

On “Kiddo,” and Kiddos: Plagues, Permission Structures, and Women’s Progress in Academic Leadership

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Last December, a month after President Biden’s election as the 46th president of the United States, former *American Scholar* editor Joseph Epstein created a firestorm with his vitriolic opinion piece in the *Wall Street Journal* calling upon Dr. Jill Biden to jettison the use of her academic title. The now infamous column began:

Madame First Lady -Mrs. Biden – Jill - kiddo: a bit of advice on what may seem like a small, but I think is a not unimportant matter. Any chance you might drop the ‘Dr.’ before your name? ‘Dr. Jill Biden’ sounds and feels fraudulent, not to say a touch comic. Your degree is, I believe, an Ed.D., a doctor of education, earned at the University of Delaware through a dissertation with the unpromising title ‘Student Retention at the Community College Level: Meeting Students’ Needs.’ A wise man once said that no one should call himself ‘Dr.’ unless he has delivered a child. Think about it, Dr. Jill, and forthwith drop the doc (Epstein 2020).

Epstein’s patronizing, misogynistic attack was infused with an elitism from academia’s tweedy past - a time when the ivory tower, as a willful disconnect from the practical matters of everyday life, was reserved for White men of privilege, and the mark of excellence was how many students were turned away or fell victim to a prevailing sink or swim mentality.

It comes as no surprise, then, that Epstein’s attribution of an erosion of standards in the academy and the subsequent diminishing of the prestige a Ph.D. once held coincides with the time when colleges and universities began opening their doors to women and students of color. The racial overtones of his sexist commentary are further evidenced in his lament that the prestige of an honorary doctorate, of which he is a recipient, has declined even further. According to Epstein, “Political correctness has put paid to any true honor an honorary doctorate may once have possessed. If you are ever looking for a simile to denote rarity, try ‘rarer than a contemporary university honorary-degree list not containing an African-American woman’” (Epstein 2020).

When the *Wall Street Journal* was barraged with letters of complaint, including demands that Paul Gigot, the editorial page editor, issue a retraction of the piece, apologize to Jill Biden, and

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resign, his response instead was to accuse the Biden team of launching a strategic identity politics campaign aimed at appealing to the “political censors in media and academe” and sending a “message to critics as it prepares to take power.” Otherwise, he questions, “Why go to such lengths to highlight a single op-ed on a relatively minor issue?” (Gigot 2020).

Epstein’s invective and the editor’s unapologetic dismissal are emblematic of a new permission structure in contemporary society that dramatically undermines both women’s leadership and their humanity while reinforcing racial hierarchies. Nowhere was this foundational societal change more apparent than during the 2016 presidential campaign. As President Obama’s former political advisor David Simas observed at the time:

Until recently, religious institutions, academia, and media set out the parameters of acceptable discourse, and it ranged from the unthinkable to the radical to the acceptable to policy. The continuum has changed. Had Donald Trump said the things he said during the campaign eight years ago - about banning Muslims, about Mexicans, about the disabled, about women - his Republican opponents, faith leaders, academia would have denounced him and there would be no way around those voices. Now, through Facebook and Twitter, you can get around them. There is social permission for this kind of discourse. Plus, through the same social media, you can find people who agree with you, who validate these thoughts and opinions. This creates a sense of social affirmation for what was once thought unthinkable (Remnick 2016).

Permission structures offer psychological and emotional gateways for people to adopt certain beliefs and justify specific behaviors. President Trump fostered social permission for overt sexism throughout his 2016 campaign, linking male dominance to political legitimacy by consistently making sexist comments, deriding women as sexual objects, insulting them based on their physical appearance or bodily functions, accusing them of being “nasty,” and comparing them to dogs, pigs, and other “disgusting animals.” Consider just two such comments: Referring to rival Republican presidential candidate Carly Fiorina, Trump remarked, “Look at that face. Would anybody vote for that? Can you imagine that, the face of our next president? I mean, she’s a woman, and I’m not supposed to say bad things, but really, folks, come on. Are we serious?” And about his Democratic opponent Hillary Clinton, he asks, “If Hillary Clinton can’t satisfy her husband, what makes her think she can satisfy America?” When challenged on the sexist nature of his comments, the former president responded by appealing to his populist base with the defense that he “doesn’t have time for political correctness, neither does America.” (Zimmerman 2015).

