

Gender, Performativity, and Leadership: Department Chairs in Research Universities

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### **Dedication**

This dissertation is dedicated to all women who refuse to accept limits and strive to defy gravity.

## Abstract

Women are significantly underrepresented as administrators in higher education leadership. This qualitative study examined the leadership of department chairs at public research universities to better understand how their gender and other identities affected their leadership. The following research questions shaped the study: (1) How do department chairs perceive that their gender and other identities affect their leadership? (2) What do department chairs believe faculty members, students, and administration expect of their leadership? (3) How do department chairs believe others' expectations are related to the chairs' gender or other identities? (4) How do department chairs' perceptions of others' expectations affect their leadership performances? and (5) How do discursive framings of power affect department chairs' leadership?

Data for this study were gathered from four women and four men department chairs at public research universities in the Midwestern United States. The data collection methods used included one day of observation with each department chair, focused interviews, follow-up interviews, and document review. The data analysis was conducted utilizing top down and bottom up coding which generated research findings in six areas: (1) perceptions of the effects of gender and other identities on leadership; (2) perceptions of leadership expectations; (3) effects of expectations on leadership performances; (4) definitions and expressions of power; (5) findings by gender composition of discipline/department; and (6) findings by institution. The theories of performativity and feminist poststructuralism were used as theoretical lenses to analyze and make meaning

of the data. Discussion of the findings and implications for research, theory, and practice are provided.

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## **Chapter One: Introduction to the Study**

Women are significantly underrepresented as administrators in higher education leadership. Over the last several decades, many studies have been conducted on the academic pipeline, a concept that focused on the idea that the paucity of women in higher education leadership would improve when more female students made their way through the system to create a larger number of qualified women available for leadership roles (Camp, 1997; Kulis, Sicotte, & Collins, 2002). However, women have earned at least 40% of doctorates since 1996 (National Science Foundation, 2009) and earn approximately 52% of doctoral degrees today (Aud et al., 2011). Yet, the problem of women's underrepresentation in higher education administration still persists.

No longer can the argument be made that the historic underrepresentation of women in administrative roles in higher education is due to a lack of women's educational attainment required for professorial and administrative roles in the academy. It appears that the cause of the disparity may take place somewhere between the faculty ranks and ascending levels of leadership in the academy. As White (2005) pointed out, despite the growing numbers of women earning doctorates, the number of women in the professoriate has not increased accordingly. Gender disparity exists in the number of full-time faculty in U.S. higher education institutions, with the greatest disparity at master's-degree and doctoral-degree granting institutions, where women make up 42.3% of all faculty at the former and 34.1% at the latter (West & Curtis, 2006). Therefore, some scholars are moving beyond examination of the pipeline, and instead are focusing more on gender bias and discrimination within the academy (Bornstein, 2008; Carli & Eagly,

2001; Dominici, Fried, & Zeger, 2009; Heilman, 2001; Nidiffer, 2001; Roos, 2008; White, 2005).

### **Background and Context of the Study**

To understand where the gender gap among administrators in higher education begins, it is important to look more closely at the time between when women enter the professoriate, through promotion and tenure, and to the beginning of the leadership ladder in the academy. Scholars have identified a traditional, normative career path for higher education leaders which begins in the faculty ranks, enters leadership/administrative work at the department chair position, and continues up through dean, provost, and president (Cohen & March, 1986). Birnbaum and Umbach (2001) utilized survey data from 2,297 university presidents and found that 66.3% of college presidents came to their positions through this traditional career path. The department chair has been recognized as the most common and important first step on this higher education administrative ladder (Birnbaum & Umbach, 2001; Gonzalez, 2001; Hecht, Higgerson, Gmelch, & Tucker, 1999; Hecht, 2007; McDade, 1987). Despite the importance of the department chair position, the majority of empirical research about leadership in the academy focuses on presidents and, to a lesser extent, deans. The recent literature about department chairs consists primarily of advice books to help chairs perform their duties more effectively (Allard, 2011; Buller, 2012; Chu, 2006; Leaming, 2007; Lees, 2006; Wheeler et al., 2008).

The challenges to women's ability to advance through the traditional administrative career path begin at the point of entry into the academy at the professorial

level. Many women do not advance through the promotional ranks, making it that much more difficult for them to attain entry-level leadership positions such as the department chair. West and Curtis (2006) found that women make up 34.1% of all full-time faculty at doctoral degree-granting institutions, but only 25.8% of the tenured faculty. Men make up 65.9% of the full-time faculty at these institutions, but are 74.2% of those who have tenure. At master's degree-granting institutions, 42.3% of full-time faculty are women, and women make up 35% of the tenured faculty. Men make up 57.7% of full-time faculty at these institutions, but again surpass women by holding 65% of the tenured positions. It is perhaps not surprising that one study of research institutions found only 17.5% of department chairs to be women (Niemeier & Gonzalez, 2004). As indicated by the larger gender disparity at the department chair level than in the tenured faculty ranks, it is possible that factors such as bias, discrimination, and gendered expectations of leadership may be impacting women's leadership advancement in the academy. If so few chairs are women, the likelihood of increased gender equity at higher levels of leadership within the academy is limited as most college presidents move through a traditional, normative academic career path.

The underrepresentation of women administrators in higher education leadership is concerning because increasing the number of female administrators in higher education may produce specific advantages, such as new leadership models and characteristics for the needs of modern organizations and the culture of higher education (Bornstein, 2008; Nidiffer, 2001; Touchton, Shavlik, & Davis, 1993). Harrow (1993) explained, "Leadership, when dominated by one segment of society, suffers from a narrow

perspective, a lack of richness of ideas and ideals” ( p. 146). Additionally, institutional policies often claim a commitment to issues of diversity, equity, and opportunity, and gender equity or disparity can be seen as one measure of the effectiveness of this commitment. Bornstein (2008) stated,

It properly falls to the academy, given its values of equity, excellence, and innovation, to redefine leadership for this new era and to demonstrate new pathways for identifying, preparing, and supporting women and people of color for the presidency of postsecondary institutions. (p. 163)

### **The Research Gap**

While the gender disparity among administrators in higher education leadership has been researched from multiple angles, further inquiry is needed into why this underrepresentation persists. Researchers and scholars have expressed a need for gendered perspectives in higher education research. Denker (2009) wrote about the loss of women as they rise up the leadership ranks of higher education and argued, “Examining this situation through the lens of doing gender we can see some of the problems that are rooted in organizations, our performance of roles within those settings, and the opportunities that we have to create change” (p. 103). Fellbaum (2011) also explained, “This necessity, or desire, of a possible life demands that we consider our current practices and policies in higher education for opportunities to disrupt regulations on our gender and sexuality” (p. 130).

Performativity is an emerging theory which has potential to identify and explicate the sometimes subtle, but often pervasive, dynamics that may deter and prevent women

from advancing in higher education leadership. Performativity theory posits that gender is socially constructed and is both created and perpetuated by repeated gender performances that support or disrupt gender norms (Butler, 1990, 1993, 2004). Gender norms related to leadership in higher education may discourage women from entering into leadership roles, thus impacting the number of women in higher education leadership positions. There is potential for performativity theory to be used to shed light on why the gender underrepresentation continues; however, there are few studies that utilize this theory in the higher education setting. Additionally, performativity may provide both men and women leaders the knowledge required to disrupt and change the regulatory powers and norms that impact and constrain their leadership-related gender performances (Butler, 1990). Through an understanding of their performances, leaders may learn to alter their performances to give them new meaning, thereby changing norms over time (Lloyd, 2007). This study on gender and leadership within the department chair position sought to help point the way to strategies to create more inclusive leadership in the academy, facilitate awareness of gendered performances, and generate opportunities for a wider variety of leadership discourses and behaviors for both women and men in leadership.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine how women and men who are department chairs at public research universities perceive and perform their gender and other identities in their leadership. Further, this study investigated how these perceptions and performances were affected by their perceptions of the leadership expectations of faculty, students, and administration. This study examined the following research questions:

- How do department chairs perceive that their gender and other identities affect their leadership?
- What do department chairs believe faculty members, students, and administration expect of their leadership?
- How do department chairs believe others' expectations are related to the chairs' gender or other identities?
- How do department chairs' perceptions of others' expectations affect their leadership performances?
- How do discursive framings of power affect department chairs' leadership?

The study of these research questions provided insights into the complexity of how department chairs enact their roles and how they are affected by gender or other identities. Subsequently, these insights expanded understandings of factors that may affect the gender disparity among administrators in higher education leadership.

In order to answer the research questions, I used a qualitative multiple-case study design. Due to the subtle and often complex nature of gender performances and gender expectations that can impact department chairs, conducting in-depth interviews and observations of department chairs in a variety of academic disciplines enabled me to better collect data relevant to the research questions. This design also best matched the inquiry traditions of feminist research, poststructuralism, and performativity theory.

This study is significant because it addresses a gap in the literature related to the gender disparity among administrators in higher education leadership. It also provides an understanding of the experiences of department chairs who are understudied in higher



education research. Lastly, it is significant because it uses the theory of performativity as a way to gain insight into the experiences and effects of gender and other aspects of identity on leadership. The theory of performativity has not previously been used in research on department chairs but provides a useful lens through which to understand the role gender plays in higher education leadership. In the next chapter, I share the review of literature for this study.

## Chapter Two: Review of the Literature

This literature review focuses on relevant research related to gender and leadership in higher education in the following ways. In the first section, I explore the theory of performativity and its poststructural roots. In the second section, I review the research on women and gender in leadership, paying particular attention to leadership in higher education contexts. In the third section, I examine the research about department chairs.

### Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework that informs this review of literature is performativity. Performativity falls under the broad umbrella of poststructural theories, and more specifically is considered to be a feminist poststructural theory. Prior to delving into the theory of performativity in detail, I first give a brief overview of feminist poststructuralism to give performativity context.

**Feminist poststructuralism.** There are six primary concepts that are useful in understanding poststructuralism and feminist poststructuralism: discourse, subjectivity, power, knowledge, language, and difference. Discourse in feminist poststructuralism is broadly viewed as “the many and varied influences that are acting on and being expressed in a particular situation” (Ropers-Huilman, 1998, p. 2). Numerous scholars and authors have provided their own definitions of the concept, and many have been influenced by the work of Foucault. Weedon (1997) explained Foucault’s theory of discourse as “ways of constituting knowledge, together with the social practices, forms of subjectivity and power relations which inhere in such knowledges and the relations between them” (p.

105).

Discourse is closely related to the second key concept which is subjectivity. Discourse constructs an individual's sense of self in relation to the world, or subjectivity (Allan, 2010; Weedon, 1997). As discourses shift and change, this sense of self also fluctuates over time and in different contexts. Multiple discourses support or compete with each other, and subjectivities are formed (Allan, 2010). Weedon (1997) stated that "poststructuralism proposes a subjectivity which is precarious, contradictory and in process, constantly being reconstituted in discourse each time we think or speak" (p. 32). Many researchers and activists study discourse because the continual evolution of language, discourse, and subjectivity makes it possible to learn how to resist and reconfigure them to encourage social transformation (Allan, 2010).

The third concept that is important to poststructural theories is power. In his writings about power and its characteristics, Foucault (1978) purported that power does not just belong to those at the apex of institutional systems, but that it is used by individuals at all system levels. This also means that there is not a simple binary of those who have power and those who do not have power as systems are continually evolving and power shifts depending upon the context and situation. Foucault viewed power as a productive force as opposed to a repressive force, "in contrast to traditional configurations of power as omnipotent, coercive, and prohibitive," and he "emphasized the ways in which social change occurs through a myriad of local power exchanges and negotiations within a complex system of discourses (discursive fields)" (Allan, 2010, p. 16).

The fourth concept, knowledge, is inextricably connected to power according to Foucault because “it is in discourse that power and knowledge are joined together” (Foucault, 1978, p. 100). Ropers-Huilman (1998) articulated, “Knowledge that is viewed as complete and true in a given social context varies over time, and those whose knowledge is most highly regarded in any such context are often defined as those with the greatest power” (p. 6). Poststructuralist thinkers posit that there is no one truth that exists, but truth is created and validated by discourse (Allan, 2010). In other words, knowledge and meaning change based upon the social, historical, and political characteristics of the situation that create multiple understandings (Ropers-Huilman, 1998).

Language, as the fifth key concept, is important to feminist poststructuralism because it serves as a basis of analysis, and it is tightly linked to the concepts of power and knowledge. Language does not reflect reality, but rather it produces reality (Weedon, 1997). Poststructuralist theories purport that “language is socially constituted and shaped by the interplay between texts, readers, and larger cultural context rather than carrying any kinds of fixed or inherent meaning that can be ‘discovered’” (Allan, 2010, p. 13). As a social construction, language and meaning are continually changing and shifting. Language is also partial in that there are meanings that cannot be “communicated through the language that we currently use, construct, and understand” (Ropers-Huilman, 1998, p. 8).

The sixth and final concept that I explore in my articulation of feminist poststructuralism is difference. Difference is related to both power and discourse within

poststructural theories. Difference, as originated in Derrida's writings, refers to the opposites and binaries, such as male/female, that are common in Modernist views of reality (Allan, 2010). Ropers-Huilman (1998) explained, "The acceptance of these dualisms as commonsense without problematizing the power relations they establish is a concern of those engaging in poststructural thought" (p. 8). Poststructural theorists work to deconstruct the fundamental suppositions that lie beneath these binaries (Allan, 2010; Ropers-Huilman, 1998).

