors have followed, in one form or another, a passion for their fields of study, the professors of business, for the most part, have made a professional, calculated choice to enter the academy.

## Socialization

Similar to the women of the Department of English, the socialization of the women of the Business School to their academic careers has been a combination of learning through trial and error on the job, learning through one’s doctoral program, and seeking good professional mentors. Due to their socialization, which emphasizes the researcher role, and their place within the organizational hierarchy, it is mainly the associate professors who describe interactions with their students as the activities from which they derive most of their satisfaction with their professional roles. The assistant professors mainly think of research time and the ability to carve

out time dedicated solely to research as what they value the most. The associate professors may still enjoy that research time and want it, but it is no longer hanging over them due to a ticking tenure clock. Christy, for example, the assistant professor who is working towards success through "a lot of hard work and focus," defines her role as an academic as "trying to change the world with your research" and then imparting what she learns from that research to her students. For at least two of the assistant professors the researcher role provides great joy. Katrina says that "the best time of the day" is when she gets to work on her research projects: "You do your work, you play. It's like you have pieces of a puzzle, and if you find the way they click together it's like this magical moment. It's so beautiful." Virginia, similarly, enjoys the process of research, "even the rejections . . . And I think, oh boy, I can't wait to like, dig in, and see what they've said about it, how I'm going to reframe [it]." Of course, these are the two professors who followed the most traditional academic paths to the academy, so we would expect them as well to be drawn to the process of doing academic research.

Janet, the assistant professor who decided to pursue a Ph.D. after attending a graduate school expo with a friend, defines her identity as a professor as "the freedom to work on projects that I'm interested in, teach in areas that I'm interested in." She points out the importance of the training that occurs during one's doctoral program to the socialization process and says that by the time that she graduated she had "a very good idea of what this job was about, what it meant, what it took to be successful." It is important, Janet says, that doctoral students know by the time that they graduate "what it takes to identify an interesting question, figure out how to test it, figure out how to write in a way that makes it attractive to journal editors so that it can be publishable." Those who do not acquire this knowledge from graduate school, she says, are "at a *severe* disadvantage coming out as an assistant professor. Because there's not time on a tenure

clock to learn that and do the work you need to do to publish enough to get tenure. So hopefully you're well-trained out of your doctoral program." The burden to learn the rules of the academy and to be successful is placed squarely on the shoulders of the individual and not on the institution. She acknowledges that the learning process does not end upon graduation and says that she is "better at it" now than when she first arrived. But Janet also struggles with balancing the competing roles of the academic profession and says she spends "too much time" with her doctoral students, because she also enjoys the teaching and the mentoring roles, and she performs a considerable amount of service on both a local and a national level. Both of those roles, the teaching and the service, take time away from her ability to produce research. As she herself says, at a school like SRU "the socialization has more to do with, just, butt in the chair, publishing. At least at a research university. I think if you went to, um, someplace that's more explicitly teaching oriented, you'd hear a different story."

Like Janet, Katrina, the assistant professor who grew up outside the U.S., identifies three different types of freedom that she says she is allowed by her professional role: freedom of the mind, freedom to direct her research agenda as she sees fit, and freedom to direct her own day-to-day activities. Similarly, Brittany, the assistant professor trying to prepare her students for life after college, describes her academic roles in terms of "intellectual freedom" and says that it is "a rare job where I'm fortunate enough to get paid for doing exactly what I want to do, any day of the week." This statement flies in the face of theories of organizational socialization, or, perhaps more accurately, reinforces it: she has been socialized into thinking this is the case. Although she feels that she has control over her daily activities, she performs activities that have been prescribed and are rewarded by the institutional structure and discourse: research, teaching, and service. She could not decide to just teach and not produce research, or just do service work, not

in her current position. The institution will not allow it. And Brittany is certainly not unaware of what the institution expects her to do. She says that she has learned that spending time in pursuit of external funding "would be looked unfavorably upon by my colleagues above me, who would be rating me for promotion purposes." The time she would spend chasing grants is time that could be better spent writing. Although she is not explicit about how she has learned these institutional and disciplinary priorities, Brittany does note that the emphasis on research was first instilled in her in her doctoral program by way of the lack of emphasis that was placed on teaching. But this socialization seems not to have well-prepared her for her current roles that demand both research and teaching, and she says she has to work to "meld more" to try to use what she is learning from her research in the classroom. It is a process that is neither natural nor easy for her: "Someday hopefully I'll be as good as some of my senior colleagues and be able to do that seemingly effortlessly. Right now it's tough."

Virginia also says that the teaching role at SRU is "not emphasized." Indeed, she says that "if anything, there's a major backlash if people sense that you're too into it. You know, you can really get yourself in trouble if people think you're like really too into teaching, or spending too much time on it or something." She is not explicit about how she has learned these rules or what getting "in trouble" means. She points out that the research pressure is such that someone who does not enjoy the process of research will not enjoy the academic profession. And part of being socialized to the academic profession for a professor of business is learning how to manage that research and submission process, which is why good mentoring and learning from trial and error are so important, as Virginia says: "the more you do it, the better you get."

Although Virginia acknowledges that she now closely identifies with her identity as a professor, she also describes how her "enchantment" with the academy has diminished as she

increasingly has been socialized into the academic profession: “In undergrad, I remember thinking, *oh I can’t wait until I can call myself a graduate student*! Very romantic, like *graduate student,* and the whole idea of taking all these classes and tons of learning and all this stuff. And by the time I got to be an assistant professor I think, I started to realize, it’s a *job*.” Much like the move towards academic capitalism has shifted priorities of the institution from learning for learning’s sake to job training, the move from student to professor has shifted Virginia’s priorities from learning new things to time management: “It’s like a treadmill, and it’s on fast mode, and I’m just trying to write and to get things out and get things back as fast as possible. And so the enchantment is definitely down. And I think of it like a job. Like just like a banker, and just like a lawyer, and, you know, students are my clients.” She has moved along that continuum from learning for learning’s sake that is valued by the public good knowledge/learning regime, to the exchange of commodities valued by the academic capitalist knowledge/learning regime.

Much like the associate professors in the Department of English, those in the Business School are in the position of being able to reflect back on their initial socialization to academia and to comment on their current socialization to the full professor role and to larger administrative roles. Elise, a lawyer by training, says that her initial socialization to the academy occurred through a combination of her formal education, on-the-job observation, and seeking out good mentors who provided “a lot of coaching from the very beginning.” She says that “it was made pretty clear” to her that she is expected to make full professor, even before she had officially received tenure. The difference between socialization at the assistant professor level and socialization at the associate professor level, she says, is that now “they can’t, sort of, engage in what I would call hazing. Constantly sort of, you know, raising the bar, you know, you need

six and then you need ten, things like that. Or, just a lot of what I would generally call hazing. They try to make you feel insecure."

The associate professors, because they are tenured, are in a position of privilege that allows them to focus on the satisfaction that they gain from interactions with their students. Elise, for example, points out the variety that the academic life provides and the ability to move between writing and teaching as a source of satisfaction, as well as the "ongoing feedback" that she receives from students both during the semester and after they graduate. Similarly, Lori, who decided to pursue a Ph.D. for the "larger impact" she could have teaching others to be better managers, says she gets emails and phone calls from students several years after graduating to thank her for the impact that she has had on their lives, which remind her that on occasion she does touch somebody's life: "That's the coolest part. Because when it comes down to it, you know, when I'm eighty-five years old, I don't want someone to get up there and say Lori had a hundred publications and was you know voted the best teacher in twenty years and blah, blah, blah. I want people to get up there and say, you know, how did I impact them?" It is, Karen agrees, the "I know you'll think about me when you're on your deathbed kind of stuff." Further, Karen, the former attorney who "kind of backed into" the academic profession, points out both the opportunity and the obligation of being an academic that she says extends beyond the number of publications on a vita: "We actually get to participate in how things are viewed and get to shape what that perception is. And I love it. Especially when you do it with honor."

Karen is content to remain at the associate professor level even though, in years of service, she is past the point where she could have been promoted to full professor. It reflects, she says, the value she places on teaching over research: "Well, at some point, I've just got to be honest about it, I just realized that was all just a bunch of bullshit. To deal with that for me,

would have been to deal with it for ego purposes. And I was not in teaching to do that, I cared more about the students and what they learned and stuff like that. So, I'm more of a teacher." This attitude is not, she says, an indication of a lack of ability and certainly her vita reflects an extensive record of scholarship. She has done what was needed to reach tenure. It is the process of building an academic vita and what it says the academy values that Karen is opposed to: "It's just that sort of inside me somewhere I hated the idea that we were doing this, this sort of fawning over each other, for nothing. . . . I get so much more satisfaction, especially with [my] subject matter and what it teaches people, than I would doing a bunch of papers that nobody ever saw, that would impress my colleagues and somehow make them think that I was all of that and a bag of chips." She points out as well that she makes far more financially from her consulting work than she ever would from a promotion to the senior rank. And even after many years away from the courtroom, Karen says she still thinks of herself as lawyer first and an academic second. "Even though," she says, referring to herself and other lawyers who work in the Business School, "we fully participate and all that, it's just our training, you know, you don't get away from your training." It is because of that training, she says, that "a lot of us always get picked for participating in administration, you know. And it's kind of good because you need that balance, you know. We don't have the same training at all." Of course, she is referring only to that training which occurred prior to obtaining the academic role; presumably, she has had the same training as others have had on the job.

Lori, who is married to a colleague in the Business School and the mother of three children, is newly-tenured and says she is trying to "redefine" herself, to break out of the mold she has been socialized into, "because I feel like I came in as myself, and then grew into someone that I wasn't, because I had to play the game. I had to do the A B C's that it took to get

the tenure." Now she feels that she has "more voice" than she had as an assistant professor and she is trying to determine how best to use that voice "in a way that can start to make change happen." Now that she has tenure she feels that she has been "freed up" to do the kind of work that she wants to do as opposed to the work she was required to do to fulfill the standards of success dictated by the academic structure and discourse, although she acknowledges there might still be ramifications, in terms of making full professor one day, for not continuing to play that game. But, she wonders, "Do I care about making full? Do I want to live the life *I* value as an academic, you know, really connecting with my students, really connecting with the field, and answering questions that they care about, and if those are my values, and if I do that, then that to me is a fulfilling career." Of course, it is questionable how different this is than what she has done to achieve tenure, other than perhaps developing a deeper connection with her students in the classroom. If she continues to publish in her field then she continues to fulfill the disciplinary requirements. And if she intends to stop doing so, then her definition of a "fulfilling career" may ultimately be at odds with the definition prescribed by the academic structure and discourse. She may have achieved "success" by getting tenure but that does not necessarily mean she is success*ful*, not yet. It does not mean she no longer must abide by the rules and standards of the institution.

Lori reflects on the differences between what she learned as a graduate student, when "to some extent you are protected from the realities of what life is as an academic," and then getting a job and being faced with those realities. She describes how she was "*indoctrinated* as a student as to what the teaching is like, how you should be *passionate* about your research and what you need to do to be published, and you're pretty protected from the political arena inside a faculty job, so, I think I felt like if I do quality research, and it gets published, and I'm doing well in the

classroom, that I will be seen as a competent academic professional." Then, she says, she was hired into her first academic position and the rules as she knew them changed. She recalls, for example, discovering that the men at her previous institution had a monthly poker game where, among other things, they discussed how to get around the system to acquire more resources, information that was not equally shared with the women. She says she has learned that there is a lot more subjectivity than she thought within the system; good work is not necessarily rewarded on its merit, nor is good teaching. Lori says that she loves the teaching part of her role and she is one of the few women from the Business School in this study who says outright that "being a good educator is to me an important part of being an academic." But she says she has been told "when you're at a research one school, just do enough to not get bombed in your teaching ratings, because that's not important. And, it's, you put it on your P and T document, but it's not really what you're going to get evaluated on."

Perhaps reflective of these experiences, Lori calls socialization for the academic profession "baptism by fire" and says that instead of training doctoral students for the profession "we train them to produce the scholarship in their discipline," though some would certainly argue that is training them for the profession. But as a result of her experiences, she has tried to be much more proactive in her own mentoring of doctoral students, "like what does it mean, how do you decide, how do you progress through your career, what are bad decisions, what do those look like, what kinds of challenges are you going to get confronted with." She advises future assistant professors to seek out a couple of senior mentors in order to find out about those informal norms that are not included in the orientation book: "And don't just get one opinion, get a couple of different opinions. I think sometimes we're just afraid to ask. I was always afraid to

ask and just thought, oh I should be doing it. And that's where I think I made some critical time management mistakes, putting time in where I didn't need to be putting time in."

The mentoring component has been an important one for all of these professors, whether it is with senior colleagues, Ph.D. advisors, or even some individuals from earlier in their careers who nudged them in the direction of an academic profession. The mentoring relationships within SRU's Business School are neither formal nor mandatory and there is of course a socialization process to that as well in terms of learning how to navigate that relationship; also, with such a dearth of female professors within the Business School, necessarily, most of the senior mentors are male. Janet, who places such great emphasis on the learning that should take place during graduate school for socialization to the academic role, describes the "unbelievably supportive" people in her department at SRU's Business School, "in a way that no one was at my Ph.D. institution." In particular she has sought out several senior women who she says have been instrumental in her development. One has provided guidance to several of the assistant professors on becoming better teachers, an area in which they all were struggling, perhaps due to the aforementioned lack of emphasis on the teaching role in their professional development. Another senior colleague reads over Janet's research and her reviews and she says provides valuable feedback. Brittany similarly describes the senior colleagues in her department at SRU as "amazing" mentors. Laughingly, she also describes some of the struggles that crop up with having such "amazing teachers" in their senior colleagues: "It's good in the sense that they lead by example and basically say it's important, it's important to communicate well with the students and stuff. But on the flip side we're like, ah, damn, they're good teachers! Now we've gotta be good at this!"

It seems that these Business School professors either are receiving mixed messages or that they have convinced themselves of institutional norms that may not exist: being good teachers, they say, is a role that is not valued by the institution, yet in actual practice, according to the role models provided in their senior colleagues, it is. How do these mixed messages originate? Clearly there are research expectations associated with gaining tenure but that is not different from any other academic department. And, according to these professors of business, they are not expected to seek out external funding to support their research efforts. So are they being told one thing and shown another? Or are they placing unnecessary pressure on themselves to be successful according to norms that may not, in fact, exist? It is possible that these women, positioned as they are within a male-dominated field that is privileged within the institution, have heightened expectations for themselves for what they must accomplish to be successful.

Elise also acknowledges informal mentors she has had to help her along her academic career path, by "going out of their way to pop their head in the door and go, what are you working on, that type of thing. Or we go to a conference and they say, make sure you meet x, y and z, or we go to a cocktail party and they say, oh come here, I want you to meet [so and so], that type of thing." She says these informal pop-ins are often more helpful than if those roles were reversed and she was forced to seek out their assistance as there are many questions she would not even know to ask. There is, she says, no question that these informal mentoring relationships have "made a huge difference" to her socialization process: "I've seen people wipe out here too, men wipe out, that I think, are you not listening? Because I do see a lot of coaching along the way."

Virginia, who went straight from her undergraduate program to her graduate program and then into an academic job, did not benefit from professional mentors in corporate practice but she

recalls “role models” that she has had throughout her education “that have kept me in it and kind of kept me centered and taught me a great deal about the profession and what’s expected.” She recalls her undergraduate thesis advisor as being the first person to challenge the myth that she held about what, or who, could be a professor, in a moment of epiphany similar to that described by some of the professors of English: “I was like, so I could be a professor? And he’s like, yeah, of course you could be a professor! It was like a real awakening for me that like, oh, these people are not like these bastions of brilliance rather than people in a profession, working hard.” In graduate school her advisor served as a mentor as well and a source of support as she struggled with adopting this new identity. Finding this sort of professional support, she says, has been crucial for her, as, like so many of the others in this study, she has been an academic trailblazer: “I had my family, most of whom, none of whom went on for higher ed, some of whom didn’t go on for college, even, so I couldn’t turn to them for support, professionally, because they just had no clue.” Indeed, it is in the Business School where the majority of the first generation college students in this study are found, which is perhaps another reason why they seem to work so hard to prove themselves as competent academic scholars.

## Performing Gender

The professors in SRU’s Business School are aware that they are in a field where women still are in the minority and that this minority status affects the way that they construct their identities. For some, like Katrina, the assistant professor who first came to the U.S. in pursuit of a Ph.D. after encountering gender discrimination in her home country, her minority status can be an advantage; as she puts it, as long as she performs well as a scholar people will pay attention to her and remember her because of the fact that she is a woman. In other words, being a member

of the minority allows her to stand out more. Christy, too, who like Katrina believes in the rules and expectations for success in academia, sees her gender as a benefit as opposed to a hindrance and thinks that along the way males were probably more inclined to help her because she is female. Indeed, she has previously called women "the worst offenders" in terms of not being available as mentors, particularly in her prior corporate job. At the same time, though, she recognizes that in her faculty role being a woman means that she is "a little bit on the outside of the political, a little bit on the outside of the power center." But she sees potential advantages to this outsider position, which she identifies as the possibility to "define your own success. As long as you publish well enough they'll leave you alone." Of course, both of these assistant professors selected the Tierney quote describing higher education as a site of socialization as reflective of their view of higher education. If they saw their gender as a disadvantage, according to this worldview they would have to admit possibilities for failure within the system.