President Trump’s attempts to repudiate charges of sexism as politically correct handwringing belies the fact that the impact of such comments extend well beyond psychic harm to the individuals at which they are directed. Indeed, studies show that women who are bystanders to sexist comments directed at other women report greater levels of anxiety, depression, and hostility as well as diminished self-esteem, measured by how well they evaluate their own performance and abilities following an incident (Chaudoir and Quinn 2010). And with the advent of the Internet, girls and women are bystanders to such rhetoric in larger numbers than ever before.

The consequence, as Michele Obama notes, has been “taking American women back to a much darker time that we thought we had left behind. A time when your body was much more important than your mind. And a far darker time still for women of color, many of whose roots in the US date back to a time when their ancestors were literally their masters’ property (Slaughter 2016).” For New America Foundation’s president Anne-Marie Slaughter, an additional downside of this return to the overt, conscious sexism of the past is that “it obscures the subconscious sexism of the present; the bias of men and women who think they know better (Slaughter 2016).” The salience of her insights is magnified when considered in relation to research conducted by Jolyn Dahlvig and Karen Longman (2020), which reveals that “the extent to which societies at large (macro-level) perpetuate gender stereotypes impacts how organizations (meso-level) enact gender norms, and ultimately shapes the ways women envision themselves as leaders (micro-level).”

These factors, as played out in academia, are showcased brilliantly in the first season of the Netflix series *The Chair*. Let me warn you that spoilers will follow. While this satirical dramedy has been criticized by some for representing the one percent in academia and reinscribing conservative portrayals of colleges and universities as bastions of liberal progressivism aimed at fostering the next generation of snowflakes - social justice warriors, who melt at the slightest abrasion of their sensibilities - it has received critical acclaim by many academics who recognize themselves in the story of Ji-Yoon Kim, recently appointed chair of the English Department at the fictional Pembroke University.

Played by Sandra Oh, the character of Ji-Yoon demonstrates, first and foremost, the gendered scrutiny centered on a likability test that female leaders at all levels and all types of institutions undergo - a test from which men are often exempt. Characterized as a lower-tier Ivy, like many colleges across the country, Pembroke University is suffering from budget constraints and the need to allocate scarce resources. Declining enrollments and decreased funding for the humanities have led the dean to ask the new chair to come in and solve both the financial and reputational problems of a floundering English department by pressuring senior faculty with high salaries and low enrollments to retire, while responding to donor pressure to hire someone from outside of the academy who brings star power for a distinguished lectureship. These leadership challenges, grounded in the dean’s enjoinder to bring the department “into the twenty-first century” must be managed alongside Ji-Yoon’s own desire to mentor and shepherd a young, dynamic African American female faculty member, Dr. Yasmin “Yaz” McKay, through the tenure process.

During her conversations with Yaz, Ji-Yoon confesses, “I feel like someone handed me a ticking time bomb because they wanted to make sure a woman was holding it when it explodes.” Through this comment, Ji-Yoon offers the classic account of the glass cliff phenomenon in which, after a long line of men, women are given a chance at leadership only in moments of crisis, where the risk of failure is highest. In fact, not only are women more likely than men to accept and occupy positions that have a higher risk of failure, but women are also less likely to be given second chances after they fail.