Poststructuralism and its primary concepts make several claims that are especially useful for feminist analysis and action. According to Weedon (1997), a theory is productive for feminist practice "if it is able to address the questions of how social power is exercised and how social relations of gender, class and race might be transformed" (p. 20). Feminist approaches to research utilize gender and sex as key analytic factors, without discounting other components of identity, and strive to create positive social change (Allan, 2010). There are many different branches of feminist theory, but they all share several common principles (Allan, 2008). The first is that gender and sex inequality exists, and it has a significant impact on relationships and institutions. The second principle is gender and sex inequality and differences are not natural or essential. The third common tenet feminists espouse is that gender and sex inequality should be eradicated. Feminist poststructuralism merges the concepts of poststructuralism with the principles of feminism to create a theory with an activist focus that can be a useful lens to examine complex gender and identity issues (Allan, Iverson, & Ropers-Huilman, 2010).

**Performativity.** Performativity emerged as a theory in 1990 when Judith Butler published an influential book titled, *Gender Trouble*. The theoretical framework of performativity “assumes that gender is socially constructed through ‘gendered performances’” (Lester, 2008, p. 277). Performativity is considered to be grounded in feminist poststructuralism because it posits that language and discourse create, rather than simply reflect, reality (Allan, 2010), and that gendered discourse is not innocent or transparent (Davies & Gannon, 2006).

Other scholars have focused on performative conceptualizations of gender, most notably West and Zimmerman (1987) who proposed a theory called “doing gender.” Researchers have utilized doing gender theory primarily in communication and other areas of research. According to Denker (2009), “Doing gender is important as an analytic lens because it allows individuals to examine the interactions that they have with others, and to look at the words and actions that they use daily to construct, deconstruct, and reconstruct their gender” (p. 103). Gender is present in our behaviors and interactions by what we do as well as in our cognition by what we think (Gherardil, 1994). There are many similarities between the theories of performativity and doing gender, although there are epistemological differences between the two. In simple terms, doing gender is rooted in sociology, the belief that gender is constructed socially through interactions with others; whereas performativity is rooted in psychology because it focuses on the individual, internal process of identity formation from discourses and subject positions, thus resulting in reiterative performances of gender (Kelan, 2009). For the purposes of this literature review, I chose to focus on performativity because of its feminist

poststructural underpinnings and its concepts of resistance and change that are absent in doing gender theory.

In performativity, Butler purports that gender is socially constructed and is both created and perpetuated by repeated gender performances that reify gender norms (Butler, 1990, 1993, 2004). Gender norms are socially generated concepts about the meaning of masculinity and femininity and its relationship to biological sex (Fellabaum, 2011). According to Butler (1993), “Performativity must be understood not as a singular or deliberate ‘act’ but, rather, as the reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names” (p. 2). In other words, performativity is a cyclical process that produces social norms rather than simply reflecting them. Performativity differs from other theories about gender by refuting the ideas that there are certain essential characteristics of women and men or that gender is simply a product of socialization (Hey, 2006) or choice (Butler, 1993).

As in poststructuralism, subjectivity is also an important concept in performativity. Butler posits that individuals become subjects through a process called subjection (also referred to as subjectivity or subjectification). The concept of subjectivity is linked to the concept of discourse. Discourses create meaning and reality, discourses are dynamic and not simply reflective, and discourses help individuals to understand themselves in relationship to the world (Allan, 2010). For example, discourses about leadership teach leaders what and how to do that which is deemed appropriate and acceptable, as well as how to circumvent what is not (Grogan, 2000). Grogan (2000) explained, “We are molded by or subjectified by a discourse in the sense that we learn to

make meaning of our experiences according to the dominant values and beliefs expressed within the discourse” (p. 127). According to performativity, individuals perform gender because they want to be acknowledged as humans or subjects. Fellabaum (2011) purported, “It is through this process of becoming intelligible that we are deemed human; yet this is the same process through which we are oppressed” (p. 130). Subjectification requires external power to dominate and form subjects (Davies, 2006). Subjects can either strengthen or subvert power structures through reiteration and resignification (Salih, 2002), whereby individuals may repeat existing norms through their performances, or they may alter them to give new meaning. The meanings ascribed to gender performances can change over time and context, consequently causing norms to change (Lloyd, 2007).

Gendered performances are present in many, if not all, aspects of daily life. People practice gender through the clothing that they wear and how they speak and interact with others (Lester, 2011). Another illustration is how women and men leaders express emotion in the workplace. For example, in a study of two university presidents, one man and one woman, the faculty member participants reported that when the presidents dealt with stressful situations, the man expressed anger and the woman was described as “emotional” (Richardson & Loubier, 2008). Gender may also be performed in more subtle ways by what people choose not to say in certain contexts if they feel that their words do not fit within gender norms. Another subtle example in the workplace may be not attending certain meetings or social gatherings because individuals do not feel



comfortable and accepted because of their gender or other aspects of their identity.

Silence and absence are also a part of gendered performances.

There are several key concepts that help to elucidate the theory of performativity: identity, agency, and power. Identity, or how individuals understand themselves in relation to others, is constructed through discourse. Identity is not fixed, but is rather a process that is subject to change, and multiple identities subsist at the same time depending upon the situation (Lester, 2011). Identity is related to subjectivity in that discourses make particular subject positions possible. The possible subject positions are then the foundation upon which identities are shaped. Kelan (2009) explained, “Which kind of gender identities can be formed depends on which subject positions are opened up by Discourse” (p. 47).

Agency is defined as how individuals choose to contextually perform their identities. These choices can range across a spectrum of rational and intentional to unconscious and nonintentional (Martin, 2003). Agency is limited by accepted norms of gendered behavior, and individuals apply agency by either obeying the norms, resisting against them (Martin, 2006), or creating new performances. Reflexivity is another important concept related to agency. To practice gender reflexively means to be thoughtful and careful about the intent, content, and impact of actions, behaviors, and context (Martin, 2003). The extent to which gender is practiced reflexively varies greatly by individual and context; some may rarely think about gender in their actions, while others may be reflexive about the impact of gender at least in some instances. Martin (2003) posited, “As a rule, people with less privilege are more reflexive about their

actions than are those with more privilege. Thus, because women occupy a subordinate status, they may be more reflexive about gender” (p. 357).

The third concept in performativity, power, refers to the gender regulations that function to restrict the agency of individuals or their ability to choose to perform their gender in ways that stray from or conform to expected behaviors. Lester (2011) explained, “Simply, certain identities are aligned with power and considered more contextually appropriate thus limiting the scope of agency and identity” (p. 144). Within the concept of power, Butler (2004) also defined a term called regulatory power, one that she adapted from Foucault’s writings, as “the alignment of norms and power” (Lester, 2011, p. 145). Regulatory powers impact women leaders in numerous ways. Women are judged by gendered expectations of how they should speak and behave as leaders. If they fall outside of the cultural norms, they may be viewed as ineffective or be subject to discrimination, sexual harassment, or incivility. For women of color, regulatory powers also may include racism, isolation, and tokenism. In the next section of my literature review, I use the three key concepts of performativity which are identity, agency, and power to organize the literature about women and gender in leadership.

### **Women and Gender in Leadership**

Views of leadership have evolved and changed over time. Until recent history, the traditional concept of a leader was that of a “great man,” a charismatic, heroic, and skilled individual who was successful no matter the context (Birnbaum, 1988). In the last two decades, researchers have shifted how they study and view leadership. Kezar, Carducci, and Contreras-McGavin (2006) stated, “Moving away from static, highly

structured, and value-neutral leadership frameworks, contemporary scholars have embraced dynamic, globalized, and process-oriented perspectives of leadership that emphasize cross-cultural understanding, collaboration, and social responsibility for others” (p. 2). More recent conceptions of leadership emphasize teamwork, collaboration, empowerment, support, engagement, and less hierarchy (Hammer & Champy, 1994; Kanter, 1997; Senge, 1994). These newer conceptions of leadership are more inclusive of stereotypically feminine ways of being; however, scholars acknowledge that effective leadership has historically been viewed in stereotypically masculine ways that are persistent and remain strong (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Isaac, Griffin, & Carnes, 2010; Johnson, Murphy, Zewdie, & Reichard, 2008).

This section is organized by the three key concepts of performativity and how they are examined in the leadership literature. While very few leadership studies specifically use the theory of performativity, these individual concepts are found in a variety of studies. The literature on leadership is extensive and originates from a broad spectrum of fields and disciplines. This review is not comprehensive in nature, but rather focuses on these key areas. Whenever possible, I draw upon literature from higher education; I also include relevant research from other fields as well.

The first key concept of performativity is identity, and the section on identity that follows contains research about the leadership identities of women and the discourses that shape women leaders’ identities. The second section on agency focuses on literature about how leaders perform their roles and includes studies on leadership style and leadership effectiveness examined by gender. The third concept is power, including

regulatory power. Within the section, I highlight the scholarship about the three primary types of regulatory powers that affect women leaders: (1) gendered expectations of leaders; (2) bias, discrimination, and harassment; and (3) racism, isolationism, and tokenism.

**Identity.** Identity, within the context of performativity, refers to how individuals understand themselves in relation to others and the world. Individuals have multiple identities that can shift over time, depending upon the situation (Lester, 2011).

Subjectivity directly impacts identity because of the subject positions that are made available through discourses. The subject positions then serve as the foundation upon which identities are formed. This examination of identity in the leadership literature begins with an overview of the scholarship and the complex ways that women negotiate their identities as leaders. This section also includes research on the discourse of women in leadership because language and discourse shape identity, gender, and organizations.

Most studies about leadership and diversity examine one or two characteristics of diversity and do not consider the impacts of intersecting identities, or intersectionality (Richardson & Loubier, 2008). Intersectionality theory is important to utilize when studying leadership because singular aspects of identity do not fully represent the complexity of the experiences of women leaders. Sanchez-Hucles and Davis (2010) explained, “These dimensions of diversity mediate decisions to become leaders, styles of leadership and collaboration, and how women leaders perceive themselves and are recognized by others” (p. 176).

There are some notable examples of research that employs intersectionality theory in the higher education literature. The first was a qualitative study of 12 African-American female college presidents conducted by Waring (2003). The researcher paid particular attention to how gender, race, social class, and educational background interacted to influence the women's perceptions of themselves as leaders and their views of leadership. Most of the presidents responded that both race and gender were significant to their leadership identity both separately and together. The majority of the African-American women presidents in the study stated that because of their race and gender, they had to spend more time thinking about how they present themselves and their ideas. Many also felt that they are held to higher standards of acceptability and consensus than their White male counterparts. Interestingly, aspects of class were not found to be strong identity factors for these women.

Another example is a study of intersectionality and higher education leadership that was a qualitative study of 12 Black women leaders from historically Black institutions of higher education (Gaetane, Williams, & Sherman, 2009). Through the narratives of the 12 women, the researchers searched for themes related to the intersection of race, gender, and leadership. Despite facing institutional racism and sexism, the Black women in the study persisted and succeeded. The researchers found that the participants' leadership styles tended to focus on collaborative leadership and consensus building. Several of the women who participated explained that "how they lead involves the collective efforts to include other voices in decision making, connection to communities, and their awareness of inequities in educational and leadership practices"

(Gaetane et al., 2009, p. 577). Despite their focus on intersectionality, the authors do not clearly articulate the nature of the intersections other than to state that race and gender were both salient to the women's leadership identity and practices.

A final example of a study that utilized intersectionality was an examination of women in higher education leadership. Enke (2011) conducted a qualitative study of eight women senior administrators at liberal arts colleges to learn more about how the women's identities affected their leadership. Participants felt that their multiple identities made them more effective and thoughtful leaders. The women appeared to be very aware of their situational contexts, their positions in various groups, and what aspects of their identities they could utilize, using this information to adjust their communication approach to each situation. The women in the study were also mindful of how their identities affected their interactions at work. Enke (2011) stated, "Most often, participants perceived that identities that made them different on their campus were the most important to their interactions with others" (p. 164), although the participants also acknowledged that certain identities helped them to fit in at their institutions. The women in this study perceived that their identities and gender intersected and interacted to mediate their enactments of leadership.

Also important to this discussion of identity is the literature related to discourse and women in leadership because discourse helps to shape and forms identity. Discourse is fluid and changes over time and in different contexts, just as identity does. The research about discourse and women generally depicts women as caring and relational leaders. While these characteristics are commonly viewed as positive, these perceptions

may have negative consequences for the advancement of women in leadership because of the lower levels of power and status attributed to these characteristics.

The literature on discourse and women in leadership falls into two broad categories. The first category is analysis of discourse *about* women leaders. The discourse about leaders and leadership helps to construct dominant images of men and women in leadership positions. The second category of leadership discourse research is analysis of discourse *from* women leaders which reflects how women leaders view themselves and their roles.

An informative study on the discourse *about* women leaders in higher education was conducted by Gordon, Iverson, and Allan (2010). Through a discourse analysis of 250 articles and opinion pieces in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* over one year, the researchers examined the discourses about women in leadership. They found that two dominant discourses of femininity were portrayed in the writings: the discourse of women as caregivers, mothers, and wives (caretaker leaders) and the discourse of women as fearful or threatened (vulnerable leaders). Two other portrayals of women leaders emerged as well – that of a relational leader who is depicted as collaborative and participatory and that of a social justice leader who advocates for others. The researchers conclude that the images of women leaders as caretakers or in distress negatively impact others' perceptions of women's leadership effectiveness which in turn can become institutionalized barriers for women's development and advancement. The findings from this study illustrate that current discourses about leadership in higher education continue

to reinforce images and ideas that can negatively impact women who lead or aspire to lead.