Advantage or not, there still are challenges to being a female faculty member in the Business School. Being a woman, Brittany says, echoing the professors of English, "means that you have to be pretty good at juggling. Multitasking." She says she feels pressure "to put research first, above and beyond anything else" including family, which proves particularly difficult for new mothers like herself. She recalls that her dissertation chair advised her, when she went on the job market, "don't tell anyone you're thinking about having kids, because they'll think you're not serious about research," as apparently it is impossible to be serious about both.

As already mentioned, because the Business School is still so heavily dominated by men it can be hard to find a female mentor, and there still is the feeling that the senior women who are there are charting new territory. As a result of the behaviors and attitudes these women had to adopt to fulfill that trailblazing role, says Virginia, "the few that made it through were often not

particularly warm and fuzzy sort of mentors. They were sort of tough cookies." Janet, as well, who acknowledges she has benefited from mentoring by senior women, also describes them as "very opinionated, very difficult, I would say almost unlikable people. But it was the only way they could be and succeed." Some of these women, of course, do provide supportive mentoring through informal pop-ins and helping with the teaching role. But they have had to become like men, as much as possible, to be invited into the male-dominated center, and in doing so they have become "tough," "difficult," and "unlikable." In other words, they are not like the women they are supposed to be. Janet counts herself fortunate to be part of the current younger generation of female academics and not a member of this trailblazing group: "When I left [the private sector] I went into the managing partner's office and told him I was going to resign because I was going to go get a Ph.D., and he said, you could be the first woman partner in the office! And I looked at him and I said, I don't want to be the first woman anything. And he was very taken aback by that. But I will always remember that because the path is just too hard."

Elise, one of the associate professors, notes that there are more women being hired now than before she came along, which may change the experience for those who come after. And although she says she is often aware, still, of being the only woman in a meeting or of decisions made on new hires that might be gender-related, more often than not, she says, gender affects her due to her own personality and her own feelings that she has to "do head and shoulders what they might expect of someone else" whether or not those expectations actually do exist. This perception may explain the value that the younger professors place on the research role over teaching; because *they* view teaching as feminized, in their effort to get to the center *they* and not the institution have deemed it unimportant.

Karen, also a former attorney and an associate professor, points out that being a woman in the academy and a woman in the Business School "means I'm going to be paid less, it means I'm going to have to struggle to be heard more." She talks about her willingness "to take my space in the world" and how that has challenged people within the academy over the years, "instead of just sitting there and shutting up" as women are expected to do. Despite these challenges and struggles, Karen says there are benefits to having women in the academy, because "the truth is, that lens is different, and our approach is different, and we need, if we're going to get the full picture, which is what education should be about, finding truth, and learning in that process, then you're going to need both" men and women within the academy. For example, says Karen, women have a different approach to work than men do: "Women tend to be like, let me get my stuff done, cause I've got a whole lot to do. Men are like, this could go on and on." The men, she says, have a lounge in the Business School that she has never visited, nor has any other woman that she knows, not because they would not be welcome there but because women do not have time to hang out in a lounge. This different approach to work may impact those perceptions of different work expectations: "We end up looking at them like, where do they get the time to do this? And then we think, ah! We forgot. They don't have to go home and fix dinner and deal with the kids and all that kind of stuff. And that's huge!" Most of her male colleagues, particularly those who were there before her, are married, she says, and "their wife takes care of the kids whether she works or not, outside of the home."

Lori, the newly-tenured associate professor who is married to one of her colleagues, holds similar views about the differences between how women and men approach work. And, she says, women in the academy who want to have a family soon realize that they are either going to have to sacrifice time with their children to make tenure or they are not going to be able

to make tenure. She describes what she calls “discounting” that she sees happen based on gender. For example, she says that many of the male senior faculty members treat her like she is a daughter as opposed to a competent colleague, “in a way that I don’t have the same credibility and respect as the male Ph.D.s. You know, they don’t necessarily ask me about how my research is, they ask me about the kids, and they touch my arm tenderly, you know, *how are you doing?* It’s endearing, but it’s not in a way that’s similar to my male colleagues.” As another example of this gender-based “discounting” that she says occurs, she describes how she often will make a suggestion in a committee meeting “and there will be kind of a nod, and I’ll have a male colleague five minutes later say the same exact thing and they’ll be like, [Bob]! That’s exactly what we’re talking about, we have to act on that!” Further, she says she has had senior male faculty refuse to go to lunch with her, if it is just the two of them, due to potential perceptions of what might be going on between them if they are having lunch together, alone. She calls it, “very outdated” and, even more than that, “incredibly offensive. Because, you know, I have a husband, I’m happily married, you’re happily married, like us going to lunch is about me wanting your body? No.” And so she is forced to find others to accompany them to lunch, chaperones if you will, if she wants equivalent access to that senior colleague as her male colleagues have.

Much like the all-female network that Margaret in the Department of English describes she now has as a result of her institutional service work, there are other avenues of support for women in the Business School. A couple of the participants describe an invitation-only listserv of professors who are also mothers that exists on SRU’s campus, which provides an outlet for some of the women to discuss issues and challenges and provide support for one another. Lori, one of the few participants who mentions this listserv, points out how interesting it is that it is all underground, and says it reflects a level of secrecy and paranoia that is indicative of larger

feelings and perceptions both about and by women on the SRU campus: “I think it would be uncomfortable if this college saw six of its female junior faculty going to lunch together. The administration would think, oh, oh my goodness! What are they talking about? Is there an issue? It’s like there’s a coalition, there’s going to be some kind of demonstration. . . . We don’t think that when there’s a bunch of guys.” It is not thought because there are so many of them – it is not so uncommon to see a bunch of men together – and because they are at the center of the institutional structure.

Like their colleagues in the Department of English, two of the major challenges faced by the women in the Business School are related to their roles as spouse and mother or as potential future spouse or mother. Janet, for example, is an assistant professor and is single and feels that she is likely to remain that way for reasons ranging from the demographics of the town in which SRU is located to the feeling that men are “often intimidated by a woman with a Ph.D., who has a very high-powered job.” She recognizes that these are issues not unique to academia: “I don’t know how much that’s focused on being an academic or just who I am, right? So, anyway. But sometimes it’s a, you know. You’d like to be married. So.” There is a sense of loss in her voice when she says these words and she gets quiet as she thinks about it. Although there are no upward age limits on getting married there are very real timing issues related to the female biological clock; indeed, other than Katrina and Virginia, who are both quite young, Janet, Christy, and Brittany all spent time in the private sector before returning to school to pursue an academic career and it may be assumed that their window for having children soon will be closed.

A couple of the participants’ spouses gave up their own careers in deference to their wives’. Brittany’s husband gave up a tenure-track position so that she could take the job at SRU,

a decision, she says, “that was best for the family,” particularly in light of the fact that they recently had their first child and he can serve as the full-time childcare provider. But he hopes eventually to get back on the tenure-track, which might mean they have to leave SRU for another institution where they can both find fulfillment in their careers. Despite the childcare realities, Brittany thinks that it is helpful to have a spouse who is also an academic, for understanding what each other is going through to get tenure. Lori’s husband also gave up a career, though outside of academia, to take care of their children when she was at her previous institution. She says she does not understand how two people with high-powered jobs and children can make their family work. However, her husband was not happy as the stay-at-home dad and they talked about Lori stepping down for his career, but she says it just was not realistic, financially, as she is the primary breadwinner. He now works in a non-tenure-track position at SRU that she says provides the flexibility they need for their family. Christy and her husband have made the decision that he will stay home with their children in deference to her career. She says she “can’t conceive” of doing it otherwise, “given what we want for our kids.”

Virginia’s husband works outside of academia in a corporate job. Contrary to Brittany, Virginia says she is “thrilled” her husband is not an academic, “because I think two people is a super-big problem, and really annoying, and really stressful.” But she also notes that there are stresses with any dual-career couple, academic or not. Elise’s spouse has recently taken a non-academic position in another town. Although she does not comment on any additional stress this adds to their relationship – as she notes: “I do not talk family” – she does recognize that having him on the road has decreased her flexibility, so they have added a nanny who helps her to “cover the time.” Katrina lives in a different state from her spouse, which poses its own source of complications, though she does not dwell on these issues as particularly stressful. Finally, Karen

used to be in a dual-academic career relationship, but is no longer; however, she does comment in abstract terms regarding the potentially negative impact of the academy on women and men as it often plays out in personal relationships.

Nearly all of the women discuss challenges associated with having or raising children and being an academic. As Virginia, one of the youngest women from the Business School, puts it, being a woman in the academy "means that I have had to think about when I want to have children since the minute I realized that I was going into this field." With tenure pressure there is little room for unplanned pregnancies within the academic calendar. As Katrina points out, although there potentially are options for stopping one's tenure clock with the birth of a child it is not a benefit that is necessarily used or perceived fairly. And the option of waiting until after tenure to have children for many women is not an option. As noted earlier, because of their career paths many of these women are already past their prime childbearing years. Christy, not wanting to wait, gave birth to her first child as a graduate student and her second when she was in her first academic position prior to coming to SRU. The time management realities associated with both meant that she spent an extra year in her doctoral program than she otherwise would have, and in retrospect, had she stayed in her first academic position she believes she would not have been successful in getting tenure.

Virginia calls the children issue "the single most important thing that differentiates us from our male colleagues." Trying to figure out when is the best time to have children she compares to a chess game, where one must "figure it out in a way that will mitigate the complications as much as possible." So, she recommends, one should not get pregnant when just starting an academic position "because everyone will think you're on the mommy track," and one should not get pregnant when going up for tenure. It is important, Virginia says, to build

institutional credit first, so that "you've published a ton, or you've put in a lot of time at your organization and they know who you are and they can think of you more as a person and not as a, you know, mom." Clearly, being thought of as a "mom" or as "on the mommy track" are not positive associations within the academy. And it is not just the male faculty members who are guilty of perpetuating this negative perception. Virginia recalls a senior female colleague sitting her down to talk about family planning, "how it's a problem in our department, and you know, two people, had, you know, *whoopsie* babies, and I thought it was *so* inappropriate, I just was shocked and embarrassed by the whole thing. Like, I can't believe you're telling me this. This is so inappropriate, like, both to them and to me."

Whether through perception or reality, the children issue is still one that poses challenges for women faculty. Elise, the former lawyer, makes it a personal policy not to ever talk about her children at work, "because when I finally did say something, immediately a senior colleague expressed concerns about my output, expressed concerns about how much it would draw away from my time, and quite frankly I hit the ceiling, and said it's none of your business. If it's not affecting my work, it's none of your business." And although she can see the concern as valid, as of course a child is going to affect one's time, she says she does not see the same concerns raised with her male colleagues when they have children. In fact, she says she keeps a nanny to make sure that she never is unavailable for a meeting because of her children, so that no one can complain that she is not pulling her weight because of them. At the same time, she notes that one of her male colleagues will cancel office hours due to a sick child and will post a sign on his office door to that end. Elise says she would never do that, because of the potential perceptions: "He's the *good dad* because he's going home. I would be the *undedicated colleague*. I mean it could be just my perception but, I don't like to chance it." Echoing Virginia, Elise also has a

strong desire that her colleagues "think of me as researcher. Not mommy." Again, these are perceptions held and perpetuated not only by her male colleagues; indeed, women are often worse: "I was at lunch recently and there's a woman who's out on pregnancy leave and they go, ha! We'll see if she comes back! This was by another woman, who has no children. We'll see if she comes back, we'll see what that's all about. I'm not sure she's going to produce any more, and blah, blah, blah. I find that other women who don't have children are harder. No question about it. In the academy and outside."

Lori, who has said that she is trying to redefine herself now that she has tenure, echoes some of these same feelings and perceptions. For example, she says she would never say that she has to leave a meeting early because of her children, whereas "some males in my department have been very forthcoming in saying, oh, well I've got to make it to so and so's soccer game so I'm going to have to leave twenty minutes early, and the sense is, isn't he such a committed father. The fact that he's such a great worker and such a committed father. It's almost like they have that permission to say that." On the other hand, women who do the same thing she feels are seen as the uncommitted and not-so-great worker. And although she does think her department within SRU's Business School is fairly collegial and supportive, "being female and having a family, it's just really difficult to manage all of that and I do think you feel like you have to protect pieces of your life." When she was pregnant she says she was treated like she had "the plague," and, like Elise, had to deal with the question of whether or not she was going to make it on her promotion and tenure clock. Further, she describes higher education as "prehistoric" in terms of work-family benefits and policies, particularly in comparison to the corporate sector. And so, she says, she finds herself teaching MBA students with "the corporate reality of all the things that they're doing to create a level playing field and to make sure the glass ceiling's not

there, and then to be at an institution where you, it's just, I feel like I'm living in this schizophrenic world."

However, this impression of all that they are doing in the corporate sector related to work-family policies may be just that: an impression created and perpetuated by the corporations. Hoffman and Cowan (2008), in their examination of the corporate rhetoric of *Fortune* 500's 2004 list of the "100 Best Companies to Work For," found four key ideas embedded in the organizational discourse: (a) work is the most important element in life; (b) life means (traditional) family; (c) individuals are responsible for managing the relationship between paid work and the rest of life; and (d) organizations control work/life programs (p. 233-234). Further, "if employees are held responsible for achieving the proper relationship between work and life, only the individual, not the organization, can be held responsible if balance is not achieved" (p. 237-238). Therefore, it may seem like the corporate sector is light-years beyond higher education in terms of work-life policies, but the reality is that this may be more policy than actual practice. And, it seems, much like the discourse around research and teaching, the discourse around the "good mother"/person binary may be more perception than reality, or at the very least women are not innocent in its perpetuation.

## Searching for Balance

In addition to the challenges posed as a result of trying to balance dual-career relationships and trying to balance the identities of "researcher" with "mom," the professors in the Business School, much like those in the Department of English, are facing other issues of balance as well. Indeed, as Janet already has realized as an assistant professor, there are class issues within the academic ranks and the Business School ranks near the top: "I would not do

this job for the money the humanities professors get paid. There's no way I'd put up with this much stress for that money." These professors of business far out-pace the English and science professors in terms of salary and, as several of them note, they left a career of much greater income and potential income to come to academia where the compensation may not match the workload. So while Janet says she values the flexibility that the academic job offers to her life, she proceeds to detail her non-teaching days as including reading something work-related while at the gym, then going to a coffee shop to work, then coming to the office to work. She has, as she puts it, "no balance. I have no balance. I am very focused on the short-term, on getting tenure. . . . I have no illusions that I will work less [when I get tenure]. To be successful, and it's important to me to be successful, requires a big commitment. And I like to work. So I don't mind the long hours." And it can be assumed that those who previously worked in the corporate sector are used to long working hours.

Brittany also notes the long hours associated with the academic job and says that she and her husband both work seven days a week. Christy describes the most stress associated with the pressures of being an assistant professor of business; just two days before our interview she says she got "the publication I knew locked me" and says she told her therapist she "nailed the landing." Part of the stress she says is due to her role as the primary breadwinner for her family and knowing what would happen to them if she does not make tenure. In light of her recent publication, she says, "I hope that I can enjoy it and not be so fucking stressed out all the time. I hope so. I hope so. It better. Because otherwise it won't be good for my health." She was diagnosed with panic disorder and then depression when she was in graduate school and continues to take medication and is in therapy because of it. She has determined, she says, to take better care of herself now that she feels that she has locked up tenure. But it does not sound

promising: “I eat like shit. I try to exercise, but not enough. I’m sick more than I should be, I don’t eat well, and I don’t exercise enough, so hopefully I can prioritize myself, going forward.”

Of all the assistant professors, Katrina, who does not have children, seems to have the best handle on the professional-personal life balance. Philosophically, she points out that she first started to figure out how to handle things in graduate school, how far she could push herself to get results. It is not worth it to her to work so hard that she never has any time off and is working around the clock. Success, she points out, “usually is something that is measured by other people.” Instead she knows what success is for her. And while she could work harder, perhaps, and achieve more, “I don’t think this would allow me to study Spanish and I spent a year on Spanish, and this won’t let me travel home as often as I am traveling now, it won’t let me to play tennis with my husband almost every day when we are together. So, I mean, there are things that I like and that I don’t want to sacrifice.” Of course, this description of success seems at odds with her view of higher education as a site of socialization, where knowing “how to behave” according to the organization’s, and not the individual’s, rules improves chances for individual success. Still an assistant professor, it remains to be seen whether her idea of success and the institution’s will ultimately match.

Virginia says she has reached a point that she realizes she can “have it all, just not all at once.” For her that means eliminating those things that will add stress to her life by being yet another drain on her time, including things that were once quite important to her like volunteer activities: “We feel like we’ve been socialized to the point where you feel like you can’t do anything that’s not, like within reason, and feel guilty about it, and volunteering is one, like I really do get so much joy out of it. But it’s something that I’ve just line eliminated because I felt like, oh that’s something that’s just going to make me more stressed out.” It is important to note

that both Virginia and Katrina are the youngest participants out of the Business School, neither of whom left other careers to join the academy and neither of whom have children, which may account for their relatively lower levels of stress; there is, in a sense, less riding on this for them.