From the outset, gendered norms of leadership are on display in *The Chair* as Ji-Yoon is referred to by her male colleagues at their first department meeting of the semester as “our first lady

chair” and instructed by them to sit at the head of the table rather take her place among them. Immediately, authoritarian, autocratic approaches to leadership are expected and Ji-Yoon’s inclinations toward collaborative, authentic leadership are contested. Her sincere efforts to build relationships with others, listen to their experiences, and instill a sense of connectedness through compassionate, mission-driven leadership, founded on self-awareness and genuineness, are viewed as weaknesses to be overcome. Her senior colleagues want her to be tough-minded in advocating for their needs against the administration, of which she is now a part, eschewing the communal characteristics associated with women and women’s leadership that have proven effective in achieving long-term goals.

The initial reactions of Ji-Yoon’s colleagues to her leadership demonstrate the ways in which the masculine ideal of the good leader as a competitive agent - an ideal that reinforces sexism - creates a double bind for women. As Crystal Hoyt and Jim Blascovich (2007) have illustrated, the agentic qualities of confidence, control, assertiveness, emotional toughness, and achievement-oriented aggressiveness posited as necessary for effective leadership are considered incompatible with women’s styles of leadership. Whereas male leaders are expected to focus on task achievement and performance outcomes, women leaders are expected to build consensus and focus on interpersonal relations and work satisfaction. When individuals act counter to these stereotypical expectations, they are judged to be less effective as leaders. Applying the theory of role congruity with respect to the appropriateness of male and female behavior, researchers have discovered that in cases of incongruity between group stereotypes and the social role in which members of the group are engaged, women in leadership roles are judged more harshly (Hoyt and Blascovich 2007).

This role incongruity around gender expectations regarding Sandra Oh’s character is confounded with expectations arising from stereotypes around Asian Americans as the “model minority.” The perception of Asian Americans as smart, competent, and hardworking is accompanied by the view that they are less vocal, less assertive, and lacking in social skills and leadership potential. These prejudices work against those seeking leadership roles, inside and outside of the academy and foster the exclusion of Asian Americans from informal power networks tied to promotion into the leadership ranks.

Dahlvig and Longman (2020) consider the detrimental impact of perceptions of role congruity on women’s leadership in relation to Claude Steele’s groundbreaking work on stereotype threat— “[a] social-psychological threat that arises when one is in a situation or doing something for which a negative stereotype about one’s group applies. This predicament threatens one with being negatively stereotyped, with being judged or treated stereotypically, or with the prospect of conforming to the stereotype.” The consequence, they uncover, is greater unwillingness of women, particularly women of color, to risk taking on leadership roles.

Still, Ji-Yoon is convinced that she can make a difference for the English faculty and their students, beginning with her two female departmental colleagues at opposite ends of their careers - alternately representing their field’s imminent death by suicide and the possibility of resurrection through replacing the canon with current intellectual trends. While Yaz, a celebrated teacher and innovative scholar, who analyzes American literature through the lenses of both feminism and Critical Race Theory, is in the throes of her tenure application, Joan Hambling, a

professor of medieval literature and Chaucer is under pressure to retire. With a dormant scholarship program and poorly attended classes, Joan is first introduced to viewers in the aftermath of learning that her office has been moved to the basement of the student athletic center. Joan and Yaz's narratives, interwoven with Ji-Yoon's, foreground the persistent barriers for women leaders in the academy in a manner both comic and tragic.

On the first day of class, Yaz announces her office hours to a packed room of students with the proviso, "but you can come to see me any time because I practically live here." Her invitation signals the routineness of pre-tenured faculty (who are disproportionately women) carrying heavy teaching, grading, and advising loads, often for introductory or general education courses with large numbers of first-year students. Being new to college or operating outside of their preferred field of study, these students require the most faculty investment to succeed and may view pre-tenured faculty either as mother figures, as the only one available to mentor them, or as representing hoops they must jump through to graduate (Park 1996).