Richardson and Loubier (2008) also examined what people say *about* leaders. The researchers interviewed six faculty members at a regional university about the leadership style and effectiveness of two of the institution's presidents. The most recent past president was male, the current president was female, and all of the participants worked for both leaders. The findings from the study indicated that the perceptions of the leaders' identities were formed by many factors including race, gender, and age, as well as education, work experience, and values. Most of the participants reported that they perceived differences between female and male leadership identities, but they also responded that there were no consistently different behaviors between female and male leaders. Richardson and Loubier reported one noticeable difference in the language used to describe the leaders' performance of emotions. They explained, "When describing leader behavior displayed in moments of stress, that was a departure from the leader's normal demeanor, participants labeled the male as angry and the female as emotional" (Richardson & Loubier, 2008, p. 152). They also found that all of the participants described the male president in more agentic terms (assertive, independent) and the female president in more communal terms (collaborative, concern for others). Eagly's work related to social role theory (Eagly, 1987; Eagly & Carli, 2003; Eagly & Karau, 2002) supports these findings. Eagly's theory "asserts that the activation of beliefs about women and men by gender-related cues influences people to perceive individual women as communal but not very agentic and individual men as agentic but not very communal"



(Eagly & Carli, 2003, p. 818). Stereotype research by Deaux and Kite (1993) also supports this assertion as the findings suggest that individuals do perceive women to be more communal than men and men to be more agentic than women.

The second category of leadership discourse research is discourse *from* women leaders. Researchers have learned that women's discourse about leadership differs from the dominant masculine discourse of leadership. Isaac, Behar-Horenstein, and Koro-Ljungberg (2009) studied 10 women deans; half of the participants were from majority male faculty colleges, and the other half were from predominantly female faculty colleges. The deans were interviewed about leadership and power. The authors found that the women's language frequently contained references to the discourse of achievement and hierarchy, discourses viewed as more masculine in nature. The use of language that conveyed masculine discourses may, in part, be the result of the women deans' mentors as all of them were men. More feminine discourses about service, cooperation, and the greater good were also common. The dissonance between feminine and masculine discourses of leadership was also found to cause internal conflict for the women deans. The authors stated, "This incongruence split their language and identities into labeled positive and negative traits where the masculine dominated the feminine" (Isaac et al., 2009, p. 148-149.) The authors argued that the identities of a leader are not confined to binaries such as masculine/feminine or power/powerlessness, but rather are fluid and unfold to create more complex conceptualizations of women leaders.

**Agency.** Agency, as a concept within the theory of performativity, is defined as how individuals perform their identities in different contexts. The research literature that

is relevant to this concept focuses on the leadership styles and behaviors by gender, and the consequent leadership effectiveness of women.

***Leadership Styles.*** Scholars still disagree as to whether or not men and women perform different leadership styles despite much research on the topic. In a meta-analysis of 45 studies from business and educational sectors, Eagly, Johannesen-Schmidt, and van Engen (2003) examined leadership styles, which the researchers defined as “relatively stable patterns of behavior displayed by leaders” (p. 569). They found that women leaders were more transformational in leadership style than men. Some examples of behaviors of transformational leaders are to motivate and empower their followers toward common goals, communicate values and purpose with enthusiasm, and innovate new solutions to problems (Avolio & Bass, 2002; Bass, 1985). Men leaders tended to be more transactional and laissez faire in their style of leadership (Eagly et al., 2003). Transactional leaders manage, reward, and correct followers in a more traditional, supervisory sense, whereas laissez-faire leaders are hands off and fail to manage when most needed (Avolio & Bass, 2002; Bass, 1985). The differences in leadership style between genders were small, but consistent. Lastly, a study by Enke (2011) of women senior administrators in higher education found that the participants defined leadership through terminology related to transformational leadership and emphasized tools such as collaboration, consensus, and relationships. These findings are consistent with previous research on gender and leadership style.

Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt (2001) posited that similarities and differences in leadership styles can vary depending upon the context. Findings from experimental

laboratory settings tend to find more gender stereotypical leadership styles for men and women. The authors suggested that this may be because the people do not know one another, causing an increase in the influence of gender roles on behavior. Studies in natural settings have found less gender stereotypical leadership behavior among leaders, possibly because the long-term leadership roles and relationships lessen the influence of gender roles. The authors found that much of the research fails to recognize the complexities of gender differences in leadership style. Their examination of different leadership styles and gender found that women tend to be more democratic in leadership style, and the authors suggest this may be because women face negative feedback if they use a more assertive style.

Other researchers claim that male and female leaders do not significantly differ in their leadership style (Dobbins & Platz, 1986; van Engen, van der Leeden, & Willemsen, 2001). Dobbins and Platz's (1986) meta-analysis of eight leadership style studies was influential in its time and has been widely cited in the literature. They found that there was no difference between male and female leaders in the leadership behaviors of initiating and consideration (Dobbins & Platz, 1986). Scholars such as Eagly and Carli (2003) have since raised numerous concerns about the validity of the results, citing inadequate search procedures for relevant articles, the inclusion of articles with research designs that should not have been used to illustrate sex differences in leadership, and inadequate coding and analysis of included studies.

***Leadership Effectiveness.*** Another body of literature related to agency is that of leadership effectiveness. Research on leadership effectiveness examines how individuals

perform their leadership roles and to what extent they are perceived to be effective in those roles. Studies on leadership effectiveness and gender are also inconclusive even though the topic has been examined extensively. Most studies utilize subjective evaluations of leadership effectiveness, relying on scores from followers, colleagues, and supervisors as well as self-reported measures from leaders. These types of evaluations most closely mirror the types of evaluations that are used for the hiring and promotion of leaders, and are therefore the most relevant to this literature review. Leadership effectiveness studies can broadly be divided into two main categories: research that finds that women are more effective leaders than men and research that indicates no correlation between leadership effectiveness and gender.

Several literature reviews, meta-analyses, and large-scale studies have found that women are more effective leaders than their men counterparts, in many cases because present-day organizations require leadership styles that are more likely to be performed by women. Additionally, researchers have found that transformational leadership styles are related to greater leadership effectiveness and women's leadership styles are more transformational in nature; therefore, women have an advantage in leadership effectiveness over men.

Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt (2001) investigated leadership style and effectiveness by comparing gender and ratings on the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), the most commonly used instrument to measure transformational, transactional, and laissez-faire leadership styles. The data were collected from a sample of 9,000 managers that were gathered to create norms for the MLQ. The researchers

found that women managers surpassed men managers in three key aspects of transformational leadership. Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt (2001) explained:

These findings suggest that the female managers, more than the male managers, (1) manifested attributes that motivated their followers to feel respect and pride because of their association with them, (2) showed optimism and excitement about future goals, and (3) attempted to develop and mentor followers and attend to their individual needs. (p. 791)

Women were also found to utilize contingent rewards, a component of transactional leadership, more than men. In other words, the women managers were more likely than men managers to reward their subordinates for good performance.

Based upon the results of their research, Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt (2001) suggested that female managers may be perceived as more effective, in part, because of the problems caused by the more laissez-faire style of the male managers in the studies. Conversely, the female managers' style of transformational leadership and contingent reward was found to be more effective. The authors found that the transformational leadership style used by more women leaders than men leaders was more effective, and thus gave women a managerial edge. They surmised, however, that there may be continued reluctance on the part of men in higher leadership roles to adopt the transformational leadership style, and that men may be threatened by women who bring this style into traditionally male-dominated settings that are accustomed to a more laissez-faire style.

In a meta-analysis of 39 leadership studies, Lowe, Kroeck, and Sivasubramaniam (1996) found positive associations between leadership effectiveness and the aspects of transformational leadership in addition to the contingent rewards portion of transactional leadership. Specifically, a leader's charisma, willingness to treat individual followers with respect, and level of encouraging followers to use their own intellectual curiosity in addressing issues were all positively associated with leadership effectiveness.

Interestingly, these components of leadership and effectiveness were the exact same ones that women managers scored more highly in than men in the two meta-analyses discussed previously, thus supporting the style and effectiveness findings. In a review of the literature on gender and leadership, Appelbaum, Audet, and Miller (2003) concurred that there are differences between men's and women's leadership styles, and women's styles are more effective based upon the needs of contemporary organizations.

In the higher education sector, women leaders have been found to be as effective or more effective than their male counterparts. In a study of 22 deans and directors (16 males and six females) at a large research university, Rosser (2001) asked faculty and staff to rate the leadership effectiveness of their administrators. Over 850 subordinate respondents scored the female deans as more effective in all seven leadership categories, including "vision and goal setting, management of the unit, support for institutional diversity, interpersonal relationships, the quality of education in the unit, communication skills, and research and community/ professional endeavors" (Rosser, 2001, p. 10-11). Women deans were rated most highly in the areas of communication skills, research and community/professional endeavors, interpersonal relationships, and management of the

unit, although the data were not tested for statistical significance. Rosser posits that the findings from the study provide evidence that women do have the qualities for effective leadership and that perceived differences between leadership and gender should not be overemphasized.

Other researchers have found no relationship between leader effectiveness and gender. Dobbins and Platz's (1986) meta-analysis was mentioned in the previous section on leadership style. To examine sex differences in leadership effectiveness, the researchers analyzed 16 studies of leadership effectiveness. They found that male leaders are perceived as more effective than female leaders, but only in controlled laboratory experiments, and that male and female leaders are equally effective according to subordinates' ratings (Dobbins & Platz, 1986). Powell (1990), in a review of research on sex differences and leadership, concluded that overall, there are no sex differences in managerial behavior or effectiveness ratings. While these two studies indicate that there is no relationship between gender and effectiveness, their age and methodologies call that conclusion into question in light of more recent and thorough research on the topic. It is still important to be aware of these studies and this viewpoint because they are still cited in the literature.

**Power.** Power, as the third key concept in performativity, is also an important component of the leadership literature and discourse. There are many different definitions and perceptions of power. Foucault (1978) articulated a noteworthy conception of power that focused on the productive rather than repressive aspects of power, while acknowledging that power both benefits some and oppresses others. Power is not owned

or held by individuals, but moves through and is exercised by individuals at all levels of systems (Ropers-Huilman, 1998). Enke (2011) explained, “According to Foucault, we are all involved in spheres of power all of the time because we are all involved in discourse production and reproduction, which in turn restricts and allows particular ways of thinking, feeling, and acting” (p. 42).

Allen (1999) highlighted power as a concept specifically within feminist theory. She described three different ways of understanding power: (a) “power as a positive social good, a resource, the distribution of which among men and women is currently unequal”; (b) “power...as a relation – specifically a relation of (male) domination and (female) subordination”; and (c) “power as empowerment or transformation” (p. 7). Allen argued that all three of these understandings are incomplete, do not provide a clear image of the experiences of women, and overstate singular features of power. Rather, she articulated a feminist concept of power that underscored the complexity and interactions between domination and empowerment. Allen’s definition of power is “the ability or capacity of an actor or set of actors to act” (p. 127). Within her conceptualization of power, she also articulated three key power terms. The first is power-over, which is the “ability of an actor or set of actors to constrain the choices available to another actor or set of actors in a nontrivial way” (p. 123). Allen was careful to clarify that power-over does not necessarily refer to conscious strategies or intentionality because power is commonly used in “routine or unconsidered ways” (p. 124) even by those who try not to enact it. The second power term is power-to. Allen defined power-to as “the ability of an individual actor to attain an end or series of ends” (p. 126). Power-to, as a concept,



addresses feminist concerns for empowerment and resistance. The third key power term is power-with, defined as “the collective ability or capacity to act together so as to attain some common or shared end” (p. 127). Power-with, therefore, addresses the feminist ideal of solidarity, activism, and collective empowerment. Allen’s definition of power that combined all three of these key terms provides a more complex and nuanced conceptualization of power that is useful for feminist theorists.

In studies about school leaders, gender, and power (Brunner & Schumaker, 1998; Brunner, 2000), Brunner conceptualized two uses of power, including “power over (ability to influence people to agree with decisions made by those in powerful positions or roles)” and “power to (ability to achieve desired outcomes which the organization tries to obtain)” (Brunner & Schumaker, 1998, p. 134). Brunner’s studies found that gender strongly indicated which of the two conceptions of power an individual ascribed to in their leadership role; women were more likely to conceptualize power as power to, and men were more likely to conceptualize power as power over (Brunner & Schumaker, 1998). Other scholars purport that women tend to conceptualize power as connectedness, or power with as opposed to the tendency for men to dominate and exercise power over (AhNee-Benham & Cooper, 1998). In a study of 20 women students in an educational leadership program, de Casal and Mulligan (2004) found that the women perceived differences between their conceptions of power and those of men. The key perceptions were: (a) men view power as a given right, and women must work to deserve it; (b) women view power with negative connotations, and also as a means of empowerment; (c) power and leadership are synonymous to men, and power means control/domination; and

(d) women emphasize the communal and cooperative nature of leadership. The authors purported that the significant differences in conceptions of power between men and women may make it more difficult for women to succeed in contexts and systems that are dominated by men.