Some of the stress associated with balance is specifically gender-related. Women, Karen points out, no matter their professional obligations, tend to be the primary caretaker of children. This means "much less schmoozing and chatting around the coffee pot while at work, more work done after the dinner is made, kids are fed, homework is done and kids go to bed. And that's not even including spending time with their significant other." Lori, for example, says that during the last two years before she went up for tenure, not wanting to sacrifice dinner with her family and her "goodnight routine time," she would get home from work, do dinner and story time, and then continue to work until two or three in the morning as well as go into the office three weekends a month. "And you regret it, you know? The kids grow so fast. I put my baby in kindergarten last year and I just cried and cried. . . . You know, I can't go back and get that time when they were little again." And so now she says she thinks she is trying to "overcompensate by being everything" and as a result her marriage has become her last priority. She and her husband have been in marital counseling twice. But on the other hand, Elise says that after working in the private sector, as most of these women have, "this is the most ideal job. . . . This is the most flexible job in the universe." This job, she feels, has actually provided her some balance and allowed her to have two children. "It's a little crazy most of the time but I feel like it's doable. Whereas it would not have been doable at [the firm], I was at a big firm, it was not doable. Part time there is eight to five."

Along with the challenges, there are various aspects of the academic life that has proven surprising, both positively and otherwise, to the women professors in the Business School.

Despite the socialization provided by graduate school, some of the surprises have to do with the academic life not matching their previous expectations. Christy, for instance, expected there to be more "intellectual curiosity" and less "insecurity" and she has found troubling the lone scholar nature of academia. At the same time, she "didn't expect to like it as much as I do, especially the research." She also says she "never expected to feel so competent, and to feel so good about myself professionally," reflecting both her previous dissatisfaction with the private sector and the difficulties she has had adopting the identity of professor. Brittany has found the job to be "way more work than I thought it was going to be. And it's way harder than I thought it was going to be. But at the same time it makes it more rewarding." But like Christy she is disappointed by how lonely it can be: "You can shut the door and never even interact with people if you didn't want to. And so that aspect of it, I was not prepared for." Finally, Lori says that she was unaware, like Brittany, when she was a doctoral student how much work was involved with being a professor: "People think that academics have all this time off. We're always working in our time off. We're always on. And at home we're always on, too. It's access by email from students and thinking about that next paper and getting committee reports done, and your work bleeds into your family life a lot more than corporate jobs."

So what strategies have these women developed to try to deal with some of these challenges? Like the professors of English, the business professors' strategies range from getting exercise, to time-management skills, to learning to take breaks, to prioritizing research activities over teaching, to building in protected time for research. Karen offers perhaps the most succinct advice to women in the academy, including her Business School colleagues:

> My advice is to prioritize. You can't be perfect at every single thing, but choose what is important and try to focus on that. Have a support system for things like having to spend

> time working on papers or when you have to leave town to present papers. Work with others so it can lighten the load, if it is not perceived as a negative in your discipline. Make the time spent on work productive. And don't neglect your kids! The rest will go on, but they only have one set of parents!

Good advice, perhaps, but advice that her own colleagues seem neither to have heard nor to follow. The disciplinary power of the institutional discourse and structure are strong, indeed.

# CHAPTER 5

# DEPARTMENTS OF SCIENCE

*"I'm surprised there aren't more suicides, in the academic world."*
*Sharon, Assistant Professor of Science, Southern Research University*

Departments of Science at Southern Research University are scattered throughout the campus in buildings ranging from many-decades-old to brand-new and state-of-the-art. The state of the building is itself a reflection of the department's perceived status within the university's scientific community and within the larger university community as well. Plant sciences are in one of the older structures, reflecting its status as one of the older scientific fields. Genetics and biomedical sciences are in one of the new ones, reflecting their value as newer, flashier fields. Many of the professors' offices are located within their lab space, giving a decidedly different feel to the location than that of the other interviews; we are, quite literally, in the middle of their work (Although, certainly this was the case for professors of English and business as well since they work in their offices, it just was not so readily apparent.). Six departments of biological sciences were selected to be part of this study on advice from two senior members of the SRU scientific community; there simply were not enough women in any of the individual Departments of Science to conduct this study. At the time of this study, within these six selected departments there were 135 full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty members, 28 of whom were women (20.74%). On average, female assistant professors in the selected Departments of Science at SRU make $51,805 and female associate professors make $83,698 (Table of Salaries

can be found in Appendix C). Of the 28 total women faculty, six held assistant professor ranks and eight held associate professor ranks. Seven of these women elected to participate in this study: two assistant professors, Trudy and Sharon, and five associate professors, Rachel, Amanda, Natalie, Carter, and Theresa, representing five out of the six departments included in this study. Three of the participants – Trudy, Amanda, and Carter – were from the same department. Each of the other departments had one participant each. Out of the three fields under study – English, business, and science – this is the only group where associate professors outnumber assistant professors who agreed to participate. Although it is not clear why this is the case, it is possible to speculate that perhaps assistant professors of science feel they do not have time to devote to such "volunteer" projects, or perhaps, in their positivist worlds, a project that aims to examine how they construct their lives simply has no meaning for them; for the professors of science in particular there is little distance between career and life. Science is not only what they do, it is who they are. These explanations, however, do not account for why these seven women did agree to participate as clearly they too are pressed for time and closely identify with their scientific roles. Whatever are their reasons for doing so, the stories of the women of science who did choose to take part, detailing the roles and activities that they perform as they construct their academic lives, follow.

## Role and Definition: The Academy and the Individual

As with the professors in the Department of English and in the Business School six of the seven professors in the Departments of Science were provided the three quotes by Readings, Slaughter and Rhoades, and Tierney and asked to select the one that most accurately reflects

their view of the academy and their role within it (the question was omitted with one of the assistant professors, Trudy, due to the natural progression of the interview conversation):

> The grand narrative of the University, centered on the production of a liberal, reasoning, subject, is no longer readily available to us. . . . None of us can now seriously assume ourselves to be the centered subject of a narrative of University education. (Readings, 1996, p. 9-10)

> The shift from a public good knowledge/learning regime to an academic capitalist knowledge/learning regime "requires us to rethink the centrality and dominance of the academic profession." The academic capitalism knowledge/learning regime "sees the economy rather than the polity as central to the citizenry's well-being. This approach affects the kinds of students, types of education, and types of research that we fund." (Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004, p. 10, 37)

> Culture is the sum of activities in the organization, and socialization is the process through which individuals acquire and incorporate an understanding of those activities. Culture is relatively constant and can be understood through reason. An organization's culture, then, teaches people how to behave, what to hope for, and what it means to succeed or fail. Some individuals become competent, and others do not. (Tierney, 1997, p. 4-5)

As expected, the science professors selected either the second quote by Slaughter and Rhoades or the third quote from Tierney. Neither choice is surprising; professors of science at SRU seek external funding to support their salaries and research agendas, aligning them with a move

towards academic capitalism, and a highly-structured educational path from doctorate to post-doctorate to academic position enhances the value of organizational socialization.

Four of the professors of science agree that the university is moving towards a model of academic capitalism and, like their colleagues in English and business, point out that there are consequences associated with such a move. Sharon, one of the two assistant professors, who is a year and a half into her position at SRU when we speak, says that academic institutions "are moving from a place of learning and intellectual freedom to something that's more governed by money and trying to train students and get them out, and that's also affecting the type of research that we do." In the past, she says, universities were "free-flowing, free-thinking institutions," whereas now the university has become "a machine" charged with providing students "what they think that they need to know." The purpose of today's higher education does not reach much beyond job skills training. The university is a "machine" churning out more and more product: well-trained students.

This machine mentality impacts not only what and how students are taught but particularly for professors of science what types of research gets funded. Starting out as an assistant professor, Sharon says she must get funding and show "independence" for tenure; as a result, "of course you're trying to get money any way you can" in the limited amount of time allowed to reach tenure. This search for funding, she says, motivates some people to become "money chasers," meaning that they continually move their focus of research around based on what is being funded as opposed to what is important or meaningful to them as researchers. Natalie, an older associate professor whose office is located in one of the older science buildings on campus, says she sees this happening as well and that it has moved the focus of scientific research away from basic science. And, Natalie continues, "what get's funded is also the

research that we're having our students do, and what students perceive as being important, because that's where the funding is, you know?" The cycle, in other words, continues and ultimately cuts out some of the smaller labs in favor of the bigger, flashier labs, the labs that are perceived to bring in more money.

Amanda, an associate professor who occupies a new office (with very little in it other than office furniture) in one of the new buildings, and who manages one of these bigger, flashier labs, also sees a shift occurring in line with Slaughter and Rhoades. However, she describes it less as a shift within the academic institution and more as a shift in her own perception of the academic institution, moving from this "kind of ivory tower idea that pursuing an academic career, and this freedom, and intellectual exploration, and the acceptance of knowledge above all else, be it practical or not," in other words, learning for learning's sake, to now, when "school has become more of an *industry* than an *ideal*." This resembles comments made both by the professors of English and some of the professors of business: higher education is no longer about the pursuit of knowledge but is now quite vocational in purpose. Rachel, an associate professor of science and one of three professors in this study, and the only one in the Departments of Science, who was educated outside of the United States, also sees a shift occurring in the purposes and goals of higher education, particularly when she thinks of U.S. higher education as compared to other countries. In other countries, she says, students are not as "pampered" as she feels they are here, where "everything is done to please the students." In the U.S. the model has moved to one where students are the customers, or clients, and the institution and its faculty exist to serve and to please them at whatever cost.

Two of the professors of science, Carter and Theresa, view higher education as a site of socialization, both for students and for faculty. Carter, an associate professor whose office is in

one of the newer buildings and who manages a large, well-funded lab, does not agree that the university has moved away from being an ideal, free-flowing institution towards being an industry or a machine as her colleagues have indicated, because she is not sure that universities ever were ideal, free-flowing institutions. Similarly, she does not think it is accurate that "academics used to be all about the public good and teaching knowledge and now we're all about producing good capitalists," as she reads the quote from Slaughter and Rhoades. Instead, the shift that Carter sees occurring is in students' perceptions of what it takes to be successful, a shift that is not, perhaps, so far from other professors' expressed concerns that the university no longer provides students with an education but serves them according to their needs and desires. Students today, Carter feels, hold the opinion that "all students are smart, and that grades are not really reflective of how smart you are. Grades are reflective of how well you do on tests, but they're not reflective of intelligence in some way. So everybody's great, and we're all really smart, it's just that some people do better on tests than others." On the contrary, Carter points out, "once you leave school you are evaluated on a constant basis. And if you somehow think that that is not legitimate, then you have *failed*, in the last statement, in becoming acculturated into the way that our society works!" She is perplexed by this attitude that she sees among her students and blames families and elementary and secondary education for perpetuating it: "I think this has to do with that self-esteem bullshit that people are fed from early on. That everybody's great, and we're all perfect, and everyone's wonderful and you get a gold star." Why, she wonders, has it become a bad thing to be smarter than other people, yet it is not bad to be a better athlete? Why do students choose as their major the subject that they are failing? "Maybe I was just unusually goal-driven as a student but it seems peculiar to me that you would choose the thing that you are the worst at as your chosen profession."

Theresa, also an associate professor, is sweet and soft-spoken and in her second academic position. She elected to move to SRU from her previous institution prior to making tenure, but says that at the time the benefits of making that move to the more collegial atmosphere at SRU outweighed the costs of losing time on her tenure clock. Her office is large and quite comfortable and lived-in and has the appearance that she has some rank within her department. Theresa also sees higher education as a site of collective activities that individuals learn through socialization, which reflects how she sees her work fitting in with the overall goals of the university. She views her work and her relations with others at SRU as "the whole being more than the sum of the parts." Success within the academic environment, therefore, "is based on knowledge. And there's like standard metrics of how individuals and the unit contributes to knowledge, based on current activities and the impacts of those activities." Success, in other words, is measured objectively and is quantifiable, including measures of how one is contributing to greater scientific understanding. But, according to Theresa, success is also defined by "how well we train students, and then how well we support each others' activities," which arguably are not so objective or quantifiable. All of it – contribution to knowledge, training of students, support of colleagues – Theresa sees as being interrelated and contributing to that greater whole.

No matter their view of the institution of higher education, either by choice or by necessity the science professors in this study define themselves first and foremost as researchers, though Trudy, an assistant professor who is several months into her first academic position, points out that this role is intertwined with that of teacher, particularly when it comes to running a lab. Indeed, she says, she could not accomplish her research objectives without teaching the people who work in her lab. But the teaching role can be a daunting one, as Sharon, the other assistant professor who previously described the academic institution as a "machine to teach

students certain facts," describes it. There is little preparation in their educational backgrounds for the formal teacher role as all of their professional socialization is to the researcher role. Further, Sharon says she is constantly aware that her students' education and careers depend on her and her research grant money, which then places even greater emphasis on that researcher role.

Similarly, Amanda, the associate professor who sees higher education as moving from an ideal to an industry, also invokes the machine metaphor to describe her role within the university as one "to feed the machine" that then "tends to make you somewhat more disconnected from that more pure academic scientific pursuit you were after." Again it is that move away from basic science, both institutionally and individually as well. Her focus, she says, has shifted from one of "Gee, how does this work," the reason perhaps that she entered science in the first place, to one of "oh God, how am I going to make payroll." And to that end, which is in service of the students who work in her lab, she points out that she ultimately may be doing a disservice to their education: "I have a grant that has goals. . . . I can let the students stumble, and bumble, and fall, which we all need to do to learn, but that's not in my best interest, because I have a deadline. Right? . . . it's totally a waste of money, a waste of time, a waste of everything in terms of me meeting the objectives that I need to keep feeding the machine." So as part of that machine she must keep churning out product (research output, trained students) in order to maintain funding of her lab. The lab funding keeps the students employed, which allows them to get an education, theoretically to one day become professors themselves. But in order to produce that product, to maintain that funding, to support those students, she must not allow the students to learn by error or failure, which therefore potentially diminishes their education. And in the process she is

training them to behave in the same way when they eventually become professors themselves. The machine (the institutional discourse) is perpetuated.

Rachel, the associate professor from outside of the United States, says that she does the teaching because it is required, but in terms of her definition of what it means to be an academic, "it's doing research to make a difference." She seeks to make a difference in the scientific field in which she works. Carter, the associate professor who describes the shift she sees in students' perceptions of success, similarly says that the "most important" thing that she does is "the science." In fact, she points out that she has a 75% research appointment, which means that most of her commitment to the university is to do research and not to teach, although she acknowledges, like Trudy, that often teaching takes place in locations other than in the classroom, such as when she instructs students in the lab, when she is lecturing at other universities or at conferences, and even when she writes scientific papers. And although research may be foremost, both in what they and the institution value, the importance of science for larger society and for education generally is not lost on these professors. At times the stress associated with an academic career is so much that it is crucial that these professors not only find enjoyment in what they are doing but also that they fundamentally believe in its importance. Theresa, the associate professor who defines support of colleagues as one measure of success, says that the "weight" of the demands of the profession can be "destructive" to the point that "when it's like the fourth night in a row that you're up to three in the morning, you know, over and over, that's just such a drag, when you're constantly pushing yourself to do things that you have to do and not necessarily because it's what you choose to be doing." It is in those 3 a.m. moments that she says the belief in the importance of what she is doing becomes so crucial.

There may be days of working until the early morning hours but there is also a sense of passion for what they are doing. Although still early in their academic careers, both of the assistant professors of science express feelings of gratitude that they are doing what they love to do in a place that they feel is supportive of them. Trudy, for example, calls herself "super-lucky" to get paid to do what she loves to do and that, "in the grand scheme of things, I'm doing what I want to do and I get to decide how I spend my time," a comment that is reminiscent of the descriptions of "freedom" provided by the academic profession by some of the English and business professors. But, again, how much, truly, does she get to decide how she spends her time and how much is dictated by the institutional structure and discourse, particularly in a laboratory setting? For instance, despite the importance placed on the researcher role by the discipline, both Trudy and Sharon say that teaching and those "aha moments of students" provide great satisfaction, though, as Sharon points out, their socialization to academia which occurs in the lab has not well-prepared them for that teaching role.

The associate professors also find satisfaction from their interactions with students, more so perhaps in the lab than in the classroom, that lead to those "aha moments," as well as, according to Theresa, "those eureka moments" that occur when making new discoveries, or, as Amanda describes it, "not so much discovering it, but the puzzle, the challenge of discovering it. I like the sleuthiness." However, they also acknowledge that the opportunities for these sorts of "eureka moments" are different than when they were graduate students or post-docs. The majority of their time is now spent behind a desk, working on grants, writing papers, managing budgets and personnel, and it is rare that any of their time is spent in the lab. And although they do not seem to derive the same amount of pleasure from these management activities, most seem

not to regret that they are no longer in the lab or at least they have accepted that sitting behind a desk is the goal of the career path of an academic scientist.

If the English professors' paths to academia can be described as chance, and the Business School professors' paths can be described as a choice, then the science professors' paths, in agreement with Weber (1946), might be described as a calling. At the very least, most of the women from the Departments of Science in this study knew they were interested in the field, if not the profession, from a very early age. Trudy, the assistant professor in her first year at SRU, says she has "always been a science person," a marked difference in particular from the professors of business, none of whom voiced similar sentiments about their chosen fields of study. Trudy recalls that she expressed an interest in continuing on to graduate school to a professor in college who was, she says, "like genuinely excited!" and altered a stereotype she held about unsupportive professors "just blowing off undergrads." Through connections provided by this professor, Trudy spent a couple of years between college and graduate school working as a research technician, which she describes as her master's degree; it has become the norm in scientific fields to go straight from undergraduate to doctoral studies, a norm which Trudy says is "not necessarily a good change." Once she was in her doctoral program her advisor moved institutions, twice, and each time she followed him in order to continue doing research with him. Despite these moves and her time spent as a research technician, Trudy's path to the academic career is fairly typical: undergraduate degree to a doctoral program, followed by a post-doctorate for three years, followed by the position at SRU.