Such work is considered the least prestigious at many institutions and has a significant impact on women's career advancement opportunities. Moreover, in their recent study on gendered and racialized perceptions of faculty workloads, Joya Misra and her team reveal that faculty workload inequities have important consequences for faculty diversity and inclusion. Examining responses from 947 faculty across 53 departments at 22 institutions, the researchers sought to gain insights into workload inequities as one of the primary barriers for promotion and advancement of women and faculty of color (Misra et al. 2021).

The study confirmed that while male faculty tend to focus on research and publications, female faculty balance research with broader attention to teaching, mentoring, and service. Because existing reward structures value research and securing grant funds above all else, White men have a greater chance of earning promotions. Under the circumstances, White women were more likely to view the workload distribution as inequitable compared to White men. Misra further emphasizes that the workload burden is more pronounced for faculty of color due to "identity taxes," which translate into greater participation in mentorship and community group work (Misra et al. 2021). Over the past year and a half, faculty of color on college campuses have been called upon to help students navigate the dual pandemics of COVID-19 and racism, which manifested in the disparately negative impact of the virus on Black, Latinx and Indigenous communities; a surge of high-profile acts of anti-Black violence by police officers; and anti-Asian sentiments and hate crimes. Black, Asian, and other faculty of color are being asked to speak to students, communities, and the media about these issues - work that takes time, is psychologically exhausting, and is undervalued in traditional tenure and promotion processes (McCoy and Lee 2021).

The invisibility of this work constitutes a form of microaggression, which has led to women of color feeling undervalued - a sentiment shared much less often by White men. Because workload inequities can impact retention rates and career development, as well as increase burnout among faculty members, institutional interventions to address them must be paramount. In *The Chair*, the microaggressions against Yaz are highlighted, not only with respect to workload inequities, but in the belittling comments and behavior of her senior White male colleague, Elliot Rentz. Elliot shares Yaz's specialization in American Literature, and he has been assigned to handle her

tenure case. Yet, Elliot is unable to see beyond his own narrow viewing point, attributing Professor McKay's stellar teaching evaluations to her pandering to students and her approach to research as inviting an evisceration of the very foundation upon which his career has been built. When Ji-Yoon enlists Yaz to team teach with Elliot as a way of bolstering his enrollment and allowing him to see Yaz in action, she correctly forecasts his treatment of her as a graduate assistant. Elliot refuses to engage with Yaz as a colleague. Instead, his most extensive conversation with her is around her dress at the departmental party.

After Yaz comes to realize, from a letter left behind in the copier, that Elliot is undermining her chances at tenure, she confronts him, disclosing that her presence in their class is at the request of the chair to help him retain his job and noting the short list for elimination he is on. Elliot immediately goes to the other two retirement-age professors on the list from his department, and it is through scrutinizing salary and enrollment numbers contained in the document that Joan discovers the wage gap impacting so many women in academia.

Though Joan and her male colleague have each been there for 32 years, she learns that her salary was \$16,000 less than his when she was hired - a circumstance discussed by Lynne Ford (2016) in her article "Two Steps Forward, One Step Back? Strengthening the Foundations of Women's Leadership in Higher Education." Ford details the implications of replacing overt biases - frequently addressed by policy or law, such as Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 - with subtler biases embedded in normative institutional rules and practices. Her analysis unveils the extent to which ostensibly gender-neutral, universally applicable rules regarding hiring, tenure, promotion, salary negotiation, and leadership opportunity are expressions of the gendered university, steeped in the anachronistic model of the male as the primary breadwinner supported by a full-time caregiver at home.

For instance, when determining initial salary offers, now as then, women are judged based on their actual accomplishments, while men's worth is assessed in relation to their potential. In addition, men are much more likely than women to seek another job offer as a means of jockeying for a pay increase. The resulting wage disparities from such gendered policies and practices continue to plague academia. According to the most recent report from the American Association of University Professors (2020), women, especially women of color, lag far behind men when it comes to earning power. Based on an analysis of the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), researchers found that the salaries of full-time female faculty members are about 81.2% of those earned by their male counterparts', with women earning \$79,368 and men earning \$97,738 per year on average (American Associate of University Professors 2020).