In considering the concept of power, performativity theory emphasizes the importance of regulatory powers. According to Butler (2004), when norms and power align, the outcome is regulatory powers that function to restrict the agency of individuals or their ability to choose to perform their gender in ways that stray from expected behaviors. The following subsections provide an overview of the literature on three main ways that regulatory powers impact women in leadership: 1) gendered expectations of leaders; 2) bias, discrimination, and sexual harassment; and 3) racism, tokenism, and isolationism.

***Gendered expectations of leaders.*** One reason fewer women are in leadership roles may be due to what Eagly and Karau (2002) described as problems with role congruity between gender roles and leadership roles. Socially constructed gender roles exert a regulatory power over people's expectations about the behavior of women and men. Eagly (1987) explained, "These beliefs are more than beliefs about the attributes of women and men: Many of these expectations are normative in the sense that they describe qualities or behavioral tendencies believed to be desirable for each sex" (p. 14). Specifically, Eagly and Karau argue that people continue to expect women to exhibit communal qualities (e.g. concern for others), whereas men are expected to have agentic qualities (e.g. assertiveness and independence). They also argue that many leadership

roles come with the expectation of an agentic leader, and women's communal qualities may be perceived to be incongruent with what is required of them to be successful leaders. Contextual factors of the particular leader and gender roles in a situation can impact the extent of the perceived incongruity between the two roles (Eagly et al., 2003; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Heilman, 2001). The perception of role incongruity is then likely to produce bias and prejudice toward women leaders in two key ways. The first is that women's potential for leadership is evaluated more harshly than men's. The second is that women's enactment of agentic leadership behaviors is also judged negatively, resulting in more negative evaluations (Eagly & Karau, 2002).

Gendered expectations also include the emotions that we expect leaders to express. Researchers have found that expressing emotions affects women and men differently. For example, exhibiting anger is viewed as acceptable for men (Brody, 2000); however, if women show anger, there will likely be negative social consequences for that expression (Eagly & Steffen, 1986; Zammuner, 2000). Researchers have also learned that women believe expressions of anger are less appropriate than men do (K. C. Smith et al., 1989). Certain emotional expressions have been found to be more common for women than men, such as crying and smiling, and gender norms, expectations, and socialization are part of the cause (Eagly, 1987; LaFrance & Hecht, 2000; Vingerhoets & Scheirs, 2000). Men more than woman have been shown to use humor in the workplace (Decker & Rotondo, 2001).

Ragins and Winkel (2011) argued that emotional expressions may be a crucial component of why there are power differences by gender in the workplace. Women and

men are expected to exhibit different emotions. Women are expected to be nurturing and compassionate; men are expected to be proud and confident. The emotions that women are expected to demonstrate may put them at a leadership disadvantage, unlike men's expected emotions. For example, in laboratory studies, participants conferred less status to individuals who conveyed sadness than those who conveyed anger (Tiedens, 2001).

Emotions are influenced by power. Women managers may have less status and power because of their gender (Ridgeway, 2001). Individuals with power have been found to have greater flexibility to express emotions, both positive and negative, and they have more leeway in how they react to other's emotions. This gives men, who currently hold more leadership positions, more influence on what emotional expressions are to be associated with positions of power. Power also impacts people's perceptions of emotions expressed by others because people expect low status individuals to display powerless emotions such as fear and sadness (Conway, DiFazio, & Mayman, 1999). Ragins and Winkel (2011) posited:

The gendering of emotion may be a critical component that creates, sustains and amplifies the barriers faced by women seeking to break through the glass ceiling, as well as by those at lower ranks who struggle with the everyday labyrinth of organizational life. (p. 389)

***Bias, discrimination, and sexual harassment.*** Another set of regulatory powers that impact women in leadership is bias, discrimination, and sexual harassment. Heilman (2001) proposed one of the foremost reasons for the paucity of women in leadership is gender bias in evaluation. Women are not only judged on their competence; they are also

judged on how well they conform to expected gender stereotypes. Gender stereotypes are descriptive and prescriptive in that they describe differences between men and women, and they determine acceptable norms of gendered behavior (Heilman, 2001). Description-based bias occurs when hiring and promotion decisions are made based upon assumptions about characteristics of women in combination with stereotypes about men and what it takes to be a good manager or leader. When there is a perceived lack of fit between these two assumptions, the person is not expected to successfully perform in the position.

Prescription-based bias occurs when women perform successfully in a leadership position and therefore violate the gender stereotype norms. Heilman (2001) articulated, “Although there is a good fit between what a woman is perceived to be like and what the job is perceived to entail, there is a bad fit between what the woman is perceived to be like and the conceptions of what she *should* be like” (p. 661). When women in leadership do not conform to gender stereotypes, they may experience censure and negative consequences for their behavior that may impact their ability to advance.

Women must also deal with sexual harassment at work in the academy.

Disparities of power within higher education lead to patterns of harassment (Buzzanell, 2004). In an semi-autoethnographical study, Gardner (2009) analyzed the cultural aspects of higher education that encourage sexual harassment as well as silence about sexual harassment. She integrated her experiences of being harassed in graduate school with relevant literature. Gardner’s examination of the issue from a cultural perspective is helpful in understanding the institutional and systemic roots of harassment. According to Conrad and Taylor (1994), there are three characteristics of organizations that make them

susceptible to harassment. The first is a task and organizational structure that is vertical and bureaucratic in nature. The second is the isolation of possible victims of harassment, and the third is unequal power relationships between individuals. All of these characteristics are common in institutions of higher education.

Researchers have documented that the regulatory powers of bias, discrimination, and harassment exist on university and college campuses. These types of regulatory powers may be contributing factors in the underrepresentation of women in higher education leadership. Women may face bias that inhibits their advancement or they may choose not to pursue leadership positions because of the discrimination and harassment they may experience in their departments or units.

***Racism, tokenism, and isolationism.*** Women of color in leadership face additional challenges that include isolation, tokenism, and subtle to overt racism. Eagly and Chin (2010) explained, “The potential for prejudice is present when social perceivers hold a stereotype about a social group that is incongruent with the attributes that they believe are required for success in leadership roles” (p. 217). Most of the studies about racism and gender in higher education focus on faculty, with very few studies that examine the racism experienced by leaders. There are, however, a few studies that address the problem of the double oppression of women leaders of color (Hill Collins, 2000; Hune, 1998; Waring, 2003; Wolfman, 1997). Myers (2002), in a study of African American faculty and administrators in the academy, found that the main cause of stress for these leaders in both historically White and Black institutions was racism and sexism. While overt experiences of racism may be on the decline, women of color now have to

contend with more covert forms of racism such as bias and prejudice that remain unseen to many White people (Bonilla-Silva, 1997, 2003; Sears & Henry, 2003).

Tokenism is the limited inclusion of individuals from oppressed and marginalized groups so as to give the appearance of diversity, access, and participation. Freire (1993) described tokenism as a way to regulate and maintain the allegiance of the oppressed. Niemann (1999) purported that a result of tokenism is being extremely visible at some times and invisible at other times, a concept that McKay (1983) also described as the “pressure of a double-edged sword: simultaneously, a perverse visibility and a convenient invisibility” (p. 144). This vacillation between being “shown off like a trophy,” frequently being asked to present the “other’s” view, and simply being ignored or marginalized takes its toll, and the consequences of tokenism for women leaders of color can be harmful (Wolfman, 1997). Wolfman (1997) argued,

Because there are so few women in this position, they are overused to such an extent that they become overwhelmed before they are allowed to acquire sufficient knowledge of the nuances and intricacies of their administrative positions to function efficiently. Often these female administrators are given more responsibility than power, with little support from their superiors. (p. 175)

As a regulatory power, tokenism is a way to control women leaders of color by relegating them to the sidelines or bringing them into the spotlight when convenient. In this way, tokenism constrains the performances and advancement of women in leadership.

Isolation can also be viewed as a regulatory power for women of color who are isolated from both other women as well as men in the academy (Wolfman, 1997). They

may often be the only woman and/or person of color in their departments or units, adding to feelings of loneliness. In a qualitative study in which she interviewed 64 women faculty of color, Turner (2002) found that participants felt both isolated and not respected for their contributions. The women of color also reported that they often felt overused by committee and service demands, similar to the highlighted literature on tokenism. Additionally, the women faculty of color felt that White women are doing better than people of color in the academy, and “women faculty of color cannot always expect support from their female colleagues” (Turner, 2002, p. 80). This lack of support from other women may also add to feelings of isolation.

Performativity utilizes these three concepts, identity, agency, and power, to help dissect and understand how the dynamics of gendered expectations are constructed and change over time (Lester, 2011). Through this theoretical lens, scholars and leaders can gain a more nuanced understanding of how the concepts of gender and leadership interact to result in the gender inequities in higher education leadership. Performativity may also provide insights for how to decrease this inequity.

### **Department Chairs and Higher Education Leadership**

In this section, I highlight research about department chairs in higher education. I chose to narrow my focus to the position of department chair because most of the recent empirical research on leadership in higher education has studied presidents and deans. In addition, the department chair position is regarded by scholars as the most common and important first step on the higher education administrative ladder (Gonzalez, 2001; Hecht et al., 1999; Hecht, 2007; McDade, 1987). In order to better understand how gender may



be performed and perceived at the department level, it is necessary to learn about the position itself. This section is organized into three topics: the department chair role and identity, a profile of department chairs, and the challenges associated with the role.

**Department Chair Role and Identity.** The role of department chair is essential to the work of universities. Wolverton and Ackerman (2006) stated, “The vast majority of decisions in any academic enterprise are made at the departmental level” (p. 14). A common statistic cited in the literature is that departments make almost 80% of administrative decisions in institutions of higher education (Gmelch, 1991; Wolverton, Gmelch, Wolverton, & Sarros, 1999; Woodburne, 1958). Chairs have a broad range of duties across multiple areas with often competing interests. These traditionally include departmental governance, instruction, faculty issues, student affairs, external relations, resource allocation and budgets, office management, and professional development (Tucker, 1992). Today’s chairs also have new and emerging responsibilities, particularly those related to the accountability movement despite declining fiscal support (Lees, 2006). Accountability duties for chairs include assessment, faculty workload, external program review, faculty evaluation and post-tenure review, civic engagement, and compliance issues. Lees (2006) predicts that chairs will need to continue to be more proactive and entrepreneurial in procuring funds for the department through not only fundraising, but through the development of programs and partnerships with the broader community; chairs will also be required to play a larger role in student recruitment and retention than in the past.

The responsibilities of department chairs can be grouped into four major categories or roles: faculty developer, manager, leader, and scholar (Gmelch & Miskin, 1993). As a faculty developer, the chair is responsible for recruitment, selection, and performance evaluation of departmental faculty. In addition to these specific tasks, the chair must also work to maintain and improve faculty morale and development. The second role, manager, encompasses the day-to-day operations necessary to keep the department operating smoothly. It takes up the most time and is commonly the least liked of the four (Gmelch & Miskin, 2011). Duties include supervising staff, balancing budgets, recordkeeping, and report writing. Department chairs must also be able to look beyond the short-term managerial tasks to the long-term planning and development of the department in the third role of leader. They must communicate a strong and consistent vision and mission for the department (Thomas & Schuh, 2004). As a leader, the chair works with external stakeholders, representing the interests of the department to ensure that both the department and its members receive an appropriate and fair share of resources (Gmelch & Miskin, 1993; Leaming, 2007). The roles of manager and leader continue to grow in complexity with the increasing demands for accountability and the necessity of finding new departmental revenue sources (Lees, 2006). The last of the four roles is that of scholar. In addition to all of the departmental responsibilities, chairs also may continue to teach and advise students. They may also strive to remain current in their disciplines and maintain a research agenda, particularly if they plan to return to their faculty status after their chair term, as most do.

The immense array of department chair duties requires an equally impressive number of skills. Chu (2006) explained, “From the very first day, new chairs find that the disciplinary and scholarly skills that were primary criteria for career success as faculty members have little to do with the new requirements of managing and leading academic departments” (p. 13). Bowman (2002) purported that “the real work of academic chairs demands a diverse set of leadership capabilities: well-honed communication skills, problem-solving skills, conflict-resolution skills, cultural-management skills, coaching skills, and transition-management skills” (p. 161). This daunting account of the responsibilities and the skills needed to perform the duties illustrates the complexities of the role of department chair.

Department chairs differ in how they view themselves and their roles as faculty members and administrators. In a study of 800 department chairs at randomly selected research and doctoral-granting institutions, Wolverton et al. (1999) found that 43% of the department chairs viewed themselves as primarily faculty members despite their administrative role, and only 4% thought they were solely administrators. The remainder, or about 50%, felt that they were an equal combination of administrator and faculty roles. The preference for some to view themselves as faculty first is not surprising given that department chairs are socialized into their discipline and the faculty ranks for an average of 16 years prior to becoming chair (Carroll, 1991). Researchers speculate that a preference for the faculty role may be why the majority of chairs (64.7%) return to faculty status after their term, while only 18.7% go on to another administrative position

(Carroll & Wolverton, 2004; Carroll, 1991). The rest of the chairs retired, left higher education, died, or took sabbatical leave.

The roles and responsibilities of department chairs are broad, complex, and ever-changing. Chairs must be skilled leaders to successfully negotiate the competing interests of their administrative and faculty roles. To understand the role of department chair more fully, I now address the profile of the role and who becomes chair.