Sharon, the other assistant professor, also describes a life-long love of science, although her path towards academia includes numerous points of internal conflict. Her decision to pursue doctoral studies was made after working in pharmaceutical labs, when she decided she wanted to

do research and she knew that she needed an advanced degree to rise above the technician level. But even in graduate school she says she was uncertain whether she could be successful as an academic and she briefly considered moving into scientific and environmental policy work. But she lacked the preparation or guidance from her graduate program to pursue these alternative careers, so she decided, ultimately, to go do a post-doc, as it was "the easier decision for me to make, and it gave me that extra time to kind of see what I wanted to do." However, there was also a point in graduate school where she became concerned that a career in science might end up consuming too much of her life so she took classes at night to become an accountant, which she laughingly describes as her "alternative career." She says now, "I think the love of science just kept pulling me back to staying in graduate school and finishing and continuing on. And then, you know, a year before I got this job I just decided, ok it's time to try this, see if it works." So if not called to the profession, she was called to the field of science.

The associate professors had rather unconventional paths to their positions at SRU, although still within the overall structure of undergraduate degree to graduate degree to post-doc. Rachel, as mentioned previously, was educated outside of the U.S. and actually started her Ph.D. in one country, but due to the unexpected death of her advisor she finished in another country while also working full-time, which considerably extended the length of her doctoral studies. Amanda, the associate professor who is now concerned with the quality of education she is providing her own students, was working in a doctor's office when she became fascinated with the evolution of various diseases, which prompted her to go back to school. Following graduate school she lived for a few years abroad with her then-husband. Once they returned to the U.S. she did seven years of post-doc work and during that time she decided that she actually did not want to pursue an academic career, because she enjoyed the work that she was doing in the lab.

She did not know, she says, that she really did want an academic career "until I got offered a very real, very serious, very nice non-academic job. . . . And this was mega-beaucoup bucks, nine to five, everything stable, and as soon as I got that offer, I was like, nope, I need to run a lab."

Natalie, the older associate professor who values the role of basic science, says she has known she wanted to be a researcher since the sixth grade, when she read the biography of Madame Curie. And although her path to SRU was somewhat winding, including two marriages, a move across the country and back, and time spent at another institution as a professor, her academic path from undergraduate to graduate school to post-doc, like the others, was fairly straightforward. Carter also always knew she wanted to be a scientist, but says that "like the vast majority of people, and I think this is a problem for our profession, actually, I didn't have any exposure to academic scientists at all when I was growing up. I didn't actually know what that job is, right?" Following college she went straight to graduate school and then, like Rachel, did seven years of post-doc work. Although the norm for a post-doc has been three years, a tight job market is now extending that time for many. As well, the type of research Carter was doing required an extended amount of time and her husband was in the same lab, which made their job prospects slim as they were two researchers from similar fields coming out of the same lab and looking for jobs together. As a result, she says, they spent two years on the job market. And, like Natalie, they both worked for another institution before both coming to SRU.

Theresa, who also worked at another institution before coming to SRU, calls her path to academia "a series of fortunate accidents," even though she too knew from an early age she wanted to be a scientist. Originally an engineering major, she says she "realized that as an engineer you're trained how to solve problems, but you're not really trained to learn why the

solution works. So you fix things, but you don't even get a deeper understanding of you know, the world." This view reflects her initial comment that within higher education the whole should be more than the sum of its parts. After switching fields of study and spending time working in a lab, she talked to several professors about the academic career, which solidified it as a realistic prospect for her: "Once I realized that you could actually make a pretty good living doing that, you're not going to be rich! But you know, you're not going to go on food stamps, either, and so that convinced me that that was the way that I wanted to go." So while the professors of science knew from an early age that they wanted to pursue a career in science, none seemed to know that they wanted to be a professor of science or what that might mean. Similar to the professors of English they have followed an initial passion for their fields of study. And, much like the professors in the Department of English and the Business School describe, it seems that there is a gap between expectations or perceptions of the academic career and the reality of constructing that career within Departments of Science; reality for which there is little structured preparation, despite what is for academic scientists a very structured educational path.

## Socialization

The process of socialization to the academic career in science is, on the one hand, a lengthy and structured path that leads from an undergraduate degree to graduate school to post-doctoral work to an academic position. But on the other hand, there is a considerable disconnect between what occurs during that training process and what is expected from professors of science on the job, in addition to the fact that the path does not prepare individuals for positions only in higher education. The on-the-job learning curve, therefore, is necessarily a quick one. Trudy, just a few months into her first position as an assistant professor, has not yet started her

tenure clock when we speak but already feels the tenure pressure and is well-aware of both the requirements for getting tenure, which include publication and securing external funding, and also the expectations after tenure to continue to not only publish but also to acquire grant money: "So, as far as I know your position [post-tenure] is secure, but from my experience what they'll do is stop giving you raises if you don't bring in money, or have grad students, they take away space, things like that. So the way I've had it described to me is, bring in money, that helps you find people, people help do good work, good work helps bring in more money. So you just have to find a way to get on that path." What is perhaps unclear is how to "get on that path" in the first place, particularly in a time of decreased federally-funded research, though Trudy does not seem too concerned. She has learned from her student days the value of resourcefulness: "You learn pretty quickly when you're doing research, if you need something, you better figure out how to get it." Trudy benefited, perhaps more so than others, from her experience as a graduate student. Each time that her advisor moved institutions she was charged with setting up the lab, so that doing so as a new faculty member "just wasn't scary." But what is scary and what her graduate experience did not prepare her for is the teaching role, which she says is "one of the things that I'm petrified of, just because I haven't done it as much, and as a post-doc I wasn't teaching really that much at all." This is a typical experience for these professors of science and exposes a real weakness in their socialization to the academic career: their professional training is almost exclusively as researchers in the lab but as professors there are expectations that they teach.

As mentioned previously, the path of undergraduate to graduate student to post-doc to academic job is largely the norm for professors of science, although as Sharon, the assistant professor who considered alternative careers while she was on that path, points out, "a lot of people now who maybe didn't consider doing two [post-docs] are doing two because they can't

get a job. Right now in the sciences money is very, very, very tight. It's very difficult and some people are not succeeding and losing their careers right now. It's actually a very bad time." Sharon spent a year looking for a job while doing her post-doc work, which she describes as "pretty typical." Finding an academic job in the sciences is directly related to the research that one does because typically university departments have a specific line of research that they are interested in fulfilling. And, Sharon agrees with Carter, there is not a lot of guidance for science majors for careers outside of higher education. Graduate students, Sharon says, are trained to do what their advisor does and nothing else: "You're not told that you could teach at a very small college and not do research. Or you could be an editor for a journal. Or, you know, you could do investment banking, where you give advice on start-up ventures. So there's a huge amount of things that people can do with a Ph.D. in science but we're never actually told." So the issues are two-fold: on the one hand, it is difficult to get a job in academia in the sciences because money is tight, so people turn to alternative careers; on the other hand, no one tells them what those alternative careers are, which puts the burden on students to do that investigative work on their own, for which they lack the time. The option, therefore, is to drop out altogether, and that is where Sharon says a lot of women in the sciences are lost. So, she says, she tries to have these types of conversations with her students, that there are other options out there and that if they do not end up in academia "it's not going to be the end of the world is I guess is the message that I try to give to students, you know, it's not the be all end all. Because the stress can kill you. So take a little bit of that stress off of yourself, and things will be ok."

Just as Trudy indicates that her graduate training did not prepare her for the teaching role, Sharon also points out, as do several of the associate professors, that the graduate training also does not formally equip them with the management skills they need to be a successful professor

of science, although one would imagine that a fair amount of informal preparation through observation does occur. As professors they must be skilled in personnel management, financial management, grant writing, and other skills involved in running a successful small business (often with budgets of several million dollars). As Rachel, the associate professor from outside the U.S. puts it, “when you get into science it’s the idea, I’m going to do science, I’m going to do lab work.” She has not worked in a lab in 14 or 15 years. So while they have been trained in science, Amanda, who worries about the impact of her own lab management skills on her students, says, “we should have had to take psychology, administration, finances, accounting, I mean, good Lord.” Her own management skills were learned from her parents or from seeking the advice of colleagues who seem to be doing things well and not from her formal preparation within the academy. She recalls what her mentor once told her, in describing the academic socialization process: “Nobody would ever run a company by only hiring people that didn’t know what they were doing, and fire them once they were trained.” It certainly can be argued that those skills are transferable, that someone trained in a lab at SRU should be able to apply those skills in another lab across the country. But with the burden placed on on-the-job learning there is no doubt a considerable loss of time and resources when such a move is made.

Carter, who points out her 75% research appointment at SRU, says she does not miss the time that she spent in the lab: “In order to get my faculty position I was at the bench for five years of graduate school and seven years of post-doc, that’s twelve years, at the bench, often eighty or a hundred hours a week, in the lab. I mean, I was a serious lab rat. And I enjoyed it! I liked it, and I was really good at it, and I’m done!” She has fulfilled the obligations of the apprenticeship period. Now, she says, she works at a “higher level,” working on the bigger picture of research projects and managing her lab. But the time she spent in the lab was

important for her professional training; she feels that if she had not put in that time she would not know how to evaluate her students' work and she would not have any credibility with them as an expert. It is an important step in the process. But she says she had no illusions that this is how her path would turn out. She was very clear, once she learned what the career of a professor was, that this would be the end result, that she would be spending time behind a desk more so than in a lab: "I'm not nostalgic about being at the bench. It's hard work to be at the bench. It's frustrating to be at the bench. Things fail a lot, and you have to make things work. And it's satisfying when they do, but I derive almost as much satisfaction from a graduate student coming to me and showing me a nice piece of data that they've created as I did from creating that data myself. And so for me, you know, this is fine."

Carter also talks with students about the realities of professions in the sciences, including what academic scientists do, how running a lab is like running a small business, and what a typical day for a professor looks like. She says she instructs students to observe their professors' management behaviors and she tries to include her students in the lab in some of those processes and decisions in order to provide them some exposure to that side of the academic profession. As part of those conversations she is very clear about emphasizing the researcher role over the teaching role at an institution like SRU: "You can be the single worst teacher *in the world!* And still get tenure if you have papers and grants. . . . The university would rather have my seven million dollars of extramural funds than have me get really outstanding teaching evaluations from the students as opposed to just average ones. That distinction doesn't matter to the university." Of course, being just an "average" teacher is not the same as being the "worst" and probably a distinction that does matter, a least somewhat, to the university. But this emphasis on research over teaching echoes that which is found in the Business School as well, and true or not

it is an emphasis that is perpetuated through the institution's move towards academic capitalism and through the socialization process and is reflective of the climb up the status hierarchy; those who value the teaching role more, such as professors of English, find themselves on the outside edges of that hierarchy, whereas those who value research, like science, find themselves closer to the center.

As evidenced by the conversations Carter has with her students, the socialization of the science professors during their graduate training was heavily influenced by academic mentors, either their Ph.D. advisor or their post-doctorate director. And for some, even earlier than that, a professor helped to guide them in the direction of an academic career. Amanda, who was working in a doctor's office when she decided to go back to school, names a college professor as "truly pivotal" in her career and who, she says, "started me definitely on the track that forms the core basis of what I'm doing right now." But as a group the science professors' experiences with mentoring at SRU varies. In Trudy's department, for example, mentors are assigned, though, at the time that we spoke, which was several months into her first year on the job, she had yet to have an official meeting with her assigned mentor. And, as in the Business School, because there are not many senior women in the sciences there are not many female mentors, so she is considering seeking one of her own outside of her department. Sharon, on the other hand, has no official mentor in her department, although she says she has an unofficial one as well as another senior faculty member who sometimes offers advice. But she notes, as Jane did in the Department of English, that often the advice of a senior (male) colleague who has been at SRU for 20 years is not appropriate for a (female) assistant professor who has been on the job for a year and a half. Amanda also says she was not initially assigned a mentor at SRU but eventually was given one. She thinks mentors are important, especially for the first year as an assistant

professor, when “you’re supposed to know what you’re doing. And you want to go out and do this, and you certainly don’t want to appear like a failure or like you don’t know how to do stuff.” Again, their academic preparation has not necessarily equipped them to fulfill the roles of professor and much of their learning necessarily takes place on the job. Now, Amanda says, in her department new faculty are encouraged to choose a mentor, although it is not clear how willing the senior members are to serve in that role.

Carter, who is in her second academic position following her post-doc, says that one of the reasons that she and her husband were dissatisfied with their former institution was the lack of senior colleagues who could serve as positive mentors, although she says they did have some negative ones and acknowledges they can be important in one’s development as well. Perhaps as a result of that previous experience, she feels that mentoring of junior faculty is important to their professional development. There are challenges, particularly in the sciences where it is unlikely that there will be more than one person pursuing the same line of research within a department or even the institution. But there are still opportunities for “generic mentoring” on how to improve time management and other skills; however, she complains, “there’s none of that.” In Carter’s department it is up to the junior faculty to seek out the senior faculty for help in addition to their other responsibilities which puts an added burden on those junior faculty who are “suddenly expected to do a significant amount of teaching when you have essentially no training or experience on how to teach, and how to manage a classroom, how to develop a syllabus, how to prepare your classroom materials, all that stuff.” On top of that work, and setting up a lab, and seeking grant money, and writing for publication, junior faculty are expected to seek out senior faculty for help, not to mention attracting the possible negative perceptions of one’s capabilities if she does seek that help. The senior faculty, Carter says, “do

almost *nothing* to help the junior faculty with that, and I just, I don't understand that." Clearly, providing that support for their junior colleagues is neither valued nor important to the senior professors. And without active change in that behavior those are values that will be perpetuated and maintained as the current junior faculty move up the ranks.

## Performing Gender

Similar to the women in the Business School, these women in the sciences are well aware that they are a minority in their departments, which affects them in various ways ranging from lacking female mentors to how they enact their professional and personal roles. As Trudy, one of the two assistant professors points out, "there's female Ph.D.s, there's a lot of female post-docs, there's not a lot of female professors." As a result of her minority status, she says, "I sort of do feel like it's true that a woman has to be a bit better than the equivalent guy" when it comes to securing funding and getting papers published, and she says she feels there is a "perpetuation of the old boy's club" within the academy. Sharon, the other assistant professor, notes the drop-off in women scientists from the post-doc period to the faculty career, and she ascribes it to the time that women decide to start having families and says that many women "decide that it's not worth them losing a lot of their family time, their personal life, and things, to devote the amount of time that they need to, to get ahead and have a career. It's just not worth it." Sharon, the assistant professor who once considered accounting as an "alternative career" because of her concerns that the demands of a career in science would not allow her to have a life, is single and without children. It is the same for most female professors she knows, so, she says, "we can devote a lot more time to our careers. Now, is that a blessing or is that a burden? I don't know. Because at the same time I think that I missed my time. Because I feel like I've put so much into my career that

I can't take that back." It is the reality once again of the biological clock in the face of the tenure clock: there is a finite amount of time to have children and that time usually coincides with the professional period when women are expected to be particularly devoted to their careers. And if a female decides to wait until after tenure, even if she does one three-year post-doc she will be in her mid to late-thirties by the time that happens.

Rachel, the associate professor from another country who is married to a fellow scientist and has a child, at first says that gender is not an issue for her, even though she does point out that she is one of only two women in her department and the other one's office is located in another town. She says that the lack of women in the sciences is something she had to get used to from the beginning of her professional career, implying that it is not something that bothers her now. It is the way it has always been. Amanda, who is also married with children, says that the issues of being a woman in the sciences are always in the forefront of her mind, although she has been fortunate that throughout her career both her labs and her departments have been fairly well-balanced, gender-wise. Where she encounters the impact of the academy on her role as a woman the most is in issues related to childbearing and childrearing, as reported by women across the disciplines in this study, and trying to balance those roles with a busy work and travel schedule. Because she has encountered those challenges, Amanda says she sees herself as a role model to younger women within the academy who are trying to make those same decisions regarding how to effectively balance work with family.

Natalie, who like Amanda is on her second marriage and has a now-grown child from her first marriage, says that she does not "think it is as hard as it used to be" to be a woman professor in the sciences. Previously, as a woman in the academy, she says, "you really pretty much had to be willing not to have a family early on." And she says that most of the women of her age that

she has known in the sciences have not had children. But she was unwilling to make that personal sacrifice and instead was willing to sacrifice some measure of professional success in order to be a mother, if that was necessary. Like Amanda, Natalie says she hopes that she serves as "an example that you can have a family and do this, and do pretty well at it" for her female students. Carter, who is also married to a fellow academic scientist and has a young child, says she feels an obligation to be a role model for her students, "because there is a deficit of women faculty and at this university in particular there is a *big* deficit of women in the administration. And in the senior faculty." There are "disincentives," she says, that push women into other careers than the academy, which she says is "to the detriment of academic science more than it is to the detriment of the women." And she says this move away from academia is largely because women perceive those other careers will make it easier for them to have a family than will an academic career.