When Joan visits the Title IX office to file a complaint, she conveys that the salary gap that existed from the time of her initial appointment was exacerbated by power dynamics within the department. As the sole female professor, she ended up doing twice the work, volunteering for service while her male colleagues concentrated on their research - a situation that led to her never going up for promotion to full professor. Because women's work enables their male colleagues to succeed in preferred tasks like research, there were incentives for Joan's colleagues to keep her in this lower-class, workhorse role because it freed them from the tasks they didn't want to do. The leaky pipeline within the academy, resulting from the circumstances Joan describes, is

well documented. Women are less likely than men to achieve the rank of full professor, which is often a requirement for service as department chair. The absence of leadership opportunities for women at the earliest stages of their careers contributes to what Kate Berheide has called the “sticky floor,” miring women in low-paying jobs with limited opportunities for moving sideways or for upward mobility (Pasquerella and Clauss-Ehlers 2017).

The sticky floor is certainly one component contributing to the fact that the proportion of women at the highest academic echelons is at odds with student demographics. According to research conducted by the American Council on Education, women have earned more than half of all baccalaureate degrees awarded since 1981 and half of all doctorates awarded since 2006. Nevertheless, while the percentage of female college presidents more than doubled between 1986 and 2006, increasing from 9.5% to 23%, it increased to just 26.4% by 2011. Since then, it has risen to 30%, with women of color making up a mere five percent. However, these increases are due primarily to a growth in female presidencies at community colleges, which now stands at 36% (American Council on Education 2017). Insofar as these variations in percentages among leadership at institutional types is perceived as correlating with power, money, and status, they are a reminder that cultural equity is not reducible solely to representation and that organizational and institutional cultures often destabilize policies and programs designed to foster diversity. The dearth of female role models in leadership positions at all levels is a significant contributing factor to women’s slowed progress in attaining leadership roles in academia.

Another, of course, is the adjunctification of the faculty. Adrianna Kezar and Arely Acuña’s research draws attention to the ways in which gender inequities among faculty have grown over the last several decades – even as women have attained more tenure-track positions – because the actual percentage of such positions has declined substantially and most of the growth of women in academia has been in non-tenure-track jobs, where such inequities are prominent. Women and faculty of color are underrepresented in academia’s highest faculty positions, and overrepresented in its more precarious ones. Although women make up 46.7% of full-time faculty overall, among tenured and tenure-track professors, the higher the rank, the lower the percentage of women. Female faculty make up 50% of assistant professors, 45% of associate professors, and only 32.5% of full professors with tenure. In addition, the experience of non-tenure-track faculty women differs from men in similar roles. Meanwhile, people of color make up only 12.9% of full-time faculty members, despite making up 32.6% of the US population. A mere 5.2% of full-time faculty members self-identify as Hispanic or Latinx and 6% identify as Black or African American, even though they represent 17.5% and 12.7% of the country’s population, respectively (Kezar and Acuña 2020).

Joan confronts these issues of pay equity against the backdrop of pressure from Ji-Yoon to pay attention to student teaching evaluations and make improvements. Since women and faculty of color are routinely rated lower by students on course evaluations, and assumptions about what constitutes good teaching, research, and service, as well as the relative importance of each to tenure and promotion processes, perpetuate masculine values and processes, these biases negatively affect rates of tenure and promotion for women and faculty of color (Park 1996). Despite demonstrated records of excellence, these biases also serve to undermine the confidence of women and faculty of color. In *The Chair*, Joan decides to burn her course evaluations but

subsequently enlists the help of a member of the IT staff to find out what her students are saying about her on RateMyProfessors.com. Consistent with the results of a research study that applied gender mapping to approximately 14 million reviews from the Internet site, Joan learns that the sexualized comments about her contained on RateMyProfessors focus on her personality traits and appearance (Schmidt 2015). Indeed, the study showed that gender is repeatedly constructed through language and, because the authority and historical contributions of men are normalized, women are more likely to be judged against male norms.