**Department Chairs Profile.** Relatively few demographic data exist on department chairs (Chamberlain, 2001; Niemeier & Gonzalez, 2004). This is surprising because chairs are the most numerous of academic administrators, and there are almost 50,000 department chairs in the United States system of higher education (Gmelch & Miskin, 2004). The National Center for Education Statistics collects data on postsecondary faculty, but department chairs are aggregated with other administrative positions such as deans and directors (National Center for Education Statistics, 2004). There are a few state-wide and national studies; however, each study focuses on one particular institutional type: (a) community colleges; (b) regional comprehensive universities; and (c) research/doctoral-granting institutions.

In the community college sector, Smith and Stewart (1998) surveyed new department and division chairs in Texas community colleges. The focus of their study was perceptions of the transition into the department chair role, but they also collected demographic data. Of the 99 identified new chairs during the 1995-96 academic year, 59 responded to the survey. The researchers found that 39% of the new community college chairs were female. Forty-four percent of the chairs were 50-59 years old, and 40.7%

were 40-49 years old. Lastly, the majority of new chairs were White (71.2%), and 10.2% self-reported as Black (the remainder of respondents were not identified by ethnicity in the article). Smith and Stewart also learned that 59% of the respondents remained in the department chair position for longer than two years; 12% were chair for one year, and 29% were chair for two years.

In the regional comprehensive institutions sector, Chu and Veregge (2002) studied California State University system department chairs; they sent out 850 surveys to 23 campuses and received 425 responses in this large-scale research project. The researchers found that 34% of the chairs were female. One noteworthy omission is that the survey did not contain demographic questions about the chairs' race or ethnicity. The majority of the regional comprehensive institution chairs reported being 50-59 years old (55%), while 24% were 60 or older, and 20% were 40-49 years old. Chair turnover was also high in this institutional sector with one-fifth of chairs leaving their positions each year.

In the research and doctoral-granting institutions sector, the most recent national data on department chairs was collected in 2000. Niemeier and Gonzalez (2004) surveyed Association of American Universities (AAU) department chairs and received 2,817 responses. At the time, the AAU comprised 63 leading research universities in the United States and Canada. The researchers found that most department chairs were White, full professors, and men. Women chaired 17.5% of departments, while fewer than 10% of chairs identified themselves as a racial or ethnic minority. When disaggregated by discipline, the representation of women changes predictably. In the humanities, women

chaired 31.5% of departments. In the sciences, women were less than 10% of chairs. Almost three-fourths of all department chairs were full professors. Interestingly, a higher percentage of women chairs were associate or assistant professors than their men counterparts (25% versus 12%). Niemeier and Gonzalez (2004) caution, "Since promotion to chair is likely to interfere with scholarly productivity, this is not necessarily a good sign if it occurs too early in a career" (p. 160). A move to chair prior to full professor status may also cause authority issues with department faculty because senior faculty members may not respect the authority of a junior faculty member (Carroll & Wolverton, 2004).

One other noteworthy national study of department chairs at research and doctoral-granting institutions was conducted by Carroll in 1991. It is essential to consider the age of the study when applying the findings, but similar research has not been conducted more recently. Carroll's study focused on the career paths of department chairs; 808 department chairs were surveyed, and 564 responded. Carroll found that women receive their bachelor's degrees at approximately the same mean age as their male counterparts; however, at every subsequent academic career milestone, including master's degree, doctoral degree, assistant professor, associate professor, tenure, and full professor, women were older than men. That pattern does not hold true for age at becoming chair. Women became department chairs at a significantly younger average age than men (44.38 versus 46.55). It is also important to note the average time span between promotion to full professor and becoming department chair. Women moved quickly between these two milestones and made the transition in 1.19 years. Men took much

longer, spending an average of 6.91 years at full professor before becoming a chair. Despite their younger age, more women department chairs (11.5%) came into the position with prior administrative experience in the role of associate dean than men (5.9%); overall, the majority of women and men chairs do not have any prior administrative experience (Carroll & Wolverton, 2004; Carroll, 1991; Hecht et al., 1999).

Another interesting characteristic of department chairs is how they are hired. Carroll (1991) found that 58.9% of department chairs were chosen by a system that was controlled primarily by faculty, including those rotationally appointed by their departments, those elected by the faculty, and those elected by the faculty with administrative approval. Forty-one percent were selected by a primarily administratively controlled process, meaning that they were appointed by the dean or other administrator either with or without the input of the faculty. Female chairs were somewhat more likely to be selected by administrative hiring systems. Chairs hired by a faculty controlled process were more likely to report that they were faculty oriented in their leadership. This correlation did not hold true for those hired by administration. Chairs hired by an administratively controlled process were not more likely to report that they were administratively oriented in their leadership. Approximately 20% of chairs were hired from outside of the institution, with no significant differences when disaggregated by type of hiring system or gender.

The reasons for becoming a chair vary considerably between individuals. For some, the motivation comes from an extrinsic source, such as colleagues or their dean. Others find themselves in the position due to intrinsic reasons, like wanting to help other

faculty or improve their department (Gmelch & Miskin, 1993). Sixty percent of department chairs reported that they took on the position for personal or professional development reasons, and almost 47% reported that that were persuaded by their colleagues or dean (Gmelch, Burns, Carroll, Harris, & Wentz, 1992). Chu and Veregge (2002), in their study of the California State University system, surveyed department chairs about their motivations for becoming chair. The four most commonly cited reasons that were “very relevant” to the decision were: “I wanted to help lead my department” (71%), “No one else was willing to do it” (34%), “I prefer a leadership role” (33%), and “I was motivated by my desire to advance a particular department program” (25%) (p. 31).

The final characteristic of department chairs that is important to consider is the duration of time spent in the role. Once again, the type of hiring system appears to have an impact. Chairs hired by faculty remain in the position for 6.2 years on average; chairs hired by administration stay slightly longer at an average of 6.9 years (Carroll, 1991). This length of time matches closely to the optimal tenure of six years that was self-reported by chairs (Lee, 1985). More recent data from the California State University system indicates a tendency toward shorter terms for chairs: 42% of past chairs served 0 to 3 years in the role, 32.9% served 4 to 6 years, 12.7% served for 7 to 9 years, and the rest (12.5%) were in the role for more than 9 years (Chu & Veregge, 2002).

The demographic information on department chairs, while somewhat dated, reflects a role that continues to be held primarily by White men in their fifties. There are more women department chairs in community colleges and regional comprehensive



institutions than in research/doctoral-granting institutions as well as disciplines other than the sciences. Department chairs are motivated by a desire to lead and personal growth, and typically serve in the role for approximately 6 years. The complexity and competing interests inherent to the department chair position make it a challenging position to hold. In this next topic in this section about department chairs, I will examine the many difficulties faced by individuals in the position of chair.

**Department Chair Challenges.** The department chair role is rife with challenges and difficulties, made all the more complex in times of rapid and significant change.

Chairs today might feel at times that they are performing in a drama where not everyone is working from the same script; where actors come and go seemingly randomly; where members of the audience participate spontaneously in the action itself from time to time; and where critics who might never have seen an actual performance nevertheless pass judgment on its quality. (Wheeler et al., 2008, p. 4)

Many of the stressors experienced by department chairs are rooted in the nature of the role as a liaison between faculty and administration often negotiating conflicting interests (Gmelch & Miskin, 2004). Department chairs must strive to serve and satisfy the demands of both faculty and administration, in addition to actually performing the roles of faculty member and administrator themselves (Gmelch & Burns, 1993). This duality creates role conflict that chairpersons must negotiate (Gmelch & Seedorf, 1989; Lee, 1985; Singleton, 1987).

Role ambiguity is also a concern for department chairs (Carroll & Wolverton, 2004). Role ambiguity occurs when faculty members' and administrators' expectations of

department chairs are not clearly defined or expressed (Gmelch & Gates, 1995). Jones and Holdaway (1996) studied the expectations and perceptions of the position across three institutions in Canada. They found that the role of department chair was viewed by deans, department chairs, and faculty members as one with heavy responsibilities and limited, shared authority. The expectations of the role also varied depending upon the group. Deans reported that curriculum, program, and policy issues were more important than did department chairs. Faculty had a narrower view of the position and responded that only faculty issues were essential. All groups were in agreement that research productivity was not important for department chairs.

The role conflict and role ambiguity that are characteristic of the position create stress for department chairs (Lucas, 1994). Researchers have examined the sources of stress for the position. In national survey of over 500 chairs from research and doctoral-granting universities, Gmelch and Burns (1993) found that there were four main categories of serious stress for department chairs. The first category was time pressures. Fifty-nine percent of chairs reported that their workload was too heavy, and 48% said that the role was affecting their personal time. The second category of stress was dealing with colleagues. Tasks such as making tenure, promotion, and evaluation decisions as well as resolving conflicts were commonly reported as stressful. The next category, organizational and bureaucratic constraints, included issues such as regulation compliance, financial resources, and program approvals. Lastly, department chairs found that maintaining their faculty role was a source of stress. Over half (53%) found keeping current in their field to be difficult. Maintaining research productivity was also a concern

for 41% of chairs (Gmelch & Burns, 1993), and the majority of chairs (86%) reported that they significantly curtailed their scholarly activities during their term in the role (Gmelch & Miskin, 2004). In another publication, Gmelch and Burns (1994) examined personal characteristics such as age and gender, and did not find any significant differences in the amount of stress. The research on stress and the role of department chair was conducted over 20 years ago. The experiences of today's department chairs may differ due to the increasing demands for accountability coupled with an ongoing decline in resources.

There are very few scholars whose research focuses primarily upon the department chair from a gender perspective. One notable example is Martinez (2011) who conducted a qualitative study of 20 women department heads from three different publicly funded universities in Spain. The Spanish university system is experiencing significant change because of the Bologna process, as well as increased emphasis on publication impact. These changes have escalated the workload of department chairs. Martinez examined the gender subtext of the organizations. Gender subtext is a concept originated by Benschop and Doorewaard (1998) who argued "that a gender subtext (a set of often concealed, power-based processes or arrangements systematically (re)producing gender distinctions) explains both the persistent practices of gender inequality and the dominant perception of gender equality" (p. 802). Martinez also studied whether the role of department head was becoming feminized. Feminization, for the purposes of the study, was defined as "the spread of traits or qualities that are traditionally associated with females to things or people not usually described that way" (Fondas, 1997, p. 258). As it

relates to the role of department head, feminization means that the position is assumed to demand stereotypically feminine traits. Martinez's findings support the idea that middle management positions such as the department head are becoming increasingly feminized because the organizational gender subtexts view the position as lacking in genuine power and status, holding the position does not advance an academic career, and the position is commonly undertaken as an act of responsibility and service – all characteristics that reflect female stereotypes. Martinez (2011) summarized the discussion of the study as follows:

This gender script implies a devaluation of middle management that stands in sharp contrast with images of empowerment and feminine leadership that the literature on women in management normally portrays. In fact, most of these women hardly see themselves as leaders – at best, they exercise what might be called a “marginal leadership.” (p. 11)

The purported feminization of the department head position may result in both an increase in the number of women in the role and a progressive devaluation of the position.

Yedidia and Bickel (2001) also conducted a study of department chairs with a gender focus. In a qualitative study of 34 clinical department chairs and two division heads, they examined the perceived barriers to leadership advancement for women in academic medicine. The chairs agreed that barriers for women existed in the forms of traditional gender roles, sexism, and lack of quality mentors. The participants suggested a variety of individual and institutional changes to address the impediments for women in

leadership. Some of the strategies were helping individuals find mentors, counseling, addressing cases of bias, lengthening tenure clocks, and creating institution-wide mentor networks.

In another example from the field of academic medicine, Isaac, Griffin, and Carnes (2010) examined faculty members' views of women department chairs. They interviewed 28 faculty members in three departments with women chairs at a public research university school of medicine. The researchers found that the faculty members did not question their chairs' ability to lead; however, the women chairs were viewed as most effective when they combined stereotypical masculine, agentic behaviors with communal behaviors that are stereotypically feminine. The authors were encouraged by the results of the study and felt that the findings reinforced the idea that women in academic medicine can be successful department chairs. The conclusions seem rather simplistic, and it would be interesting to deconstruct the data from this study with attention paid to the discourse surrounding women's leadership to get a richer understanding of the topic.

### **Conclusion**

Recent studies on department chairs are relatively uncommon. Most of the research focuses on the roles, responsibilities, and stressors of department chairs with the goal of helping chairs to be more effective and cope with the complexities and challenges of the work. Even fewer studies consider gender as a key analytic category, and those that do often treat it as a simple demographic variable without attempting to unpack the underlying issues in a more systemic way.

Further research is necessary because the existing higher education research does not provide a complete understanding of how gender and identities affect leaders in higher education, and more specifically department chairs. Additionally, there have been no studies utilizing performativity, an emerging theory not frequently used in higher education research, with department chairs. This study is unique from the previous research on leadership in higher education because it utilized performativity to examine the effects of gender and identities on the leadership of women and men department chairs in research universities. While the primary focus of the research is women, the inclusion of men provided a deeper understanding of the issues and a broader range of performances for analysis. In the next chapter, I describe the methodology used for this study.

### **Chapter Three: Methodology**

In this third chapter, I describe the methodology used in the study, including the research questions, an explanation of the study design, researcher background information, participant selection process, consent and confidentiality measures, data collection methods, data analysis strategies, quality criteria, and scope of inquiry.