Theresa, who is married without children, says she did not realize how much it mattered, being a woman in the sciences, until she became a faculty member. Before then, during her graduate training, she says it was generally balanced between males and females, as others have noted as well. Now she says she has to deal mostly with the subtle ways in which being a woman affects her role as an academic and vice versa, such as how she spends her time, and what she prioritizes, because, she says, "I tend to prioritize myself last." And, she says, contrary to her view that support of colleagues is one definition of success, within higher education the system is set up instead to "reward things that men do really well, and it's not set up to reward things that women do really well. And so I think we do a terrible job rewarding good mentoring and we do only a so-so job of rewarding good teaching. And good service. But then we do a really good job of rewarding people when they get a major grant or when they get a paper in a top journal." Of

course, this is just one more way of essentializing what "women do really well," but it is a reflection of that inside-outside positioning, where the discourse and the structure reward so-called "male" roles and activities over that which are "female." Theresa says that on the one hand she is concerned by this system of rewards and how to change it and on the other hand she is concerned with how to push herself to do the things well that are rewarded by the system: "Because every innate tendency in me is saying, you know, sacrifice your own rewards or accolades to make sure others are doing well. But you know you have to do the opposite to succeed." She knows she has to do the opposite to succeed within the academic structure and discourse. Theresa notes that she learned from her Ph.D. mentor, a woman who delayed the start of her career to have a family, that "the way the world works right now, it's not set up to accommodate women who want to have a family and be good parents and women who want to reach the top echelons of their chosen field." Instead, women are faced with hard choices between work and family, choices that the men are not equally forced to make. And so, Theresa has delayed the start of her own family and is just now thinking about having children, now that she has tenure.

For these women who have, perhaps, made the hard choices, how is gender performed within the scientific halls of the academy? As several of the women indicate, they feel a need to serve as role models and mentors, a need that Trudy describes as pressure, even. Being a female academic, she says, has made her "less likely to be a pushover" and has forced her to focus her priorities, a reflection of her awareness of her minority status. She learned this in particular when she was in graduate school and experiencing harassment by a male colleague, who was thwarting her in accomplishing her own research. A senior female professor advised her to "do what you need to do to get your work done. I don't care what it involves. Just do it. Be assertive, don't fall

into this guy's game." It was, Trudy says, a very empowering moment, because "this woman really had to battle her way up. She's been there. She was held at a research position rather than a tenure-track position for a really long time and had to fight tooth and nail to get where she was." As a result, Trudy found a way to accomplish her work despite the actions of her colleague.

Sharon, the other assistant professor, seems cautious to admit that any gender discrimination has overtly affected her and says that she does not feel she has ever been denied anything based on gender. But she has noticed that she is sometimes not invited to lunch or to get together with the men from her department. And she notes differences along "stereotypical" personality lines, "you know, females are better at multitasking and getting things done and dealing with personal issues and conflicts" that may come up in the lab, even though they are not necessarily trained to handle those issues, "whereas men are very much like, you know, I failed you, that's it, end of story, I don't want to hear any excuses." It would seem that the former would be the preferred style for accomplishing those lab management tasks for which they lack the formal training; however, Sharon seems to wish she was better able to adopt the more authoritative style of the men. And it may be that the more authoritative style is what gets rewarded if it allows the men as a result to produce more research. She also says she feels some hesitancy to raise issues in faculty meetings, to allow her voice to be heard, which she also thinks might be typical of women in the academy. She describes as an example her post-doc advisor, who decided he wanted to hire a woman because he said that they did not have any in the department, but he claimed that he could not find one that he deemed good enough. And then she adds, "Well, his wife worked there, but maybe he wasn't counting her."

With so few female professors in the sciences, the power structure is, not surprisingly, male. Amanda comments that "there's definitely a good old boy's network. Without a doubt. Now the fact that it's a good old *boy's* network, is historical artifact, whether it will continue to be just the good old *boy's* network as opposed to that inner loop, I don't know. I'm on the edges of the loop now. I can see the loop." In other words, it is possible to imagine a day when that "inner loop" will include both men and women, although, recalling the theory of inside-outside positioning, it is difficult to imagine that the loop will look or act much differently than it does now. And Amanda acknowledges that her desire to be inside that loop varies, depending on the day. Like Sharon, Amanda has witnessed some inherent personality differences that affect the ways that men and women in the academy approach their work and says she has had to learn to be more aggressive in asking for what she wants, instead of assuming that good work will be rewarded. And, "falling back on the same old clichés about men and women," she says she feels a sort of intuition about her students and when they need help: "Students walk in the door with unwanted pregnancies to bad marriages to I had one that was getting death threats. I mean, I do think if the students have a problem they're more likely to come and talk to a female professor than a male professor. Certainly for the female students that's the case. So I get a lot." And this, as professors in the Department of English point out, puts an extra burden on the female professors, particularly in the sciences, simply because there are fewer of them to share that load.

Natalie, who has indicated that she hopes to serve as an example for her students, also notes differences she has seen in how men and women enact their professional roles and agrees that men tend to be much less involved in mentoring students than the women. She also confesses to periods of self-doubt about her abilities, which she labels as a "woman thing." She is the only one of the professors of science who points out that there still are salary differences

between men and women in the academy, due to the still-held view that the men are the ones supporting families and that is why they are paid more than the women. She also describes instances when the male faculty members in her department have treated female faculty members as secretaries, but also how the women in essence encourage this behavior: “If you’re in a hurry and you want to get things done, you do it yourself. And that’s what women tend to do. Instead of saying, oh, if he isn’t going to do it, it just won’t get done. Which is what another male faculty would do.” So, she says, she can run all of the audio-visual equipment in the department, unlike her male colleagues, because she does not want to depend on anyone else to have to do it for her. It is reminiscent of Trudy’s earlier comment that “a woman has to be a bit better than the equivalent guy”; however, Trudy may not yet realize this extends to operating an LCD projector.

Carter, who has already noted the lack of women at all levels of the university and the “disincentives” that push women away from academic careers, at first backs off of any inherent differences between men and women and says that she does not feel like she has been treated any differently because of her gender and that men can have “just as much difficulty doing this job and being successful at it, as women can.” It is an issue of personality type, she says, whether you are a man or a woman: there is a certain personality that makes a good academic. Period. As was the case with several of the Business School professors, this sentiment is not surprising for one who has most closely aligned with the view that higher education is a site of organizational socialization, where some will succeed and some will not. Someone holding that view is not going to set herself up for failure using a measure over which she has no control. That being said, Carter continues: “I think you have to be an extraordinarily strong and competent woman in order for that to be true. . . . Because you can’t make it through all the things you have to do to

get to this point, I mean, we're put through our paces pretty roughly, all the way through, in order to get to where we are. So I think if you don't have that sort of personality, it's going to be hard on you." But, she says, if you have that personality and if you are able to succeed, "it's a very, very good career for women. I think it's sad that it's not perceived that way."

Much like the women in the Department of English and in the Business School, these women in the Departments of Science have been impacted as women by their decision to become academics on issues related to children and issues related to their relationships with their spouses. Rachel, for example, the associate professor from outside the U.S., says that there is still a generally-held societal expectation that if you are a woman you are also a stay-at-home wife and that if you are a man you have a stay-at-home wife and that these societal perceptions get carried over into organizational life as well, including academia. Even if that reality is no longer true – as Carter points out, it is nearly impossible these days for both spouses not to work, economically – those perceptions of what a woman should be are still bound up in the discourse of good wife and mother. As Natalie has noted, one way these perceptions are enacted is through salary differences. And so, Carter argues, it is important in an organization such as higher education where women are in the minority "to have women in the room." And although the gender-imbalance holds true across the university, in the sciences this is particularly an issue, it seems (although for this study, the selected Departments of Science actually have a higher total percentage of women than in the Business School, but only by 2%). Carter points to a particular department of science on SRU's campus that has forty faculty members and only two women: "That's appalling! You know? So, I think that [Southern Research University] in particular has a problem with that, and I think it's a big problem. You're missing out on a huge talent pool." As she has previously stated, this potentially is a much greater loss for the academy than it is for

women. And as long as women are kept out of the institution the issues that women struggle with, like the work-family balance, will not be of equal importance to the institution, which has implications for both women and men.

Carter is one of four of these female science professors whose spouse is also an academic (Trudy, a recent newlywed, is married to someone who works for SRU, but not in a faculty role.). Because their jobs are so similar, Carter says, as others have, that she and her spouse understand each other better and they understand the stresses and the conflicts that each is facing professionally. While Carter and her husband collaborate on some of their research projects, Rachel has tried hard in the past to keep her career distinct from her husband's because he holds a more senior position than she does. She fears being seen "as one name," as she would likely be lost in the process, although now she says she has been at SRU long enough that they are starting to collaborate more. Theresa and Natalie are also married to academics, both of whom are currently non-tenured. Natalie's husband, her second, is looking to move into a tenure-track position in his field. For Natalie, being married to another academic can be both good and bad, as she says they understand each other's work loads but those dual academic work loads can also create tension in the home. Theresa's husband wants to remain off of the tenure-track, for the flexibility, and especially if they decide to have kids now that she has tenure, because, she says, she "just couldn't fathom starting a family before coming up for tenure." Theresa says she wishes she had had better role models along the way in women who modeled how to balance the academic work life with family life. The only women academics that she knew, she says, either delayed their careers for their families or elected not to have families. So if she had role models who have successfully and simultaneously done both would help, she says, as would having

more support and flexibility built into the academic career so that people do not have to make those hard choices in the first place.

Amanda is the only one of the seven professors of science who is currently married, as she describes it, to "a very intelligent person who has nothing to do with academe." Without a doubt, she says that being an academic "very much impacted my first marriage. We were grad students in different areas of the sciences, got married, and the stresses of both of us trying to have an academic life were very difficult." And even though she thinks the marriage probably would have ended anyway, she thinks it might have lasted longer than it did if they were not both in higher education. She says that they just were not prepared for the realities of the stresses of the academic life: "You know, it became so consuming that I'm definitely guilty, and at times I'm proud of this and at times I'm not, but, you know my role is my life. My job is who I am." And so she says her second husband "brings back some balance" to that academic life.

The other major issue, much like for the women in the other disciplinary areas in this study, is that of children. Sharon, who, like Trudy, the other assistant professor, does not have children, expresses that sometimes the choice that she has made to pursue a career in academia bothers her and sometimes it does not, "because I think that I wouldn't be where I am now if I got married and had kids." But she worries that now it might be too late and she thinks that had she the opportunity to do it again that she might do things a little differently. It is, she says, a common situation among female academics: "They put off that family life for a long time. And some of them will eventually do it. But others, you know, it's easy to keep pushing it, and pushing it and pushing it, and then it's like, ok now I'm forty. You know, and it's like, what do you do at forty?"

Carter provides one answer to that question. Because of her career she says she delayed childbirth for at least five years, so that she did not have her child until she was over the age of forty. And that, she says, "is probably the single biggest material effect that being a woman in science has had in my life, was the delay in childbirth." Although she is quick to point out that this issue is also one that affects men; therefore, there are structural changes that need to occur within the academy for everyone's benefit. Indeed, she says, very few people anymore have the luxury of a family with the man who works and the woman who stays at home and takes care of the house, despite the institutional and societal perceptions that this still does occur. Very few, certainly, can afford it. But it remains the woman's responsibility to bear the child and most women do not want, or may not be able, to have children past the age of forty, whereas men can father children at almost any age.

For Rachel, who has one child with her fellow academic scientist husband, being a parent has changed her work patterns so that now they arrange their work schedules around when their child needs to be picked up, although she says she probably gets just as much done as before by being more efficient. Amanda, who has one child with her former husband and step-children with her current husband, also sees ways that her role as a parent has affected her work schedule. When necessary she has brought her child to faculty meetings and to the office. Her department, she says, used to have a tendency to let meetings go past five o'clock or would schedule meetings on the weekends, and she says she has walked out of some of these events or not attended at all because of obligations to her child. And although she says she has gotten some push-back from people who have questioned why she could not just get a sitter, she also has made a point of scheduling meetings to end promptly at five in recognition of other people's

family obligations. But she also notes that this is something she is more comfortable doing now that she has tenure.

Carter thinks that in comparison to other careers, academic science is "one of the most flexible careers, easiest to deal with the difficulties of raising small children as a professional as you can possibly have." It is a question, she says, that comes up a lot with students, "because there is a perception that this job is very difficult to do and have kids. And I'm not really sure why that is because this is a very kid-friendly life in that sense." And she says it is not so different from any other profession, in terms of the hard work that it requires to be successful. The difference, she argues, is that the threshold of success is self-determined, rather than dictated by the organization: "I could be just as successful, and keep my job, and make just as much money and do what I do, well maybe not make just as much money, but have a perfectly legitimate and successful academic career with one grant and three people in the lab. I'm just a chronic overachiever." Legitimate, perhaps, but if her previous arguments are accurate that society and its institutions constantly evaluate individuals to determine success and failure, then the threshold for academic success is not, in fact, completely self-determined. It has already been determined by the institution of higher education and by the discipline of science.

## Searching for Balance

Similar to their colleagues in the Department of English and the Business School, the professors in the Departments of Science also struggle with maintaining balance between their personal and professional lives, although what is interesting with the science professors is that the majority of them are associate, not assistant, professors, and should have achieved success according to the institution's standards. Part of the stress for the professors of science may stem

from the fact that there is so little distance between their personal and professional identities. Trudy, the member of the group who has been on the job for the shortest amount of time, already says that she "never imagined the stress would be this much and so fast." The stress of finding funding, she says, is probably the most intense, particularly with the current difficult funding atmosphere. She has hopes that once she gets her lab set up and gets "sort of an equilibrium, that it will be something you just maintain." It seems she is looking for a way to get on that path she described earlier. One of the particular challenges that Trudy points out, in trying to maintain that balance, is that due to the male-dominated nature of the field she lacks a social network of women. But she does meet with a group of her fellow male assistant professors once a week as a "check in" and as a way to keep connected and "to keep our eye on the ball in the long term." It is called, she says with a laugh, "the cabal, that's what one of the senior professors called it, oh you're having your cabal again!" This is just another way that senior faculty marginalize these community-building activities of their younger colleagues, comparing it to a subversive, and potentially dangerous, group.

Sharon, the other assistant professor of science, also discusses the "pressure" of securing external funding once the university's start-up package ends. She calls it "definitely the most stressful time in my life," although she says it with a laugh. She also acknowledges that there is a certain freedom and personal responsibility that goes along with the job and allows for a large amount of independent work, but which can also add to the pressure: "It is a lot of stress because it makes or breaks you but at least you know that you were the one that in all likelihood was responsible for the success or the failure." She reports having heart palpitations and going for a stress test and says that she has been in the emergency room twice with "phantom pains." She has been advised by several people to find a way to calm down, she says, so that when things get

*really* stressful she does not end up having a heart attack. She has been prescribed anti-anxiety medication, although she says she does not take it. She has tried yoga, "and that seemed to really work, until I realized that I was trying too hard and hurt myself." She also got a dog, but "she's another level of stress because she has kind of behavioral issues, not that bad, but she is on medication." But the dog also "de-stresses" her life, in a way, because the behavioral issues force her to focus on the animal and to take a break from thinking about work. And she says it provides a source of comfort to her that she hears that others are going through the same thing and that others are being rushed to the emergency room because of panic attacks; at least she knows she is not the only one. In fact, Sharon reports that a lot of her colleagues, both men and women, take drugs to cope with the high stress level of the academic life.

Amanda, one of the associate professors, says that "the most precious commodity I have is time," and that "professional time kind of subsumes everything." As an assistant professor, she reflects, the tendency is to accept every invitation, because it is one of the ways to build a national reputation, which is a requirement for tenure. So even though her schedule is still over-loaded, she feels like she has reached a position, with tenure, that allows her to say no to some things. Theresa says that her greatest pressure was felt in the year before tenure, when she felt the need to say yes to a lot of things, "because I felt that I knew they would be involved in that decision in some way and I didn't want them to be shadowed by, oh she's the person who refused to be on this committee or to do what I asked her to do." As a result, she now must fulfill extensive commitments she agreed to pre-tenure. Natalie, who says that she sacrificed a measure of professional success in order to have a family, also says that it is necessary to be a workaholic as an academic, including working weekends and nights. And that work pressure does not change with tenure; rather, "it's in the nature of the work, that you have to be always writing

grants, and you have to be always writing papers, and whether you've gotten tenure or not, it's like, oh, I got tenure, gotta get back to it." So, she says, she would have liked to have taken more time off along the way, but notes that she still is not likely to do so, even when she is totally worn out and in need of a break.

Carter agrees that the profession is hard, but when compared with people in other professions, like doctors and lawyers, she says that the academic profession is not a bad life. Paralleling her dismay at students who want an easy pass, she notes that working hard and coping with stress and not always being in control is "being a grown up! The world is like that, everything is like that! And you're not going to find a job that's a professional career, that pays you well, that's rewarding intellectually, and emotionally satisfying, that doesn't require that you work hard!" It helps, too, that her husband is an academic, she says, and they can look out for each other and help each other achieve that balance. And she points out that even though they make sure they both have time for their personal lives, they do not "segregate" the personal and the professional: "My being a scientist isn't just my job. In many ways it's my identity. It affects my belief systems, it affects everything about my life! And so it would be wrong for me to think that I could just have a personal life that didn't include being a scientist. Because I am a scientist." This close identification with the role of scientist, also mentioned by Amanda, may in fact be the key distinction between the professors of science and the other women in this study.