Ji-Yoon's attempts to advocate for Joan and lead the department are complicated, and at times thwarted, by her personal relationships. One of these is with Bill - a professor in her program. A recent widower whose only child has just left for college, Bill has lapsed into alcoholism and drug use. Yet soon after he starts pulling himself together, he becomes the center of a campus controversy around White supremacy. Although he is a popular professor, students call him out on his White privilege during a town forum in which he bungles an apology for satirically and performatively giving a Nazi salute in the classroom for pedagogical purposes. Placed on leave and barred from campus pending a hearing for dismissal, Bill spends his days babysitting Ji-Yoon's daughter, JuJu, who has been suspended from elementary school. Ji-Yoon worries about whether she will be taken as seriously if her growing romantic relationship with Bill is discovered. It is a concern amplified by an exchange between Bill and Ji-Yoon in which he says, "I love it when you act like my boss." Her exasperated response is "I am your boss" - something she needs to prove over again with every word and deed.

However, it is in Ji-Yoon's struggle to be a good mother while being a good leader that some of the most profound challenges for women seeking leadership positions are highlighted. After splitting with a long-time partner, Ji-Yoon tries for years to adopt a child. She is finally matched with a little girl who has Mexican heritage. In her efforts to ensure that JuJu is exposed to her birth culture, Ji-Yoon comes up against her father, Hiba, who complains that JuJu refuses to speak Korean and doesn't know what he is saying. Hiba also doesn't understand why, since her promotion, Ji-Yoon must work more, not less. His distress grows when he is increasingly called upon to provide care for JuJu while Ji-Yoon is at work, a situation common for women in the absence of adequate childcare facilities and the continued scheduling of meetings before and after school and daycare hours.

The interplay between Ji-Yoon and Hiba around his expectations regarding the time she will spend away from work are a stark reminder of the fact that caregiving is not just about "kiddos." Women spend more time than men caring for children and elders and getting involved in community service organizations. An estimated 66% of family caregivers for older persons are female. The average elder caregiver is a 49-year-old woman who works outside the home and provides 20 hours per week of unpaid care to her mother. And although men also assist, female caregivers spend as much as 50% more time providing care than male caregivers. In the end, elder caregiving reduces paid work hours for middle aged women by about 41% (Family Caregiver Alliance 2015).

In the academy, being married and having children tend to boost the careers of men and slow or stop those of women. From the start, women with children in academia pay a penalty given that women without children are 33% more likely than women with children to secure tenure-track

faculty positions. The same penalty is not paid by men. The fact is that men with young children are 35% more likely to secure tenure-track positions than women with young children after earning their Ph.D.s, and fathers surpass mothers by about 20% in securing tenure (Waxman and Ipsa-Landa 2016). In *The Chair*, there is a reference to these disparities in a bedroom conversation between Elliot and his wife, who reminds him that she was denied tenure because she was juggling her teaching and research responsibilities with raising a family - something he took for granted that she would do while he went up for tenure.

The writers of the show capture many of the real-life challenges around women's leadership in academia and gender inequities in work and parenting. However, what the show fails to address, despite its timing, is the extent to which the pandemic has profoundly altered academic work for all families and all faculty members, enhancing gender inequities at colleges and universities. Eighty-two percent of working women have said that their lives have been disrupted by the pandemic; and 70% of those are concerned that their career growth may be limited as a result (Deloitte 2020). In October of 2020, there were 2.2 million fewer women in the labor force than there were in the previous October, representing the lowest level since 1988 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics 2020). COVID-19 dramatically increased families' childcare responsibilities, disproportionately affecting mothers and undermining their careers and wellbeing. Pre-pandemic gendered structures of paid work led many families to lean on mothers by default when the pandemic hit. Gaps, within couples, in job types, pay, and work hours, led some mothers to do more childcare and at-home instruction to protect their partners' work as primary wage earners. Women were more likely to be the only parent able to work fully remotely, leading to even greater responsibilities. In addition, mothers were relied on more heavily even when both partners were home full-time (Calarco et al. 2021).