#### **Research Questions**

The purpose of this study was to examine how women and men department chairs at public research universities perceive and perform their gender and other identities in their leadership. Further, this study investigated how these perceptions and performances were affected by their perceptions of the leadership expectations of faculty, students, and administration. This study examined the following research questions:

- How do department chairs perceive that their gender and other identities affect their leadership?
- What do department chairs believe faculty members, students, and administration expect of their leadership?
- How do department chairs believe others' expectations are related to the chairs' gender or other identities?
- How do department chairs' perceptions of others' expectations affect their leadership performances?
- How do discursive framings of power affect department chairs' leadership?

## Research Design

Before addressing the specific methods of the research design, I consider the epistemological and methodological foundations of the study. At the core is a desire to incorporate feminist perspectives into the research design to the greatest extent possible. Ropers-Huilman and Winters (2011) explained that feminist research “(a) acknowledge[s] that the role of the researcher will have an effect on the research; (b) seek[s] to understand social situations as they affect women in all their diversity; and (c) is concerned with positive social change, especially as it relates to diverse women’s lives” (p. 672). These three characteristics are consistent with the overall design of the methodology for this study.

Another concept that is important to feminist research is what Haraway (1988) described as “feminist objectivity” that is “situated knowledges” (p. 581). Hesse-Biber, Leavy, and Yaiser (2004) explained that feminist objectivity differs from traditional conceptions of objectivity in the following ways:

Feminist objectivity changes the strong dualism of objectivity and subjectivity into a dialectic. The nature of knowledge and truth is that it is partial, situated, subjective, power imbued, and relational. Feminist objectivity combines the goal of conventional objectivity – to conduct research completely free of social influence or personal beliefs – with the reality that no one can achieve this goal.... Feminist objectivity acknowledges the fact that the researcher is going to bring the influences of society into the project. It also recognizes that objectivity can



only operate within the limitations of the scientist's personal beliefs and experiences. (p. 13)

Throughout the entire design and process of this study, I endeavored to maintain the ideals of this feminist definition of objectivity while incorporating the theoretical framework of performativity.

This study was based upon the epistemological tenets of poststructuralism. Epistemology, or the theory of knowledge, is a concept that encompasses questions about who has knowledge, what knowledge is legitimate, and what can be known (Harding, 1987). Poststructuralist theorists posit that there is no one truth that exists, but that truth is created and validated by discourse (Allan, 2010). In other words, knowledge and meaning change based upon the social, historical, and political characteristics of the situation that create multiple understandings (Ropers-Huilman, 1998).

For this study, I used a qualitative, multiple-case study design. Case study design typically involves three important characteristics (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). First, the design tends to involve a research focus on individuals who are representative of a group (i.e., department chairs) and/or phenomenon (i.e., gender performance) experienced and demonstrated by the individuals (cases). Second, to provide deeper insight into their often complex nature, the individuals and/or phenomena are studied in their natural context (i.e., in a university setting). As a third characteristic, case studies provide a rich description of the individuals and phenomenon through data collection techniques such as observations, interviews, and document gathering. Including more than one case by using a multiple-case study design provides the additional benefit of giving the researcher the

ability to study and draw cross-case conclusions through comparison and theme-exploration among the multiple cases (Yin, 2009).

### **Researcher Positioning**

As the author and “primary research instrument” (Sprague, 2005, p. 121) of this study, it is important for me to explain my own identities and positions so that individuals may consider this information as they read about the study and the choices I have made throughout the design and research process. The identities that are most salient to me are that I am a White, middle-class woman from the Midwest region of the United States. My father was a professor, and I was raised around higher education and spent much of my childhood on college campuses. Education was strongly emphasized, and there was an assumption that I would pursue a college education. I learned to love reading and education at a very early age.

I earned a Bachelor’s degree from a public land-grant university in 1994, and spent many years in the private and public sectors in a variety of jobs, primarily in the field of human resources. I always felt most comfortable working for organizations with an interest in the public good rather than a for-profit motive. My partner completed a Ph.D. in 2006 and became a professor. At that time, I returned to school and in 2008 earned a Master’s degree in higher education administration at a regional comprehensive university in the Midwest. Since then, I have been working in college-level administration at that same university. In 2009, I began my doctoral studies at a research university in the Midwest where I was a graduate research assistant and full-time student. I became a doctoral candidate in 2012. Throughout my graduate studies, my research

interests have focused on women and higher education leadership. My interest in this area stems from my own work experiences and observations both in higher education and other employment sectors.

I bring numerous preconceptions to this topic, several of which are particularly relevant to this study. First, I believe that women leaders can provide important benefits and perspectives to higher education leadership. Second, I feel that gender is a salient identity that affects how individuals make sense of themselves in relation to the world. Lastly, I believe that this study helped me gain a deeper, more nuanced, and complex understandings of individuals' gender performances and the effects on higher education leadership. I do not believe that I can simply remove these preconceptions from the research process to achieve objectivity; rather, I chose to acknowledge and grapple with them throughout the research process. For example, there were times during the data collection, analysis, and writing of this study that the findings were different from what I expected (or hoped) they would be. Rather than try to wedge the data into my preconceived notions, I was careful to reflect upon these dissonances and wrote notes to remind myself of the thought processes I experienced.

### **Participant Selection**

I utilized purposeful sampling for participant selection. Patton (2002) explains, "The logic and power of purposeful sampling lie in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth" (p. 230). Within this category of purposeful sampling, Patton (2002) enumerates a variety of strategies, each with a particular function. I employed a stratified purposeful strategy to select department chairs, which is best used to "illustrate

characteristics of particular subgroups of interest” and “facilitate comparisons” (Patton, 2002, p. 244). In this study, the primary subgroups of interest were gender, institution, discipline, and faculty gender composition of the discipline. In addition, I made every effort to recruit participants from a variety of racial/ethnic backgrounds.

I selected four women department chairs and four men department chairs for this study. By including women and men, I was able to examine commonalities, differences, and complexities in how individuals perceive and perform their gender and other identities in their leadership roles as department chairs. While the primary focus of this research was on the experiences of women, norms and expectations also shape the performances of men. Additionally, gendered performances by women and men occur on a continuum from feminine to masculine. The inclusion of men provided a deeper understanding of the issues and a broader spectrum of performances for analysis.

To choose the institutional type for the locations of this study, I utilized information from The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education (2012) to identify higher education institutions with similar key characteristics, including size, control, basic type, and geographic region. I selected two large, public, research universities located in the Midwest for my study because the gender disparity in administrative leadership is the largest in this type of institution. Two institutions were selected to provide an opportunity for comparison between institutions.

The participants were chosen from disciplines within the social sciences and humanities to limit possible differences between widely disparate areas of studies. Within the social sciences and humanities, I sought to recruit participants from disciplines with

differing faculty gender representations as determined by data from the *2004 National Study of Postsecondary Faculty* (National Center for Education Statistics, 2004): two participants in disciplines with mostly women faculty members (greater than 60% women), two from disciplines with mostly men faculty members (greater than 60% men), and four from disciplines with relatively equal gender representation of faculty members (each gender between 40% and 60% representation). The selection of participants from disciplines with a variety of gender compositions was designed to allow for the analysis of possible differences based upon this discipline characteristic as well as to increase the potential range of department chair experiences related to gender.

I used the institutions' websites to identify the departments and department chairs in the social sciences and humanities. Individuals who had been department chairs for less than a year as of fall 2013 were removed from consideration because their experiences in the role would be limited. I sent an initial email to the chairs to briefly inform them of the study and invite them to consider participating. All of the department chairs who responded were selected for the study, except for one individual who agreed to be an alternate if a participant withdrew. I ended the recruiting process after I had eight participants who fit the selection criteria outlined above.

### **Consent and Confidentiality**

Consent and confidentiality were an important focus throughout the duration of the research project. The study was approved by the Institutional Review Board of the University of Minnesota (see Appendix D: Institutional Review Board Approval). The focus of the study was the department chairs and their experiences and not the

institutions; therefore, I did not seek human subjects research approval from the employer institutions of the participants. I provided all of the participants with consent information sheets before any of the observations or interviews occurred.

Numerous safeguards were employed to ensure participant confidentiality. Pseudonyms were used for participants and institutions on all files and documents. All data were stored in encrypted computer files on a password protected computer located in a locked office. Physical items, such as paper documents and audio recording devices were stored in a locked file within a locked office. At the completion of the study, all audio recordings were destroyed.

In addition to the standard types of protections, it was important for me to build trust and credibility with the participants so they felt comfortable sharing their experiences. The sequence and nature of the data collection activities detailed in the next section were designed to nurture the trust-building process. The participants were also asked to decide how to explain my presence as an observer to their faculty, staff, and students, in a way that protected their anonymity to the greatest extent possible.

### **Data Collection Methods**

Data collection began after the participants were selected for the study. According to Yin (2009), “a major strength of case study data collection is the opportunity to use many different sources of evidence” (p. 114-115). There are five components or steps to the data collection methods for this study: observation, initial interview, documentation, follow-up interview, and transcript review. First, I contacted each participant to schedule

a full day for observation, interviewing, and gathering documentation at her or his work location. Observation and interview days took place in February through May of 2013.

In order to effectively gather the observation data, I used recommended case study strategies offered by Hancock and Algozzine (2006). The first involved clearly identifying what must be observed to answer the research questions. In order to examine how department chairs perform their gender, I observed and wrote notes on each chair in her/his natural work environment during a workday. I paid particular attention to the interactions chairs had with others during the course of the day, as it is within these social interactions that gender performances may be most visible. I also watched for other behaviors and information that may provide key insights to help answer my research questions, paying close attention to audience and context. These included the observation of non-verbal communication and silence during interactions, how emotion was handled and expressed, and what artifacts (such as appearance and clothing) might suggest about the gender performances. Throughout the observation time, I also paid particular attention to any reactions I had so that I could be aware of my biases or assumptions. I wrote notes about these reactions and reflections during the observations so they would not be forgotten rather than journal about them later.

Another observation strategy that I used was to work to gain the trust of the participants so that I could be as minimally intrusive as possible (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). I wanted to reduce my influence on what was being observed and to acknowledge when and how my presence may have impacted the nature of what I observed. In order to do this, I worked from the first communication with each chair to be clear and open about

myself and my research, allowing the department chairs to choose how to explain my presence.

Throughout the observation process, it was also important for me to recognize my own role in the research process. As a researcher who is interested in helping to improve gender equity in higher education leadership, I was aware that I might be more sensitive to gender expectations or performances that I believe might disadvantage women. This sensitivity may have been a benefit because it could have helped me to recognize the often subtle performances, norms, and expectations as they occurred; however, it may have also caused me to give too much weight to or to focus on only certain observations. I therefore worked to be cognizant of this potential bias and documented when I felt strongly about certain observations.

During the day with each chair, I spent 65 to 90 minutes interviewing the participant. The interviews were “guided conversations rather than structured queries” (Yin, 2009). This type of case study interview is referred to as a focused interview and utilizes an interview protocol with open-ended and follow-up questions. A table mapping the research questions to the interview protocol questions is located in Appendix A, and the interview protocol is located in Appendix B.

For the interview, it was also important to consider the location and setting (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006). I asked the participants to secure a room that was at their work setting, quiet, neutral, and as free of distractions as possible. The interviews were audio-recorded for later transcription and analysis. I avoided note-taking during the interviews in order to foster a comfortable and free-flowing dialogue between the



participants and myself. I invited any questions they had during the process, reminded them of the steps I would be taking to protect their identities and confidentiality, and reiterated that their participation was voluntary and they could decline to answer any question or withdraw from the study at any time. At the end of the interview, I asked the participants to keep in mind the questions and issues we discussed as they went about their work until the follow-up interview.

The third step was to gather documentation relevant to the research questions. Yin (2009) suggested, “For case studies, the most important use of documents is to corroborate and augment evidence from other sources” (p.103). During the day spent with the chairs, I asked them for copies of various documents including a current curriculum vitae (if not available online), emails, memos, or meeting minutes related to departmental faculty, students, or administration that was non-confidential or public in nature, and any other written information such as policies, handbooks, or brochures that may have be relevant to the study. I also examined the departmental websites for additional information. I sought documents that reflected the communication and leadership styles of the department chairs while paying particular attention to audience and context.

After the observation day and initial interview, I transcribed and conducted a preliminary assessment of the data. I then called the participants for a brief, follow-up interview that was also audio-recorded. The follow-up interviews lasted from 21 to 35 minutes and occurred during the months of March 2013 through July 2013. This was the fourth step in the data collection process. The follow-up interview protocol is located in

Appendix C. The purpose of the follow-up interview was to discuss any other thoughts or experiences the participants may have had regarding gender, identities, and leadership since the observation and interview day and to review and clarify the preliminary assessments from the data already collected.

The final step in the data collection process was to transcribe the follow-up interviews and then send the transcripts from both interviews to the participants for their review. The participants had the opportunity to clarify or add comments to their statements. This fifth step was completed in September 2013. Together, these five steps of the data collection process helped to ensure the quality and rigor of the study.

### **Data Analysis**

As the first step in the data analysis process, I transcribed all of the interviews. The transcripts were sent to the participants for clarification and additional comments in September 2013; three of the eight participants provided edits or comments. The data for analysis included the final, annotated transcripts and observation notes (252 pages) and documents (491 pages). The documents were utilized primarily to provide a contextual understanding of each department chair and were also useful for triangulation. All of the data was loaded into NVivo qualitative data analysis software. NVivo was used as an organizational tool to assist in the preparation of the data and the work of analysis and to increase the transparency and visibility of the coding process (Ryan, 2009).