Besides the aforementioned challenges related to children and spouses, the science professors identified other challenges associated with their roles as professors. Trudy, like her fellow assistant professor Sharon, points out that much of the "fear of failure" is "self-imposed." It is, she says, "maintaining a balance between expectation and reality. There's only so many hours in a day. You can only do so much. And there's this expectation that you're sort of dealing

with not being perfect and coming to grips with what failure is, and sort of the fear of failure." Indeed, the pressure that each of these professors feel seems much more internalized than organizationally mandated. At first, when asked how she would feel if she did not get tenure, Trudy says, "I'd probably feel relieved!" But then, laughing, she says she actually would feel "devastated." The other professors in this study have already achieved that level of success, so for them, according to Rachel, the greatest challenge is "handling the work load," most of which, she says, is "non-science related." It is, she says, "basically the sheer volume of administrative tasks which are science-related but they're not getting down and doing the science you want to do." These professors complain about finding time to read, to write grants, to sit on grant review panels, to spend time with family, or a myriad of other activities and responsibilities pulling on their time. As Carter puts it, "I'm by nature a very organized person. So being unable to organize my time to get everything done in a timely fashion irritates the crap out of me." And Theresa, still fulfilling those pre-tenure commitments, says that "every year I'm expected to do more and more with less and less time." And then, as well "finding time to be creative, you know? To be able to set aside an afternoon, or a couple of days, when there aren't 20 other people banging on the door."

The surprises related to the academic career are also associated with these same challenges and stresses. Trudy, whose tenure clock had not started when we spoke, says that "the tenure stress" was worse than she had thought it would be. Amanda, now past tenure, says she was surprised by the amount of time spent on paperwork and says that she "wasn't necessarily aware of how much time I would have to really spend thinking about prioritizing, you know where am I going to put my energies and my time, and if I'm going to piss somebody off, who's it going to be." Natalie, again reflecting similar comments by other professors, has been

surprised by how much she needs to know outside of science, “about business practice, about selling things, you know, how grants really worked.” For Theresa, “the service and the administrative load is what’s different. There was nothing that prepared me for that.”

Like the professors of English and business, these professors of science have developed some strategies for dealing with these challenges, surprises, and levels of stress. Some do protected time for research and several mention the importance of maintaining healthy relationships, both at home and at work. Trudy looks forward to weekly faculty lunches as a point of regular contact: “Yeah, when I first got here, I was by myself and it was just so boring. It would be three o’clock and I’d be like, I haven’t said a word to anyone all day. I’m going to go bother somebody. It’s just not healthy.” Sharon also welcomes social events at work as positive times to connect with other people and to seek out advice. She knows there are groups on campus that provide similar outlets, but again the time pressure prevents her from getting involved with these groups. Amanda, in the ongoing search for more personal and professional time, is trying to leave the computer at work a few nights a week and says that she tries to do protected days but finds it nearly impossible with her commitments. She points to time spent with her new husband as a release and says that now when she travels for work he comes along, sometimes, and they will add a day or two onto the trips and make a vacation out of it. But then, she adds, “and here’s probably where the female thing comes in more than the guys, but, you know, it’s kind of like, if I take a day off to do something for me, something else isn’t getting done. [laughs] So, you know, I try hard to keep some mental health and sanity, and that me-time is ok.” She tries some days to leave early, but as she points out, that is a bit different in science than in other fields: “I have to be here. Although maybe I don’t have to be here as much as I think I have to be. But if you’re not here you can’t put out the fires. And our students are here.

They're not dispersed, off doing their own thing. They all congregate here every day. Working with radioactivity and nasty infectious agents and you kind of like to keep an eye on it."

Theresa admits that she has "resorted to a model where, between nine o'clock at night and two in the morning is the time that I allow myself to do creative activities. And I'm finally realizing, you know, this isn't how I want to spend the next twenty years. So, the goal is to try to do that better in the future." She does, she says, some small things, like leaving prep for the next day's lecture until late afternoon, because she knows it will just fill the time she gives it. She tries only to teach on Tuesdays and Thursdays, which frees her up to have long weekends for travel to conferences, although as she points out, "basically, that's just fitting more work in, but it's the kind of work that I want to do." As well, she makes sure that she has time outside every day, either running, gardening, or riding horses, which she calls a "secret to sanity . . . because your mind can't be anywhere else, otherwise, bad things will happen." And, she says that no matter what happens it is something she will not give up: "And it's been hard to work that in. And sometimes I'll feel guilty because I'll have to let the other things go at work. But then I think, oh, but I can just stay up until three in the morning!" Time, it seems, for all of these professors, is a most precious commodity and one that is in short supply.

So what is the future for these women of science in the academy? When asked if she would be a professor somewhere in 20 years, Trudy responded, with a laugh, "Either that or the loony bin. Maybe both. I really like what I do. I think as long as I don't get an ulcer or something from it. I'm still really new at it, so I'm ironing out kinks and trying to figure things out. But I think I'll eventually get there. The support system here is really good, both among the other assistant professors and from the senior faculty." Sharon and Amanda, meanwhile, have developed hypothetical "fallback" scenarios for themselves, Sharon for in case she does not

make tenure and Amanda for the possibility of walking away from it all. Sharon says that she and a friend have a running joke that if they do not succeed they will move to Australia and open a tapas bar on the beach: “And it’s not that I don’t want to succeed, you know, but if you do, it’s not going to kill you, it’s not the end of the world, type thing. Because you do feel, it’s the culture of scientists, when someone doesn’t make it, it’s like *oh they didn’t get tenure*, it’s this little whisper. And really, it shouldn’t be that way. But it is.” And she thinks that is why, perhaps, people in academia are so stressed, because “it’s still considered a pseudo-taboo,” when one does not get tenure. And then, she points out, that person has to go try to find anther job with a record of that failure, “and you have to bring that with you and justify why you should still be doing what you want and love to do.” Really, she says, it is a lot to deal with, too much, perhaps: “I’m surprised there aren’t more suicides, in the academic world.”

Amanda, who by all accounts has “made it,” says that if she leaves the academy she is opening a bakery. “I do have a plan B and it’s not academe,” she says. There are days, she admits, that she is not sure it is worth it and she compares the profession to a sort of indentured servitude: “When a student comes to you and they say they want to do their thesis with you, that’s a five year commitment. They’ve got a lot riding on it. And if I decide to have plan B and go open a bakery and they’re three years into their thesis, right? Wow. That’s a tremendous responsibility, right?” Thinking too much about that responsibility, as well as about the other staff members who are dependent upon her grants can be, she says, “totally overwhelming. Incapacitatingly numbing, to think about. To support all of that.” But then, she says, a student comes in with a cool result, “and somehow it’s like childbirth, you forget the pain.” And so she says she wishes it were a bit less industry and a bit more ivory tower ideal. “It’s all too easy to get caught up in all the rat race and focus on the papers and the travels and the meetings and

mistake that for really doing science, where the neat stuff happens. But you need to do all that other stuff to have the neat stuff happen. It comes together."

# CHAPTER 6

# BEGINNING AGAIN: REFLECTIONS AND INTERPRETATIONS

In the previous three chapters I have endeavored to share, through the voices of the participants in this study, stories of how women construct their lives in the academy. In those pages I related how women in Southern Research University's Department of English, Business School, and selected Departments of Science are socialized to their academic roles, the activities that they perform in those roles, and the challenges that they face as women in the academy. Now it is important, as Armitage (2002) reminds us, that "we step back and ask questions about meaning, about comparability, about context" (p. 63). In analyzing context, it is important to remember there are many layers: the individual context that each participant brings with her to the interview; the context that reflects the relationships between participants; and the cultural context, which in this study encompasses the individual's department, Southern Research University, and higher education at large. Using theories of organizational socialization and feminism, this final chapter examines these contextual layers through an analysis of how these women define the university and their roles within it, how they have learned to enact those roles, and the particular challenges they face as women in the university. Finally, I will reflect on my own role in the research process and put forth some recommendations for future research directions.

## Theoretical Implications

In an analysis of contextual elements, researchers "look for times and places where each woman constructs or reconstructs her sense of self through acts of accommodation, challenge, or resistance" (McCormack, 2000a, p. 287). In doing so, of course, I potentially subject the women to these finite positions; might there be other constructions than accommodation, challenge, or resistance? Must it, in fact, be one or the other, or is it possible to exist somewhere in the in between places? Some of these women, for instance, might argue that they construct their selves through acts of acknowledgment, or that they construct new selves through acts of production, neither pushing against the established structure nor accepting it as status quo. What do these defined positions look like? Is resistance in a department of English the same as in a business school, when a professor in the latter has access to so many more resources she may draw upon to fuel that resistance? What are the acts through which these women are constructing those selves? If I am to acknowledge the many contextual layers present in the construction of each participant's individual life, I must acknowledge as well that there are at least as many constructions as there are individual participants.

Theories of organizational socialization argue that these positions and constructions are formed out of the institutional structure and, further, out of the specific disciplinary cultures that create a department of English, a business school, and departments of science. These are not constructions that occur independently of the influence of discipline. In this study disciplinary contexts affected the extent to which these women either accommodated or resisted the institution of higher education's move towards academic capitalism. The women of the Department of English were more likely to articulate feelings of resistance towards this move, arguing that higher education is shifting from an "ideal" to an "industry," from a model that

values knowledge for knowledge's sake to one that is a "machine" that values students' needs and wishes above all else. The move towards academic capitalism affects both what is taught in the classroom and what types of research are funded. Professors must explain the economic value of their courses and how they will help students to compete in the world for limited resources. Education, in this model, becomes vocational in nature, providing students with skills they need to get a job. Programs and disciplines such as business and science that are better able to engage with the economy, whether through job skills training or research, are privileged in such a model over those such as English that do not. The Business School provides professional training for students at all levels; as well, faculty members in the Business School have opportunities for external consulting work that allows them to engage with the economy. The Departments of Science attract external funding to support their research; within the sciences, those who bring in more money are more privileged than others. The professors of English want to resist this move towards academic capitalism as they have the least opportunity to participate in it. They are less able to access external resources to support their work or to make an argument for a direct relation to job skills training (although they would no doubt argue that a proficiency in the English language is a necessary requirement for any job).

Professors of business and science were more accommodating of such a move, reflecting their more privileged status within the higher education institution. They benefit from the move towards academic capitalism in their greater ability to access external resources through research funding and consulting work and in the direct relation of their programs of study to job skills training. Although a few professors in both business and science challenged the explicit benefits of this move for the overall future of higher education, they still participate in it. Further, in line with models of inside-outsider positioning, in their positions of privilege and willingness to

construct their selves as professors through this engagement with the economy professors of business and science move closer to the organizational center, whereas professors of English remain on the margins.

Disciplinary contexts also affected the extent to which participants accommodated a view of higher education as a site of socialization. Although participants in the Department of English did not expressly resist this view, neither did they expressly accommodate it. Unlike business and science, participants in the Department of English were mostly assistant professors and therefore not yet fully socialized to the academic culture. And, as these participants acknowledged a desire to resist higher education's move towards a model of academic capitalism, they would not equally acknowledge that they are being socialized to such a model; indeed, to do so would mean they were willing to engage in that model. In their stated desire to resist the move to a model of academic capitalism, they acknowledge their position as outsiders to the organizational discourse. If they allow themselves to be fully socialized to that discourse then they will be accepting an insider's position and they will be much less able or willing to challenge that move.

Participants from the Business School, on the other hand, were almost evenly split between assistant and associate professors and participants from the Departments of Science were mostly associate professors and more fully socialized to the academy's norms and rules for behavior and more willing to accept the organization's and the discipline's influence on the construction of their academic selves. Several of the professors of science took this acceptance one step further and pointed out that there is little distance between their academic and non-academic lives; a scientist is who they are and to resist that construction would, in essence, mean resisting their selves. As well, unlike the Department of English, the Business School and

Departments of Science were heavily male-dominated fields: over 80% of the faculty in the Business School and just fewer than 80% of the faculty in the selected Departments of Science at SRU were male as compared to just under 60% of the faculty in the Department of English. Women in these male-dominated disciplinary areas must believe that objective, uniform standards and measures for success exist that apply equally to all and that can be learned and transmitted through the socialization process. If they believed otherwise they would be required to admit that gender is not only a factor in their ability to achieve success, as those standards and measures are formed by and for the gender-neutral (male) employee, it is a stumbling block.

No matter their position within the organizational structure, as all of these professors are inside that organizational structure they are in the process of being socialized to it. They have agreed to follow the rules and norms for behavior to enter the structure and continue to do so as they pursue academic careers. So even if professors of English express a strong desire to resist the move towards academic capitalism and describe acts of resistance, including pointing out opportunities for resistance to their students, they do not construct their academic lives through those acts of resistance. Although they lamented the move they also acknowledged their participation in it. For example, they try to explain the economic value of their classes to their students and argue for the need for the critical thinking skills that their courses provide for job skills training. All of the professors in this study have chosen to uphold the academy's structure and discourse by electing to participate in it as professors. To truly resist the academic power structure, one would not participate in its perpetuation. Although the structure gives members power that they can use for resistance, by drawing on that power they further reproduce the structure. In their positions as insiders, professors across the disciplines gain access to the privilege and the power that allows them to resist that structure and its system of rewards and

punishment. But by accepting a position as insiders they uphold both the structure and the system, therefore ensuring its perpetuation.

## Construction of the Academic Role and Definition

Dependent upon their position within the academic structure these women also expressed degrees of difficulties and ease in constructing the identity of professor. Overall, the professors of English have had the greatest amount of difficulty constructing this identity whereas the professors of science have had the greatest amount of ease and the professors of business were split somewhere down the middle, which again reflects their tenures as assistant or associate professors. In fact, this may be the key distinction among these three fields of study. While professors of English have passion for what they do and consider themselves "lucky" to be paid to do it, they have had more trouble accepting their position as an expert and described their attempts to construct that role, including adopting more professional attire when in the teaching role. Professors of science have had the least difficulty making this transition, related both to their more structured education and training and also to a lifelong love of science. Professors of business, on the other hand, made a professional and calculated choice to become professors, but not necessarily, for most, due to a passion for their field of study.

A further distinction can be made here in their paths to the academic career, a two-fold decision that reflects the organizational socialization process for professors: it consists of both choice of disciplinary field of study and choice to follow an academic career (Lindholm, 2004). Not only does one decide to become a professor, one decides to become a professor of a particular field of study; further, the choice to pursue a particular field of study does not necessarily result in the pursuit of an academic career. This is particularly evident in the career

paths of professors of business, most of whom had previous careers in the private sector before deciding to become professors. The English professors arrived in the academy largely by chance, though they certainly express deep passion for their fields of study; business professors arrived in the academy mostly by choice, and as members of a professional school their definition of the academic role is different than that of the others as they are engaged both in perpetuating the (corporate) profession and the (academic) discipline; and, science professors followed a calling and as such identify themselves as scientists above all else and do not struggle as much as their colleagues in English and business with the associated stresses of the academic role: it is who they are. This breakdown in the professional decision-making process is similar to that found by Lindholm (2004) in her study of the factors shaping academic career aspirations: two-thirds of the participants in her study "aspired to faculty careers" while one-third can be described as "accidental academics," albeit expressing similar shared core values of autonomy and interest in their disciplinary work (p. 618).

Disciplinary contexts also affected preparation for the academic career; however, across the disciplines participants reported a similar mixture of graduate training, professional mentoring, and, mainly, learning on the job through a process of trial and error. Professors of English described having little professional guidance regarding expectations for doing the job either before or during graduate school. The doctoral process in English tends to be long, with little assurance of an academic job at the end and little formal preparation for alternative professional careers or for doing the job of English professor. They described mixed experiences with professional mentors and job training. Most, it seems, are figuring it out for themselves as they go. The professors in the Business School indicated better preparedness for the profession, or at least upon reflection they seem to have been more self-aware of what the job would entail.

Most indicated that they received good training for the job in their doctoral programs to fulfill the researcher role, although the assistant professors struggle with their teaching duties, which again seems to be something they are figuring out as they go. The socialization process for professors in the Departments of Science is much more structured. There is a standard path from undergraduate degree to doctorate and then at least one post-doctorate position before seeking an academic position. But there appears to be a considerable disconnect between the training one receives as a graduate student and as a post-doc and what is required for the job of professor of science. In the former, one is expected to be at the bench, engaged in doing the work of science. But when one reaches the latter, she needs to know how to set up and run a lab, hire and manage personnel, write grants and manage budgets, and, of course, teach and publish. Many of the participants said that they wished there had been more formal preparation in some of these "management" areas before they began their roles as professors.

Some of this disconnect between expectations and reality may be attributed to the relative rankings of the participants' graduate programs of study and the programs in which they are now employed. SRU's Department of English, Business School, and the selected Departments of Science do not sit at the top of their fields, according to the most recent *U.S. News & World Report* graduate school rankings (Table of Participant Characteristics can be found in Appendix B). Three of the participants in the Department of English attended a more highly-ranked school for their doctoral studies and it can be assumed were highly socialized there to the researcher role. Four of the Business School professors were from a similarly-ranked doctoral program and one went to a more highly-ranked program, which may account for their general feeling of preparedness for the roles and activities of their current positions. Four of the five associate professors of science went to a more highly-ranked graduate program than SRU's. Indeed, it is

Sharon, the assistant professor who described such intense stress related to her professional roles that went to the least highly-ranked institution among the professors of science, which may account for her current struggles.