As in many other sectors, women on college and university campuses have been more negatively affected than their male counterparts. Throughout the pandemic, the majority of faculty, regardless of gender, spent more time on teaching and service. Those who had caregiving responsibilities at home decreased their research time markedly and reported amplified stress, whereas those who did not have caregiving responsibilities saw no change or even a slight increase in research productivity (Calarco et al. 2021). In addition, because women are more likely to be in pre-tenured faculty roles, spend more time in the classroom, are more likely to be engaged in the community, and are less likely to have protected time to work on research, they reported higher levels of stress and lower research productivity. This stress was intensified due to the emotional labor of supporting students during the transition to online learning and enhanced roles as caregivers to their students (Fulweiler et al. 2021).

A study released in March 2021 by Ithaca S+R (Skinner, Betancourt and Wolff-Eisenberg 2021) confirms that 63% of women caregivers experienced difficulties with time management, and 75% reported challenges balancing family, household, and work responsibilities. This compares to 48% of male caregivers having concerns about time management and 61% identifying difficulties balancing work, household, and family responsibilities. These results signal an imbalance in the amount of labor that caregivers are engaged in by gender.

One differential impact has been in research productivity. Women and those caring for children or other dependents spent less time than usual on research publications compared to men and

those without caregiving responsibilities. Indeed, there was a 15 percentage-point gap between caregivers and non-caregivers on a range of research products, with the largest gap between women and men and caregivers and non-caregivers seen in the social sciences. With respect to scholarly papers and draft manuscripts, there was a 14 percentage-point gender gap for social science faculty compared with a six-percentage point gap for science faculty, and a three-percentage point gap for arts and humanities faculty. Similarly, the gap between caregivers and non-caregivers is larger for social science faculty (15 percentage points) compared with science faculty (three percentage points) when it came to producing primary source material, including data, images, and media (Arora et al. 2021). Without mitigation, these gaps will have longstanding impact on the advancement of women faculty and a reverberating impact on the students they teach and advise.

Many universities have made good faith attempts to redress the impact of COVID-19 on research productivity by allowing candidates to pause the tenure clock and by providing an extra year or two to publish academic work. Nevertheless, some experts don't believe that these measures are sufficient and suggest instead that faculty be allowed to choose the years on which they want to be evaluated. As with parental leave, men use the extended time toward tenure to advance research even further, whereas women focus on managing parental obligations. Moreover, these policies do nothing to help the large number of women who are contingent faculty.

Finally, there has been a false sense of security regarding what vaccines can do to protect us, our families, and our children, leading to moral distress on the part of faculty with young children, especially in states that proscribe vaccine and mask mandates. While hundreds of universities across the country have required that all staff, faculty, and students be vaccinated for fall 2021, there are religious and health exemptions, and just now are children from the ages of 5 to 12 getting approval to be vaccinated, with those under 5 still ineligible. Caretakers for children are at risk of being carriers when they take public transportation to campus, teach in-person in the classroom, or send their kids to school or daycare. These risks are disproportionately borne by women and people of color (McCoy and Lee 2021).

The Chair touches on a multitude of challenges faced by women and faculty of color attempting to advance within academia. Ji-Yoon defies stereotypes by assuming the leadership of her department. Yet, in the end, she is pushed off the glass cliff, contesting the myth of “queen bee syndrome” on her way down. Unlike Madeline Albright, who is convinced that “there’s a special place in hell for women who don’t help each other,” the queen bee pushes the ladder away just as other women are getting to the top (Pasquerella and Clauss-Ehlers 2017). The notion that powerful women are the biggest enemy of other women seeking advancement has been debunked by a number of studies that show women in leadership roles engage in lower levels of discriminatory and harassing behavior, offer more personal support to female employees, and oversee offices with smaller pay gaps between men and women than those run by male bosses (Pasquerella and Clauss-Ehlers 2017). When Elliott leads a vote of no confidence in Ji-Yoon, simultaneously offering to serve a third term as chair, Ji-Yoon counters by nominating Joan as chair, a position that comes with an office.