According to Yin (2009), “The analysis of case study evidence is one of the least developed and most difficult aspects of doing case studies” (p. 127), and the preferred method analysis is to use the theoretical framework that informed the design of the study

(Yin, 2009). Prior to beginning the analysis, I created approximately 75 codes related to the central tenets of performativity – identity, agency, and power – in addition to sub-themes such as regulatory powers, gender norms and expectations, reflexivity, and specific gender performances. I then read through all of the data and coded phrases, statements, and other pieces of information into the related category or categories while also considering how codes might be related to one another. In addition to this type of top-down analysis based upon the theoretical framework and literature review (Ryan, 2009), I collapsed and expanded codes as needed during analysis to reflect the understandings and possible multiple meanings of the participants' words and actions. For example, in situations where there was no existing code to adequately represent the concept, I created a new code. In other situations, I realized that I was unable to separate the data to such a granular level as my existing code structure required, so I collapsed several codes together into a slightly broader concept or category. This process of expansion and contraction of codes continued throughout multiple readings of the data and ultimately resulted in approximately 35 codes organized around the research questions of the study. The combined approach of top-down and bottom-up coding (Miller & Fox, 2004) helped to ensure that I was open to unexpected themes and ideas throughout the analysis process while also utilizing the theoretical framework to help make meaning of the data.

### **Validity and Trustworthiness**

In this section, I examine the validity and trustworthiness of this study while remaining cognizant of the how these concepts are affected by the framework of feminist

poststructuralism. Lather (1986) offered the following guidelines as a “reconceptualization of validity appropriate for research openly committed to a more just social order” (p. 66): triangulation, reflexive subjectivity, face validity, and catalytic validity.

I used triangulation in this study through the collection and analysis of a variety of types of data sources, including interviews, observations, and documents. This type of triangulation is called data triangulation (Denzin, 1978), and it diminishes the possibility of misinterpretation through “a process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning” (Stake, 1998, p. 97). When considering meaning, it is also important to remember that feminist poststructuralist thinkers posit that no one truth exists and knowledge and meaning change based upon the social, historical, and political characteristics of the situation that create multiple understandings (Allan, 2010; Ropers-Huilman, 1998). I therefore asked participants to provide their own definitions and understandings of concepts such as meaningful identities, leadership approach, and power rather than imposing my own meanings or the meanings of others. Additionally, by using the participants’ words as much as possible, I sought to allow readers to consider my understandings of the data as well as that of existing literature and the readers’ own understandings.

Reflexive subjectivity, the second concept of validity, is defined by Lather (1986) as “how the researcher’s assumptions have been affected by the logic of the data” (p. 78). In this study, reflexive subjectivity was promoted through the comparison of the literature review, the theoretical framework, and the themes that arose from the research data.

While theory was central to this study, I was careful to be open to adjusting my understandings based on the data. For example, as a researcher and student interested in issues of gender, I went into this study assuming that department chairs in higher education (and more specifically, the social sciences and humanities) would be fairly conscious of issues related to gender and identities. I was surprised to learn that the participants thought about these issues much less than I anticipated and had some difficulty providing examples of the effects of gender and identities on their leadership. I then examined new questions I had not previously considered such as why the participants may believe that their gender and identities do not affect their leadership.

Face validity in this study was addressed through the use of member checks. Guba (1981) stated, “The process of member checks is the single most important action inquirers can take, for it goes to the heart of the credibility criterion” (p. 85). Lather (1986) defined member checks as “recycling categories, emerging analysis, and conclusion back through at least a subsample of respondents” (p. 78). Member checks were completed in two ways. The first was through the follow-up interviews. Prior to the follow-up interviews, I completed the transcription of the initial interviews and prepared a series of follow-up questions based upon my preliminary analysis and understandings of the data from the observations and interviews. I asked follow-up questions based upon the preliminary analysis and gave the participants the opportunity to confirm, clarify, or refute my understandings. The second piece of the member checks process occurred when I sent the interview and follow-up interview transcripts to the participants. The participants were given the opportunity to review the transcripts and clarify or add to

their meaning and intent. Three of the participants chose to provide specific edits or feedback. The remaining participants were comfortable with the data as presented in the transcripts.

The final concept related to validity and trustworthiness is catalytic validity. According to Lather (1986), catalytic validity is demonstrated through “documentation that the research process has led to insight and activism on the part of the respondents” (p.78). Feminist poststructuralism also has an activist focus (Allan, Iverson, & Ropers-Huilman, 2010), therefore this validity criterion fits well with the theoretical framework of the study. I sought to achieve catalytic validity by asking the participants to consider the effects of their gender and other identities on their leadership as department chairs. After the observation day and initial interview, I asked the participants to keep in mind what we had discussed over the next few weeks. Then in the follow-up interview, I asked the participants if they had thought about or done anything differently related to gender or identities in their leadership. While none of the participants stated that they had altered their thoughts or actions, they were able to bring up additional issues related to gender or identities that had arisen or developed since our previous meetings which indicated that they had put some thought into the topics addressed in the interview. I believe that by raising the participants’ awareness, they may be more mindful of issues related to gender and identities in their leadership. Additionally, I hope that providing insights into the gender performances of department chairs to readers through this study may offer opportunities to higher education administrators to expand the range of performances available to them with the goal of a more diverse and equitable leadership.

**Scope of Inquiry**

The scope of inquiry is the setting and sample utilized for the study. The setting was social sciences and humanities departments at two public research universities in the Midwestern United States. I did not include departments in other disciplines, types of institutions, and regions. Research in these settings may generate findings and understandings that differ from those of this study.

The study sample comprised four women and four men department chairs who had been in the role for a minimum of one year. Participants were also selected based upon the gender composition of the faculty in their disciplines. The department chairs who agreed to participate in the study may have different characteristics, identities, and experiences than the department chairs who chose not to participate.

The scope of this study was limited to the settings and sample described. Rather than transferability, the goal of this study was to provide a deeper, richer, nuanced, and more complex understanding of gender and leadership in the role of the department chair through the use of thick description. The scope of inquiry utilized in this study generated a depth of information about how department chairs enact their leadership at research universities. The findings of the study are presented in the next chapter.

## **Chapter Four: Findings**

The information gathered by the interviews, observations, and documentation provided a detailed view of the experiences of department chairs at research universities. Additionally, the data help to deepen understandings of how gender and other identities affect department chairs' leadership. I begin this chapter with an overview of the participants as well as in-depth profiles of each department chair. Next, I provide the findings and themes which are organized into six categories: (1) perceptions of the effects of gender and other identities on leadership; (2) perceptions of leadership expectations; (3) effects of expectations on leadership performances; (4) definitions and expressions of power; (5) findings by gender composition of discipline/department; and (6) findings by institution.

### **Participants**

For this study, I observed and interviewed eight department chairs. Summary information about the participants is provided in Table 1. Because this study focused on the identities that were meaningful to the participants, I provide only limited demographic information in the table. I sought to recruit department chairs from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds; however, no chairs of color volunteered to participate. One participant identified as gay.

The participants in the sample represent a wide range of characteristics of department chairs. Two of the participants were titled as department heads. There were no differences that I could discern between them and the participants who were called department chairs. For consistency, I refer to all of the participants as chairs because that



Table 1

*Participants (N=8)*

Name <sup>a</sup>	Gender	Institution	Discipline Gender Composition	Department Faculty Gender Composition	Years as Chair	Internal vs. External Hire	Approx. Department Size	Career Stage	Salient Identities
Carolyn Avdar	Woman	A	Mostly women	Mostly women	9.5	External	20 faculty members	Late career	Survivor, resilient, mother, grandmother, friend
Gus Vine	Man	A	Mostly men	Relatively equal	2.5	Internal	50 faculty members	Late career	Teacher, scholar, discipline
Robert Belmont	Man	A	Relatively equal	Relatively equal	6.5	External	20 faculty members	Late career	White, male, gay
Carol Evans	Woman	A	Relatively equal	Mostly women	1.5	Internal	30 faculty members	Mid-career	Woman, mom, wife, daughter, religious affiliation, empathy, thoughtfulness, compassion, scholar, discipline
Ferdinand Ross	Man	B	Relatively equal	Mostly men	3.5	Internal	30 faculty members	Mid-career	Discipline, academia, family life
Sarah Eldon	Woman	B	Mostly women	Mostly women	1.5	Internal	10 faculty members	Late career	Wife, mother, professor, teacher, good friend, approachable, fun to talk to, laughs a lot
Bill Gibbon	Man	B	Mostly men	Relatively equal	5.0	Internal	< 10 faculty members	Late career	Teacher
Avery Target	Woman	B	Relatively equal	Relatively equal	5.0 years	Internal	15 faculty members	Mid-career	Teacher, mentor, profession, discipline

<sup>a</sup> *The participants selected their own pseudonyms.*

is the most commonly used moniker for the position in the literature. The participants held their positions for a varied number of years, from a low of 1.5 years to a high of 9.5 years. Two were hired externally, while the rest were chosen internally from within their departments. The chairs also came from departments with a diversity of sizes, from fewer than 10 up to 50 faculty members. Three participants were what I considered to be mid-career with 10 or more years until retirement; the remaining five participants could be considered late-career with fewer than 10 years until retirement. I include additional information about each participant in the profiles of the next section. I briefly introduce each department chair and how we met. Next I share how and why they became department chairs, including what they find most challenging and most rewarding about the role. Lastly, I provide a summary of their leadership approaches and what identities are most meaningful to them. I purposefully left out the chairs' personal appearance and clothing from the profiles because I address it later in the chapter as a part of the discussion of gendered expressions. I also obscured any information that I thought might compromise the confidentiality of the participants.

**Carolyn Avdar.** My interactions with Carolyn began in her office where we met shortly after 8 a.m. on a work day. She smiled kindly at me, explained that she is an open person, and made me very comfortable from the beginning which was a welcome relief since she was my very first participant. After we went over the information about my study, she worked on email at her computer for a while before we headed off to a class she was teaching. While she was working, I took some time to get acclimated and poked around her small office. Carolyn did not have any lights on so it seemed very dark in

there on a dreary winter day. She had turned on some classical music, and the overall feeling was very calm and relaxed. Her desk was cluttered, but there were still open work spaces too. There was a small round table with chairs around it in the front part of the office. Carolyn had a couple of candy bowls around the office, both on the table and the bookshelf. I also noticed that there were several personal photographs and plaques with inspirational sayings on the bookshelves. Above her computer desk, there were a large number of photos of flowers, animals, birds, and nature scenes. We spent most of the day in meetings in her office or around the building.

Carolyn's career path to the position of department chair was somewhat non-traditional in that her academic career began a bit later in life. She entered graduate school in her mid-30s, and completed a master's degree and a Ph.D. in her discipline. She was encouraged to apply for a post-doctoral position at a research center in her field. Carolyn won the position and worked there for two years. She was then hired as an assistant professor at another research university where she advanced through the ranks to associate professor.

A department at a different research university was recruiting for a chair. A friend there encouraged her to apply, but she was skeptical of her chances and told him, "So what, you don't have enough women in the pool and you just have to round out the pool?" Carolyn waited until the last minute to send in her application materials "never dreaming" that they would choose her. Despite her skepticism, she was intrigued by the position and thought it would be interesting to go through the interview process. To her "complete surprise," she was hired for the position and has been in it for ten years.

When asked why she decided to take on the role of department chair, Carolyn stated that she wanted to know if she could be the kind of person she is and still lead. Carolyn explained, “I was very interested in seeing if a model of my imagining that is a more gendered model of how you work with people would work.” She also cited that another reason for choosing the role was that she wanted to work in this particular department because many of the people that she had studied as a student worked in the department, and she wanted the opportunity to get to know them and work with them.

Carolyn finds the role of department chair to be both challenging and rewarding. She finds that it takes a lot of her energy, and she does not like it when things catch her off guard. She said, “The things that break your back as the department head or chair in my estimation are the things that come out of thin air that you can’t anticipate.” The hardest thing for her to do in her role is to be an evaluator. At times, it makes her feel conflicted because she knows her colleagues very well, and she knows the struggles and pressures they have in their outside lives, but she has to hold them to the requirements and demands of their jobs. Conversely, mentoring her students is one of the most rewarding things that she does.

Carolyn described her approach to leadership as servant leadership and having soft edges. She explained, “I think you can touch some people and your fingers almost bleed, and I think it’s harder to be a leader if you have razors around you.” Having soft edges has both advantages and disadvantages according to Carolyn. It is her preferred way of leading, but she admits that it does not always work and that sometimes messages need to be delivered in a more “brash” way, and it is important to know when not to use

soft edges. Despite her soft edges, Carolyn also said she has a temper when she gets aggravated which makes her more tenacious about solving the problem. She is very conscious of her temper and tries to hide it. Carolyn remarked, “With my temper . . . I have it, but I don’t show it because I know it’s destructive and not a positive thing, and because I am very collaborative.” Carolyn also said she cries sometimes and that is a part of who she is. She said, “I don’t have any problem crying, and at my age, I’m not going to change that.” She has learned to accept that she cares very deeply about what she does.