Research on other professions within education reveals similar challenges related to the professional socialization process. Peterson (1986) and Restine (1997), for example, describe difficulties related to preparing future secondary school administrators and argue for a more structured combination of formal education and training, a process of mediated entry, and learning on the job. Oud (2008), similarly, studied the socialization process for new academic librarians and found a substantial degree of difference in the job requirements from their pre-existing expectations. Those individuals who reported higher levels of discrepancy between requirements and expectations had a more difficult experience transitioning to the workplace and reported lower levels of job satisfaction. The results of this study, Oud notes, suggest that new librarians would "benefit from more assistance in their adjustment to their new workplace" through orientation, training, and mentoring programs (p. 263). While no training or educational process can ever fully prepare individuals for the realities of actually doing a job, steps can be taken to diminish the stress associated with the transition from outsider to insider.

In this study, the professors of English most closely identified with the role of teacher as opposed to the role of researcher as they construct their academic identities. And they appeared to have more difficulties than their colleagues in business and science in constructing that identity. Although their academic preparation has been quite lengthy, the professors of English have not followed a calling nor have they made a calculated choice; they easily could have ended up in another profession. The construction of their academic identity as teacher more so than researcher places them at the margins of the organizational structure, which accounts for their

struggles adopting their professional role. And, they are mostly assistant professors and therefore not yet fully socialized into that role. They are on the margins both in terms of the activities that they value and in terms of their place in the organizational hierarchy. On the other hand, many of the professors of science and business are associate professors and have had more time to construct their academic identity. They have more fully moved from the outsider position to that of insider. And, because professors of science and business more closely identify with the researcher role that is valued by the male institutional structure and discourse, they find it less difficult to move to the insider position and are less resistant to that structure and discourse.

Some of the difficulties with construction of the academic identity can be attributed to class differences, both individuals' social class backgrounds and departmental class stratification on campus. Organizational class relations, Acker (2000) points out, are constituted "in gender and racial images of the organization and the identities of men and women as organizational participants. White working class masculinity has been defined in terms of earning a living wage, putting in a fair day's labor, and supporting one's family" (p. 198). Women in organizations are not equally defined; indeed, "the wage relation itself, which is at the core of class as conventionally defined, can be seen as 'gendered'" (p. 199). Women in organizations tend to be paid less than men due to an assumption that women are not the primary breadwinners for their families. Men who do "women's work" or who work in a feminized discipline such as English will be paid less than their male counterparts in other fields. Gender (and race)-based inequality serves to reproduce class stratification and attempts to eliminate that inequality through structural changes will more than likely be thwarted by those whose interests the current structure serves (p. 201). Women are paid less than men, on average, across the disciplines, which sends the message that the work that women do is less valued than that of the men. Further, professors of

English are in a feminized discipline; as such, they are less privileged within the institutional class structure. Faculty members in the Department of English are paid considerably less than their colleagues in business and science, which sends the message that their discipline is less valued by the academic discourse and structure. Professors of English feel “lucky” to get paid for their jobs, whereas at least one professor of business stated that she would not do her job for what professors of English are paid. This marginalization of the professors of English surely must influence the construction of their professional identity. And, although those in the more privileged disciplines in science and business may acknowledge the lack of structural fairness in what professors of English are paid, they are not inclined to change the system that so rewards them. Placing professors of English closer to the organizational center would mean moving professors of business and science closer to the margins.

Class issues that impact construction of the academic identity also appear in relation to social class background; nearly one-half of the study’s population is from a working-class family. Two participants in the Department of English, five participants in the Business School, and two participants in the selected Departments of Science indicated that they are the first of their family to go to college, let alone to continue for a terminal degree and then to enter the professorial ranks. They have broken with their familial backgrounds, leading, as several participants acknowledged, to some of their interior issues and even feelings of betrayal of their families associated with constructing the identity of professor. Nothing in their backgrounds has prepared them to construct a life as a professor. Not only are they moving from outsider to insider in terms of being women inside the institution, they are also moving from outside to inside in terms of class. By education, they have moved into the professional managerial class, yet by birth they remain outside of this class. It is the inside-outsider problematic, again.

Organizational socialization theory describes the process by which individuals learn to become members of organizational structures, how they learn and adopt the rules and norms of behavior that allow them to better operate as organizational insiders. Professors have a two-fold socialization: to the academic profession at large and to their disciplinary fields of study. Feminist theory helps to illuminate the places within the organizational structure of the academy at large and within the disciplinary fields of study where women encounter oppression based on their role as women. Because the organization has been created by and for men and is shaped to their values, belief, and behaviors, to be successful women must adopt those values, beliefs, and behaviors. They must try, as much as is possible, to become men and still be women. For some of these women this means denying that gender plays a role in their ability to achieve a place within the structure. Chase and Bell (1994) describe the difficult and often challenging task of treating women as subjects of their experiences and at the same time inviting them to give voice to "narratives about discrimination, isolations and exclusion" (p. 63). Women's subjectivities, the authors point out, are complex, because women "experience themselves both as active subjects who make a difference in their social worlds and as subject to gendered and ethnic or racial inequalities" (p. 78). It is not always easy for women to identify the boundary between one and the other, or whether her subjection is due to the situation or to her "orientation to the situation. Can one decide not to conceive of oneself as subjected?" (p. 79).

To some extent, then, these SRU women are constrained to produce themselves according to the male discourse prescribed by the academy, which subjects them to certain positions within the disciplinary relations of power. They acknowledge that they enact versions of "the good girl," or "the smart girl," or the "emotional caretaker" within these relations, and they fear being seen as "mom" instead of "person" or "researcher." As women, they also are

subject to the normalizing gaze of the structure in their enactment of nontraditional gender roles. There are ramifications for not adhering to traditional roles of the good wife and mother, roles that should keep them outside of the institution and in the home. Since they have chosen to enter the institutional walls, they are expected to conform to the norms of the academy in order to achieve success, including teaching obligations and producing research that adheres to the standard requirements for achieving tenure within a prescribed timeframe. Additionally, they are burdened with extra service requirements and mentoring roles, simply because there are fewer women in the institution to share the burden, and because, as women, they are perceived as more capable of fulfilling these roles. Because they are viewed as "women's roles" they are marginalized within the academy. Time spent performing those roles takes away from time they could be producing scholarly research, further marginalizing those who perform these roles within the academy. Requirements for achieving success have been created out of and are perpetuated by the male discourse of the academy. Women who choose to be wives and mothers reported that they are questioned on their abilities to meet these male-defined standards because it is unrealistic to expect someone to do full-time work and the work of the home. Women who ignore their obligations as wife and mother are viewed as lesser women. Those who pay sufficient attention to those obligations are viewed as less capable, professionally. As a result, women are faced with several choices: they can choose to sacrifice their personal life to the professional, delaying childbirth or forgoing it completely; they can do both and either accept or reject any resulting discrimination; or, they can choose to keep their personal lives silent, and make sure they do not give their male colleagues reason to question their dedication or ability, or to label them "abnormal." Women in this study have made all three choices, none of which can be seen as an acceptable "choice" as long as their male colleagues are not forced to do the same.

Indeed, these choices do not resist the disciplinary power structure, but in fact succeed in reinforcing it.

These women of SRU construct their academic selves as competent, successful professionals, as teachers and as researchers, as contributing members of the organizational and academic community. They do committee work and perform administrative roles and mentor students. They run multi-million dollar labs and receive awards for their research output. They are also placed into roles and definitions by the structure and discourse as caretakers, imposters, wives, and mothers, roles which are heavily weighted with preconceived notions by the structure and discourse. Instead of rewarding the caretaking role, the structure burdens them with additional caretaking, thus preventing them from performing the role of scholar which the structure does reward. They are imposters, thus not to be trusted. They are wives and mothers, and therefore unable to fully inhabit their professional roles, better positioned in the home, taking care of a spouse and children. And, of course, the reality is that many of the women do take care of a spouse and children, and report that they are their families' primary breadwinners, in addition to performing their professional roles. Roles for which they are, generally, paid less than the men.

## Challenges

Participants in this study in all three disciplinary areas note particular challenges associated with their lives as academics and related to personal relationships, children, and balancing competing demands on one's time both within the institution and outside of it. Participants who are in relationships, both with academics and with non-academics, indicate challenges resulting from the reversal of traditional gender roles and the pressure to be successful

as the primary breadwinner, and time constraints that put pressure on maintaining healthy relationships. These are not, however, challenges that are unique to the academic profession but are issues related to all of today's professionals who are struggling with role overload (Duxbury, Lyons, & Higgins, 2008). As of 2005, 57% of married couples in this country were in dual-earning households and only 18% of married couples relied solely on the husband as wage-earner (U.S. Department of Labor, 2007a, p. 2). These numbers reflect today's societal realities including an increased number of women who are earning higher education degrees and entering the professional workforce and increased pressure to maintain certain standards of living which require more than one income (Whitehead, 2008). According to the Current Population Survey, women in full-time jobs in this country are working on average more than 40 hours per week (U.S. Department of Labor, 2007b).

Professional choices impact decisions related to children, when to have them, and how to care for them. For many of the women in this study the demands of the tenure clock conflict with prime childbearing years resulting in hard choices between family and tenure. Although complying with the FMLA, maternity leaves are defined by SRU policy as "an illness" and are subject to sick leave policies and are left to the discretion of one's department head. The availability of childcare often depends upon one's personal financial resources or the willingness of a spouse to take a lesser professional role (which, for several of these women, increases the pressure on marital relationships). Further, these women described a pervasive bias, whether real or perceived, within the academy towards those "on the mommy track," so that there exists an undercurrent of negativity and a lack of confidence in their professional commitment from male and female colleagues alike. For several of these women the result of this bias has been that they

downplay their roles as mother, even refusing to discuss their children with their colleagues, and setting up an unnatural binary of person/mother.

Again, these pressures are not unique to the academic profession. Coltrane (2004) describes how "belief in separate gender spheres continues to shape socialization into elite professions and the gendered organization of work and family life" (p. 219). In elite fields such as law, medicine, and management, the "family man" still is seen as potential partner "material" and a leader, whereas for women who become wives and mothers it is perceived that family obligations will intrude on their ability to uphold work commitments. Maternity leave is an issue across institutional types in this country; only 8% of all workers receive paid family leave and even federal government workers must use paid vacation or sick days or take unpaid time off for parental leave (Lovell, O'Neill, & Olsen, 2007). This lack of benefits affects current workers and future workers alike. Frome, Alfeld, Eccles, and Barber (2008), for example, tracked a cohort of women, beginning with their high school graduation in 1990, who held at that time "male-dominated" job aspirations. Seven years later most of these women aspired to either "female-dominated" or "neutral" jobs, in part due to an expressed desire for a job that they perceived would better allow them to combine career and family.

Across the disciplines, their competing roles within the academy, in addition to their roles external to the academy, provide a significant amount of stress for these SRU professors. Many of the professors described the challenge of learning effective time management skills and increased stress levels affecting their mental and physical health. Jacobs and Winslow (2004) confirm many of the challenges expressed by these participants as well: faculty work long hours, tenure collides with family decisions, and dual-careers are necessary due to low incomes. Again, is this different from other professions? As noted by one of the business school professors, part-

time in her previous corporate career is working 8 to 5; therefore, the academic life is potentially *less* stressful. But if this were completely true we would expect to find professors of business in particular, most of whom have had previous careers in these high-stress occupations, completely at ease with the demands of their academic professional lives and this certainly is not the case. The professors of business reported similar struggles with balance and increased stress levels; the main difference with their colleagues in the Department of English and Departments of Science is that professors of business are better compensated, potentially making the workload more worth it. As one of the professors of business said, she would not put up with the stress of the academic life for what her colleagues in other disciplines are paid. Why then, do they? Is it just that, as one of the professors of English said, they are prepared for little else and they have already put so much time and money into getting to this point that they might as well stay?

Of course for many of these professors there is a deep love of what they do. They mention the joy that they experience from the interactions with their students, from the "aha moments" they witness, and the occasional feedback they receive in the form of letters and phone calls. For some of the professors the process of doing research itself provides a source of satisfaction. Several of the women, across the disciplines, say they find satisfaction in the perceived "freedom" of their professional lives, which allows them to operate, they feel, relatively unobserved as they enact their daily activities and roles within the academy. They enjoy the freedom to define their own research agenda and to determine how they will spend their days; they do not, in other words, punch a clock. While almost all of the participants mention the influence of professional mentors, individuals who encouraged them to pursue doctoral studies, or who advised them in moments of crisis, or who help them now as they learn to perform their professional roles, none of the participants describe a consistent nor a formal

relationship with these current and former colleagues. There is no one looking over their shoulders on a continual basis to make sure they are doing things right or doing the right things. However, none of the women seems unclear about what is expected of her in order to succeed within the academy. None describes alternative constructions to the academic life that do not include teaching, research, and service, although several mention alternative constructions outside of the academy. Nearly all describe enormous amounts of stress related to meeting those expectations, even though, as a couple of the professors of science point out, it is stress that is "self-imposed." The structure and the discourse of the academy are so strong that it does not need to constantly watch over them, to ensure that they are working hard enough. They do it to themselves.

And, as one of the professors of science says, being an adult is hard work, no matter the profession. For example, Moore (2000) describes the high levels of burnout and exhaustion experienced by IT professionals due to work overload, role ambiguity, and role conflict, and the recent edited volume, *Handbook of Work-Family Integration* (Whitehead, 2008), details the effects of role overload on individuals' physical and mental health across professions. Academics are not unique among professionals who work hard and must cope with high stress levels; however, this does not make it acceptable. One of the hallmarks of the academic profession is a high degree of autonomy in how professors manage their day-to-day lives; indeed, autonomy and independence is cited as one of the reasons individuals are drawn to the academic career (Lindholm, 2004). And as mentioned above several of the participants in this study noted the freedom of the academic profession as one of their main satisfactions. But when the high expectations for research output and tenure require that faculty work on average in excess of 50 hours per week, it is questionable how independent professors are (Jacobs &

Winslow, 2004). To deal with these issues of work overload, role ambiguity, and role conflict, the professors at SRU have developed various strategies to cope, ranging from protected days for work, to exercise regimens, to medical remedies.

One of the strategies these women employ is working to build community within the SRU campus. As many of the women note, due to their own experiences as women in the academy they are aware of their status as role models and some actively work to mentor younger women and to instruct them on how to better navigate the academic structure. They also look for opportunities for networking, whether through the all-girls' network that one of the participants in the Department of English describes as a result of the burden of service, online communities, and other places for interacting with fellow academics both within their departments and across campus. This sense of community is for some of these women what keeps them going and what attracted them to the academic profession in the first place; it supports their professional and intellectual choices. There are greater opportunities for these female interactions, of course, within a department such as English, where women are no longer so isolated. But younger women may find that they do not appreciate the need for such communities, precisely because they are no longer so isolated. Lindholm (2004), for example, found that the younger women in her study "downplayed gender" and emphasized instead the need for "competence and persistence" for both men and women in academic careers (p. 624). Some of the women in this study have made similar comments that can equally be seen as a sign of their socialization to the academic structure and discourse: they have made it inside the academic halls; therefore, other women should be able to do so, as well. Regardless, women across the disciplinary areas commented on their lack of preparation for the "lone scholar" aspect to the academic career and

their desire for greater interaction; the university and the disciplines would do well to strive to create more opportunities for building community among its faculty.

## Recommendations

It would seem, then, some recommendations can be put forward, in the spirit of Bensimon and Marshall's (1997) advice that a project such as this should have as its goals both to change institutions and to be "openly political and change-oriented." These are recommendations, I feel, that will not only improve the institution of higher education for women but for men as well. The larger issue is a structural one that reaches beyond SRU, as several of these participants have noted. The institution of higher education should create and support standards and expectations for success within the academy that will also allow room for a life outside of the academy and recognize that today's economy generally requires two-income households. If the institution is going to continue to require a teaching role and a service role of its faculty, it must find a way to reward those roles as equivalent to research; after all, teaching is where universities and students most often intersect, and service is often what keeps institutions of higher education in operation. As long as these roles are marginalized within the eyes of the institution, so will be those who perform those roles. Women should not have to bear this burden disproportionately simply because there are fewer of them within the institution, and they should not be burdened as caretakers simply because they are women. Fields where women remain the minority post graduate study, such as in the sciences, should be examined further to determine structural changes that can be made to correct that balance. It behooves the institution of higher education to question whether the threshold for success that has been established is realistic and even necessary. Exactly how many publications does a successful academic make? How much

grant money secured? And, why? The current up-and-out system is based on that ideal, gender-neutral faculty member and does not take into account individuals who want to create a life outside of the academic halls. Of course, some of this pressure is, as these participants acknowledge, self-imposed, and some of these women are going above and beyond what is necessary to meet tenure. The institution should find a way to reward these individuals that does not, concurrently, punish those who do not equally overachieve (it should be noted here that, from 2000 – 2008, the number of tenured women at SRU has risen from 266 to 344, whereas the number of tenured men has dropped from 1,003 to 902).