Ji-Yoon's grand gesture communicates the need to begin reimagining and revolutionizing higher education in ways that reframe what it means to be a good leader, teacher, and practitioner, destabilizing existing norms and centering women's authentic leadership. It also calls upon women to actively pursue social efficacy, social modeling, and mentoring in order to attain leadership positions and serve as change agents. However, as Ford (2016) argues, this must be accompanied by structural changes that align the academy with the lived experience of a diversified faculty, as opposed to reward systems that privilege masculine behavior and reify the separation of the public and private spheres in which women continue to do the majority of unpaid domestic work.

In addition to improving access to childcare, parental leave, the creation of lactation centers on campuses, greater job flexibility, and the increased use of virtual meetings, procedural changes must be implemented to promote equity in hiring and promotion. This might involve awarding credit in the promotion and tenure process for engaging in High Impact Practices that position students for success in work, citizenship, and life, including teaching first-year seminars; facilitating undergraduate research and internships; offering writing intensive courses; participating in the informal mentoring and advising of students, meeting with them inside and outside of the classroom; supervising capstone or senior projects; and fostering community-based and service learning projects.

Further, now more than ever, as colleges and universities face burgeoning public skepticism around the value of a college degree, alongside the prospect of a lost generation of students due to COVID-19 and the ensuing financial crisis, they must serve as anchor institutions, demonstrating that their success is inextricably linked to the psychological, social, economic, health, and educational well-being of the communities in which they are located. This requires recognizing the work of public intellectuals and rewarding humanistic practices both inside and outside of the academy. Acknowledging these contributions, in addition to research and scholarship, and establishing systematic performance guidelines and benchmarks, are critical for ensuring fair and transparent workload assignments and practices.

As a means of confronting hidden biases, we also need to validate authentic forms of leadership that involve self-awareness, balanced processing, internalized moral perspective, and relational transparency. Rather than personalizing environmental assumptions, we must understand limitations that reflect hidden biases and promote organizational understanding from the viewpoint of structural, rather than internal, dynamics. We must also reinforce that validation is an individual as well as institutional responsibility, and those who are already privileged are the most empowered to enact it. Validation can include amplifying another's unheard perspective, recognizing and rewarding previously unaccounted for work, muting expressions of racism and sexism, mitigating permission structures that allow hateful speech, acknowledging that, in academia and elsewhere, both words and sticks and stones can have a negative impact.

In *A Leadership Guide for Women in Higher Education*, Council of Independent Colleges president Marjorie Hass (2021) outlines the ways in which women's leadership in the academy, despite the obstacles, is not only possible but essential to dismantling barriers and creating a more level playing field. Pointing to Mary L. Bucklin's essay, "Madame President: Gender's Impact in the Presidential Suite," Hass (2021) notes the reluctance on the part of women in

leadership roles to identify situations in which gender dynamics impacted their situations, instead turning to the challenges of other women presidents. Breaking the silence around everyday sexism and the unwritten rules in academia that perpetuate gender biases is an equity imperative. Paying attention to and reforming hidden biases embedded in language use as well as relaying our own stories matters, Hass (2021) reminds us that while sharing one's experiences may be seen as threatening one's credibility, "keeping our stories of sexism to ourselves reinforces the idea that they arise because of our individual failings. Sharing them gives them their rightful place as symptoms of broader patriarchal structures." I couldn't agree more. By telling the truth about the historical and contemporary barriers faced by women in academia, we can upend hidden biases by bringing them out into the open and begin to reframe the narrative in a way that creates news pathways for women's leadership into the future.

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