In addition to these structural changes, improved and increased training for the academic role should be provided, beginning at the very least in graduate school. If graduate school is going to be equated to a sort of pledging process, then this is exactly the time to pass along the rituals and the secret handshake required for full membership. Students should be instructed on career options and how to be good teachers and effective researchers. Clearly, future professors of science should learn skills pertinent to running a lab. Becoming a professor, no matter the field, is not a process of osmosis, and the current model which privileges learning on the job by trial and error is a waste of time and resources both for the individuals and the institution. This is not to say that there is no place for on-the-job learning, but that it should not carry the burden of the professional learning process and that it could be better structured. Expecting employees to succeed without training or guidance is both foolish and risky and certainly no way to run an organization. As well, there is a clear need for better and more purposeful mentoring throughout the educational process, beginning before graduate school, but with the recognition that mentoring is not innocent and is potentially destructive. There should be better guidance provided regarding career choices available in one's chosen field of study and better guidance

provided about the expectations associated with the choice that is made. Faculty need better, more purposeful mentoring on the job, about how to do the job, and how to do it better. In those fields where women are in the minority, steps should be taken to ensure that junior female professors have access to senior women and not in a way that places undue burden on those senior women who are in the academy. And, potentially, mentors should be pulled from the associate, not the full professor ranks, to ensure that the knowledge that is shared is appropriate to the junior faculty's experience. As several women in this study indicated, often the guidance offered by a senior faculty member is less than supportive or appropriate to that junior faculty member's developmental needs. In short, everyone, throughout the institution of higher education, should want the institution to succeed, not by adhering to outdated models of success of the past but by enacting progressive models of success for the future.

## Reflections on the Research Process

An interpretive research project requires that I provide some reflections upon both the study itself and upon my role as researcher. This study has been limited in size and scope due to my own constraints of both time and resources. Any qualitative study gives up an ability to generalize from its results to a larger population in favor of deeper study of a local population; this qualitative study cannot argue to do otherwise. A former SRU administrator informed me prior to the beginning of the study that a better project would be found in a quantitative survey of female academics from across the country. And certainly I would not discount the possibilities offered by such an approach to augment and further the research undertaken here. But I also would point to other recent studies, undertaken at other institutions, of women in the academy that have come to similar conclusions as this one has as a sort of data-check. A recent study at

UC Irvine (Monroe, Ozyurt, Wrigley, & Alexander, 2008), for example, found, among other things, unintended bias and outdated attitudes towards women, tensions resulting from the competing demands of family and career, and the need for more flexible career paths; it should be noted as well that the Irvine administration released a statement criticizing both the report and its authors (Monroe et al., 2008). I would argue that the experiences of the women from Southern Research University shared in this study are neither unrepresentative of the larger population of female academics nor are they representative of the disgruntled ramblings of a few employees. Indeed, the fact that, other than in the Departments of Science, the majority of the women who chose to participate in the study are untenured assistant professors with perhaps the most to lose by voicing their opinions would, I think, suggest otherwise. Still, the argument can be made that those women who did elect to participate are those who had the biggest axe to grind, so to speak. There is little that I can do to defend against this, other than to refer the reader to the data itself; it seems to me that any complaints that were voiced were launched not at the university that employs them but at the higher education system as a whole and at their own inabilities to "do better," as it were, within the system that they have elected to join.

A study such as this, centered as it is on a particular group of participants at a particular institution, treads dangerous ground in protecting the confidentiality of its participants. One might question, for example, the lack of discussion of the racial or ethnic composition of the participants under study. Quite simply, there are so few non-white individuals within the academy that to engage in that discussion, though clearly important, would immediately betray that confidentiality. At least one potential participant declined to participate for just this reason and recommended that expanding the population to other institutions would make for a better study (although I would wholeheartedly agree with this suggestion, I again note my limitations

of time and resources). The limited population size increases the possibility of participants knowing one another; often their offices were next door to each other and one participant even asked me about other participants in the study. Of course, none of the participants who did choose to take part were in any way intentionally forced to participate (any unintentional coercion I cannot speak to, other than to hope that it did not happen), and in keeping with human subjects requirements all were given the option to opt out of the study at any time and to decline having their interviews audio-taped. None of the participants requested this option, and although three of the participants did voice concerns about the confidentiality of their responses, on the whole the participants seemed comfortable to share their stories, on the record, and to give me the freedom of interpretation (keeping in mind, of course, the power differentials previously discussed in Chapter Two). Although I did not share the data with the participants during the course of the study, I believe the similarity of the data across participants serves as a sort of member-check. In fact, I was repeatedly struck by how alike these women were, how similar their experiences within the academy, despite the disciplinary differences. And, the results of the aforementioned recent studies from other researchers serve in this role as well. Eight of the participants requested to see the results when the study is completed, not to check for accuracy or to make sure that I had adequately protected them within the findings, but to learn from one another, and to discover, perhaps, that they are not so seemingly alone.

Armitage (2002) reminds us that any analysis must include an "awareness of our own motivations, beliefs, and personal styles as interviewers" (p. 64). Similarly, Lincoln and Guba (2000), citing Alcoff and Potter's *Feminist Epistemologies* (1993), note that the research process is not just about reflecting on the research problem and on our data but also requires being reflexive of "our selves and with the multiple identities that represent the fluid self in the

research setting" (p. 183). I entered this study as a researcher, as a doctoral student, and as a woman in the academy, though each of those selves was tested and questioned during the course of the study as I encountered feelings of inadequacy related both to my self as a scholar and as a student. I found myself, as much as asking questions from the interview protocol to inform my study, in dialog with my participants about the purposes of my research, about my own goals and ambitions, and about my history as a student, as a woman, and as an academic. Through these conversations I discovered that by undertaking this study I was, in a way, trying on the academic role for size, trying to figure out if this future was a future that I wanted. I was, through the course of this study, constructing my own future life within the academy. Did I feel like I could do it? Did I want to? What might be the ramifications if I did not? What might they be if I did? So in a way I was placing myself at the feet of these women and asking them to mentor me, to advise me on my own path, by reflecting on theirs.

Naturally, as a student of higher education, and as a woman who is also employed by the academy, I entered the field with a certain amount of preconceptions about the role of higher education, about the role of women within higher education, and about the socialization process to a career in higher education. By privileging feminist theory I must recognize how I may have subjected these women to their narratives and the position of agency I either unfairly demanded of them or the lack of such for which I may have judged them. I must question what positions of powerlessness and misery I may have placed them in when I analyze them in this way. What measure of "success" am I privileging? Is it possible, on another reading, that these women are doing just fine, thank you very much, and are not so much in need of my salvation? And so, I find, I must begin again.

I continue to believe in the value of higher education, both for men and for women, and I am optimistic about the future of this institution, largely because of the women I have had the great fortune to meet through this study. They are clearly committed to their fields, to the ability of their teaching and research to change individuals and the world, and I for one have no doubt that they will accomplish it. But perhaps even more than that they are committed to making the academic world better for the women who come after them, through better mentoring, through leadership activities, by building community, by breaking barriers to ensure structural changes that make the halls of academia better for all, and as one participant put it, just by being.

I see several large areas for further and ongoing study on women's lived experiences within the academy. We need more studies of this type, at other institutions and within other disciplines, to allow more women's voices to be heard on the academic campus, so many more that the weight of their voices can not be so easily brushed aside. Other institution types should be studied as well. Is there something different, for example, in the narrative of the female academic at an all-female institution than at one in which they are in the minority? What are the narratives of women professors in teaching institutions and do they include the same issues with balance that these women at a research institution describe? And finally, other organizational types should be examined for models of institutional structural change from which higher education can learn. Are there, for example, models to be found in the corporate or non-profit sectors for different ways that we might envision relating to and supporting one another within higher education? This future research is important, not only so there will *be* women in the academy in the future, but also so that future women academics can look at their lives both inside and outside the academic walls as lives to aspire to, lives that are not so much constrained by the institutional structure and discourse, but lives that are engaged in producing that structure and

discourse, producing, it can be imagined, a structure and discourse that privileges community and support over hierarchy and exclusion.

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# APPENDIX A

## POPULATION BY DEPARTMENT TABLE

| English Professors | Assistant | Associate | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total Pool | 5 | 6 | 11 |
| Interviewed | 4 | 2 | 6 |
| Declined | 1 | 3 | 4 |
| Did Not Respond | 0 | 1 | 1 |

| Business Professors | Assistant | Associate | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total Pool | 7 | 6 | 13 |
| Interviewed | 5 | 3 | 8 |
| Declined | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Did Not Respond | 2 | 3 | 5 |

| Science Professors | Assistant | Associate | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total Pool | 6 | 8 | 14 |
| Interviewed | 2 | 5 | 7 |
| Declined | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Did Not Respond | 3 | 2 | 5 |

| All Disciplines | Assistant | Associate | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total Pool | 18 | 20 | 38 |
| Interviewed | 12 | 10 | 22 |
| Declined | 2 | 4 | 6 |
| Did Not Respond | 4 | 6 | 10 |

# APPENDIX B

## TABLE OF PARTICIPANT CHARACTERISTICS[6]

Rankings grouped by sets of 25

English (51-75)

| Name | Rank | 1st Generation | PhD Institution Rank | Dual Academic Career* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jane | Assistant | No | 1-25 | Yes |
| Lucy | Assistant | No | Non U.S. Inst | No |
| Debra | Assistant | Yes | Non U.S. Inst | No |
| Kelly | Assistant | Yes | 51-75 | No |
| Margaret | Associate | No | 1-25 | No |
| Ellen | Associate | No | 1-25 | No |

Business (26-50)

| Name | Rank | 1st Generation | PhD Institution Rank | Dual Academic Career* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Katrina | Assistant | No | 26-50 | Yes |
| Janet | Assistant | Yes | 26-50 | No |
| Christy | Assistant | No | 26-50 | No |
| Brittany | Assistant | Yes | 26-50 | No |
| Virginia | Assistant | Yes | 1-25 | No |
| Elise | Associate | Yes | Tier 3 (law) | No |
| Karen | Associate | No | Tier 3 (law) | No |
| Lori | Associate | Yes | Not ranked | No |

Science (51-75)

| Name | Rank | 1st Generation | PhD Institution Rank | Dual Academic Career* |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Trudy | Assistant | No | 76-100 | No |
| Sharon | Assistant | Yes | 100-125 | No |
| Rachel | Associate | Yes | Non U.S. Inst | Yes |
| Amanda | Associate | No | 26-50 | No |
| Natalie | Associate | No | 1-25 | No |
| Carter | Associate | No | 1-25 | Yes |
| Theresa | Associate | No | 26-50 | No |

*Dual Academic Career defined as two tenured or tenure-track positions.

[6] Ph.D. institutions ranked according to *U.S. News & World Report: America's best graduate schools 2009.* Retrieved September 24, 2008, from http://grad-schools.usnews.rankingsandreviews.com/grad

# APPENDIX C

## TABLE OF SALARIES

All figures are averages, as of January 2008

Department of English - All

| | Female | Male |
|---|---|---|
| Assistant Professors | $43,513 | $49,819 |
| Associate Professors | $64,088 | $69,436 |
| Full Professors | $82,086 | $89,379 |

Department of English – This Study

| | |
|---|---|
| Assistant Professors | $43,513 |
| Associate Professors | $69,682 |

Business School - All

| | Female | Male |
|---|---|---|
| Assistant Professors | $150,870 | $139,652 |
| Associate Professors | $116,318 | $150,873 |
| Full Professors | $197,987 | $181,716 |

Business School – This Study

| | |
|---|---|
| Assistant Professors | $145,376 |
| Associate Professors | $118,880 |

Departments of Science - All

| | Female | Male |
|---|---|---|
| Assistant Professors | $51,805 | $72,743 |
| Associate Professors | $83,698 | $93,472 |
| Full Professors | $121,196 | $134,750 |

Departments of Science – This Study

| | |
|---|---|
| Assistant Professors | $74,769 |
| Associate Professors | $84,378 |

# APPENDIX D

## INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

### Theoretical Issues

1. Do any of the following quotes more adequately describe how you think about higher education and your role in the academy? Why?

"The grand narrative of the University, centered on the production of a liberal, reasoning, subject, is no longer readily available to us. . . . None of us can now seriously assume ourselves to be the centered subject of a narrative of University education." (Bill Readings, *The University in Ruins*)

The shift from a public good knowledge/learning regime to an academic capitalist knowledge/learning regime "requires us to rethink the centrality and dominance of the academic profession." The academic capitalism knowledge/learning regime "sees the economy rather than the polity as central to the citizenry's well-being. This approach affects the kinds of students, types of education, and types of research that we fund." (Sheila Slaughter and Gary Rhoades, *Academic Capitalism and the New Economy*)

"Culture is the sum of activities in the organization, and socialization is the process through which individuals acquire and incorporate an understanding of those activities. Culture is relatively constant and can be understood through reason. An organization's culture, then, teaches people how to behave, what to hope for, and what it means to succeed or fail. Some individuals become competent, and others do not." (William Tierney, Organizational socialization in higher education, *Journal of Higher Education*)

### Knowledge of the Academy

2. What does it mean to be a professor? How have you learned this?
3. Has your understanding of what it means to be a professor changed over time? How?
4. What have you found to be most challenging or difficult about being a professor?
5. What have you found to be most satisfying about being a professor?

### Gender Issues

6. What does it mean to you, being a woman in the academy?
7. From your perspective, is being a female different than being a male in the academy? Why or why not?
8. Are there things that women in the academy know that men do not?
9. What effect has being a woman had on your life as a professor?
10. What effect has being a professor had on your life as a woman?

Activities

11. What do you value most about what you do every day? Why? How much time do you spend doing it?
12. How have you learned the various identities that are required of you as a professor?
13. Is there anything about being a professor that has surprised you or that you feel you were unprepared for?
14. It seems that the academic life can be a stressful one, often all-encompassing. How do you balance your professional and personal lives?

15. Finally, thinking about your life as a professor and as a woman, is there anything I should know about your life outside of the University that you would like to share?

# APPENDIX E

## DEPARTMENT HEAD/DEAN'S LETTER

Dr. Name,

My name is Allison McWilliams and I am a doctoral student in higher education administration at the University of Georgia, under the guidance of Dr. Sheila Slaughter. The purpose of this letter is to inform you of a research project I am conducting.

This fall I am beginning the data collection for my dissertation project entitled *Troubled Interpretations: Female Academics as Produced in Practice*. Through this qualitative study I seek to interview women faculty holding assistant and associate professor ranks to discover how they are constructing their lives as academics. The project aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What roles do women enact as they construct their academic lives?
2. What activities do women perform as they construct their academic lives?
3. How does disciplinary culture affect the construction of women's academic lives?

For this project I would like to interview women faculty holding assistant and associate professor ranks within your department. While I intend to invite participation from all faculty in the department who fit this description, only those who willingly agree to do so will take part in the study. Those who do agree to participate may withdraw consent at any time without penalty and have the results of the participation, to the extent that it can be identified as theirs, returned, removed from the research records, or destroyed. Each participant will be asked to take part in a face-to-face interview lasting approximately 1-2 hours during the next few months (October 2007-May 2008). Participant names and any details that might identify them will be changed in any written reports in order to protect confidentiality. Tapes of the interviews will be destroyed upon the completion of the project or no later than December 31, 2008.

I plan to begin making contact with potential participants by email and telephone beginning October 15, 2007. If you have any questions or concerns, now or in the future, please do not hesitate to contact me at Allison@cviog.uga.edu or by telephone at (706)338-9643, or to contact Dr. Slaughter at slaughtr@uga.edu or by telephone at (706) 542-0571.

Thank you in advance for your support of my doctoral studies. I look forward to the opportunity to meet with and learn from your faculty members.

Allison McWilliams

# APPENDIX F

## PARTICIPANT LETTER

Dr. Name,

My name is Allison McWilliams and I am a doctoral student in higher education administration at the University of Georgia, under the guidance of Dr. Sheila Slaughter. The purpose of this letter is to request your participation in a research project I am conducting.

This fall I am conducting the data collection for my dissertation project entitled *Troubled Interpretations: Female Academics as Produced in Practice*. Through this qualitative study I seek to interview women faculty holding assistant and associate professor ranks to discover how they are constructing their lives as academics. The project aims to answer the following research questions:

1. What roles do women enact as they construct their academic lives?
2. What activities do women perform as they construct their academic lives?
3. How does disciplinary culture affect the construction of women's academic lives?

I would greatly appreciate the opportunity to include you in my study. Your participation is, of course, completely voluntary. If you choose to participate you may withdraw consent at any time without penalty and have the results of the participation, to the extent that it can be identified as yours, returned, removed from the research records, or destroyed. Your participation will consist of a face-to-face interview lasting approximately 1-2 hours during the next few months (October 2007-May 2008). Your name and any details that might identify you will be changed in any written reports in order to protect confidentiality. Tapes of the interview will be destroyed upon the completion of the project or no later than December 31, 2008.

If you would be interested in participating, please feel free to contact me at allison@cviog.uga.edu or by telephone at (706)338-9643, or, I will follow-up by telephone in the next few days. If you have any questions or concerns, now or in the future, please do not hesitate to contact me or to contact Dr. Slaughter at slaughtr@uga.edu or by telephone at (706) 542-0571.

Thank you in advance for your support of my doctoral studies. I look forward to the opportunity to meet with and learn from you.

Allison McWilliams