Relationships, collaboration, and consultation are also key components of how Carolyn enacts leadership in her role as department chair. In her relationships as chair, she finds it advantageous to not remember every little detail. Carolyn declared,

I’m not a person who holds grudges. . . . I don’t remember why I was aggravated, and I think in some ways that is helpful because if you remember every little thing everybody does to you over the time that you’re a department head or chair, you’re going to hate everybody, and they’re going to hate you.

By thinking about the things that are happening in their lives, she is able to understand her colleagues’ viewpoints and not see them as enemies. She is then able to forget about any tensions that arose and move on to the next thing. Carolyn believes in collaboration in the department and feels that she leads only because they allow her to lead.

Consultation plays a key role because she likes to take her time making important decisions and talk to as many people as is necessary so that she is able to explain her decision. Carolyn stated, “I’m highly consultative . . . that’s very characteristic of the way

that I've lead the department, and if I don't have time to do that, then I don't believe my decision making is as clear and effective as it should be.”

A variety of identities provide meaning in Carolyn's life. Most important to her is that she is a survivor. She has been able to survive things that she never thought she could, and believes that she is very resilient in the face of the challenges she has had to face in life. Carolyn also mentioned a number of other identities that have meaning including being a mother, grandmother, and friend, and also finding beauty in things that people overlook every day.

**Gus Vine.** Gus asked to meet with me prior to giving his consent to participate to discuss the details of the study. He inquired about my research methodology and what I hoped to learn from the study, expressing concern about whether or not I would be able to get the data I needed. Despite his questions, he was willing to participate for which I was grateful. I noticed that his large office was quite sparsely furnished with lots of open space. Even his bookshelves were rather empty which I have noticed is quite rare for an academic. His computer desk was in the corner, and there was a round table with chairs for meetings in the middle of the room. Disorganized piles of paper were on his desk. I did not see any personal items around the office. I spent minimal time in Gus' office during my observations because we spent most of our time at a variety of meetings in locations around campus.

Gus' career path to department chair was a traditional academic trajectory. He earned a Ph.D. in his discipline and went immediately into a tenure-track appointment at a research university. In his faculty role, he gained some administrative experience along

the way as a director of a program and by being active in faculty governance and university committees. Gus was then asked to be the director of a new interdisciplinary program at his university. When a position in his area of research as director of a research center opened up at his current university, he was ready for the change. After being director for a number of years, he decided to step down. At the same time, the department of his discipline needed a new chair. There were few available candidates, so Gus decided to take on the role. He said, “I didn’t come [into the position] with an agenda, any personal agenda, to change the department,” but he knew that there were some upcoming challenges that the department needed to address.

Gus tries to find balance in his leadership approach. He feels that you can “err on the side of being too authoritarian, or you can err on the side of being too eager to consult on things that shouldn’t be consulted.” Gus also feels that his role as chair is “not so much leading as persuading” because of the strong democratic tradition within the culture of his department. He explained that “if you think you just bull your way through things or simply get things done by brute force, you’re just not going to last very long in a job like this.”

The role of department chair brings a number of challenges with it for Gus. One of the difficulties is role ambiguity. He sometimes has a difficult time determining what is within his authority and what is not. Gus lamented, “I have to think twice about just about anything as to whether I have the authority to approve something, to ask for something, to sign a particular letter, and even if I do . . . is it truly my responsibility.” Also, dealing with colleagues is challenging. Many types of personnel matters arise

including promotion and tenure, problems of poor behavior and poor performance, misconduct, and grievances. Budget cuts, enrollment changes, accounting problems, and dealing with administrators have also caused difficulty for Gus as department chair.

The rewarding aspects of being chair were not as extensive as the challenges for Gus. The most satisfying part of the job for him is helping his colleagues secure funding, get their work done, and advance in their careers. He also gets a small amount of satisfaction from things like keeping the budget balanced and getting through the year without deficits.

Gus has a couple of identities that are important to him in the work setting. He views himself as a teacher and a scholar, and also identifies strongly with his specific discipline. It frustrates him when others within the university (students, administrators, staff) do not respect “intellectual life” and “the life of the mind” or view faculty as “whiners, complainers, spoiled people who don’t work very hard.” Gus chose not to discuss any identities related to his personal life.

**Robert Belmont.** I first met Robert in his office where he warmly shook my hand and invited me to sit down. I chose the nearest chair. It was an old-fashioned wooden swivel-type chair, hard and squeaky. It did not take me long to switch it out for a less noisy and more comfortable one. As we went over the necessary human subjects consent information, I glanced around his office and noticed that it was quite cluttered and lived in. Books were scattered haphazardly around, and packets of mayonnaise, both used and unused, littered his desk. I did not see any personal photos or items in Robert’s office. I



spent time observing Robert during office hours as well as in several meetings and presentations prior to the interview.

I learned that Robert came to the position of department chair through an external hiring process. He began his academic career very young in his mid-20s at a private research university and spent more than 30 years there. He gained administrative experience through leadership roles in faculty governance where he met regularly with administration, ran senate meetings, and formulated legislation. Robert received a call from the chair of the search committee at another research university. They were looking for an outside chair for their department and wanted him to apply. At first he did not take it very seriously because “it came out of the blue.” He was interested in leadership positions, but there did not seem to be many opening up at his institution so he decided to apply. He was offered the position, and surprised himself when he accepted it. He has been in the position over six years.

Robert’s motivation for wanting to be a department chair was primarily his interest in institution building. The idea of “building something and helping to improve the institution” was attractive to him. He recognizes that others may have different reasons for being chair, but he believes the main goal should be “to facilitate the development of the department and the department members and to really make things happen.” He was also given a very good offer from the university in terms of salary, research money, and discretionary funds for the department.

Robert described his leadership style as consultative. He explained that consultation makes for a longer and more complicated process, but it is preferable in the

end. Robert explained, “Even if you end up with a decision that does not please everybody, at the very least they feel that they were respected.” He also believes that it is very important to thank people and recognize their achievements, particularly in the university environment where people are not getting paid very much. Robert also tries to “foster a sense of community” and be inclusive in his leadership. He provides regular opportunities for people to get together and socialize. His style is deliberately informal to make people feel comfortable and included.

The primary challenge for Robert as department chair is dealing with the bureaucracy of a large university. He remarked, “It is a frustration because we have several layers of bureaucracy between us and the people who actually make the primary decisions, and so you feel somewhat helpless.” Changes to university policy are typically very slow and very small. He has not found the job to be overly stressful and attributes that to his hard-working support network of staff and faculty members that help administer the department. Robert explained, “I feel like I’m in a very lucky space, and this is one of the reasons why I reluctantly agreed to take this on again because saying that it’s not stressful doesn’t mean it’s not hard work.”

The rewards for Robert as department chair are to help faculty and students to be productive. The intellectual resources and interdisciplinary connections with other parts of the university also are exciting and fun for him. Robert believes that this “cross-fertilization of intellects” creates synergy and facilitates knowledge creation.

When asked what identities were most meaningful to him as a person, Robert identified himself as a “White guy” and gay. He explained, “I’m gay and have been very

comfortably for all my life. It doesn't play a big role, much of a role. . . . Fortunately, we're in a university where questions about sexuality are really not so important." On a department level, he is concerned about the underrepresentation of women and people of color.

**Carol Evans.** Carol and I met in her office at the beginning of her day. My initial impressions of her were that she smiled a lot and seemed reserved or quiet. I was very much looking forward to learning more about her. After we spoke, she took some time to work at her computer. I began to look around at my surroundings. Carol's office was small, neat, and minimalist. Instead of a big bulky desk, she had a simple table that she used as a desk. A sleek leather chair was in the corner and a round table with chairs sits by the door. Behind her desk was a wall with a bold paint color that stood out and a large photograph of a country scene. Decorative items related to her discipline lined the window sills, and there were several small stuffed animals around the office. I noticed that there were a couple of personal photos on the credenza behind her desk. I observed Carol throughout the day during a variety of meetings in her office and the building.

Carol's path to her current position was a bit unique in that she was a graduate student at the same institution. After she completed her Ph.D., she taught on a part-time basis for a time, left for three years, and then returned to teach part time once again. After several years and several failed searches in her department, she did get a tenure-track position. She got through the tenure and promotion process to associate professor. The department was in the process of an internal search for a chair at the same time she was

going up for promotion to full professor. She applied, went through a lengthy interview process, and was hired for the position by the dean of her college.

Carol never had any aspirations to be department chair, but she was encouraged to apply by some faculty members that she respected. She stated, "I guess they saw something in me that I didn't recognize in myself." Other reasons she applied were because she was concerned about who might end up being chair if she did not apply. Further, she felt that being chair for a time would be a low-risk opportunity. Carol explained, "It's a three-year initial contract, and I think I can get through three years, and if not, I can go back and be on the faculty and be perfectly happy, so I didn't see it as a big risk adventure."

Carol was not sure if she has a particular leadership style, but described her approach as laid back. She thinks that it is important to lead by example. She thinks she has a "soft approach" and continues "to want to nurture and support." She is not sure that she is as strategic as other department heads. She believes people skills are her strength, but also her weakness. She said she is a good listener, tends to be quiet, and takes time to think things through. Carol hired a leadership coach to help her transition from her faculty role to an administrative role. The coach also helped her to be comfortable with who she is and to not try to fit some mold of what another leader is like. Being rather new to the role, she is still figuring some things out, like how much information to share with her colleagues. She does not want to be in the position where she has to justify every decision she makes, so she is still learning where that line is.

Carol finds two aspects of being department chair to be challenging. The first is that she does not have a mentor or confidante. She commented,

I'm not sure still who I can trust at this level, and I know I can't talk to my former friends and colleagues because of the position I'm sitting in. So I would say that's been the hardest piece for me, and I still don't have a solution.

The second challenging part of the role for Carol is dealing with colleagues and "people that don't get along, disagreements, people who are doing things that are just nasty or not right."

For Carol, the most rewarding aspects of being chair have to do with facilitating faculty productivity. She finds it gratifying to help faculty members obtain the resources they need to "make things happen." She also enjoys working with and mentoring new faculty.

Carol described a multi-faceted list of identities that are meaningful to her. She was able to easily provide a quite extensive list that covered a variety of aspects of her life. She stated that being a woman was "definitely part of her identity." Carol also remarked, "Being a mom is a strong part of my identity." Other identities from her personal life that were salient to Carol were being a wife and a daughter. She also mentioned that her religious affiliation was important to who she is as well as the traits of empathy, thoughtfulness, and compassion. Carol brought up two identities related to her work life that provide meaning – that of scholar and an identity related to her specific discipline.

**Ferdinand Ross.** On the day of my observation and interview, Ferdinand and I met briefly at his office before heading off to a series of meetings around campus and in the building. As we talked, he seemed to have an enormous amount of energy and was able to focus on one thing and then quickly move on to the next. People stopped by frequently to say hello or ask a question. He seemed to be used to the interruptions. His office struck me as very white and bright. The ceilings were tall, and one wall was entirely made of windows. A bulletin board and artistic prints lined the walls. One wall had bookshelves, although there were not very many books on it – just some binders, periodicals, and a few personal or decorative items. There was a large, rectangular conference table that can seat about nine people in one half of the office and Ferdinand's computer and desk were in the other half. The desk had papers spread out over it, but it was not overflowing.

Ferdinand worked in his field for about 10 years prior to entering the world of academia. He had a successful and developed professional career when he started doing sabbatical replacements for friends at several different schools. He discovered that he really liked teaching and realized that he needed to get a terminal degree in his field. About half way through his graduate program, he got a job offer at one school. When that ended, he got another job offer at his current institution on the tenure track with the caveat that in order to advance, he would need to finish his degree. Ferdinand gained some administrative experience in his department by taking on the responsibility for a program area and then the graduate program prior to becoming department chair.

Ferdinand decided to pursue becoming department chair because he felt that he had the skills to do it. Also, there were not many others willing to take it on that he thought would be able to do a good job. He said he wanted to be part of a well-regarded department in his discipline. He also saw a chance to make an impact on the department because there were several upcoming retirements that would create opportunities for new searches and hires.

Ferdinand has a remarkably positive view of his department and the challenges of being chair. He acknowledged that certain tasks and situations are stressful, such as “putting out fires,” dealing with conflicts, performance issues, the volume of email, tenure cases, and searches. Ferdinand mentioned that there are a couple of faculty members in his department who are problematic. He explained, “At any given point, one of them takes up more time and energy than the rest of the faculty put together. They are crisis driven, and it’s just the way they are, and they drive me crazy.” Overall, he does not feel that being department chair is particularly stressful.

Rather than the stressors, Ferdinand seemed to focus on the many things that he enjoys. He reported, “I like to do the things that are more on the visionary, mission side, trying to move the department forward or improve our visibility.” He also appreciates knowing and understanding more about the department’s relationship to the larger university and meeting interesting people in other administrative roles. Successfully completing a new hire is the most rewarding and fun thing he gets to do. Ferdinand gets a lot of enjoyment from sitting down with new faculty members at the beginning of an academic year. He likes the feeling of new energy in the department as well as being able

to keep up with changes in his discipline through choice of new hires. He also gets satisfaction from seeing the graduate students develop from where they started at the beginning of their programs to where they end up at the final transition point. Ferdinand also enjoys working with the department's external advisory board and helping the faculty members to be productive.

Ferdinand described his approach to leadership as informal, conversational, transparent, and team-based. He has learned a lot from administrators he has worked with in the past, such as proper procedures and how things work, but his style is his own and different from others he has observed. Over time, he has gotten more comfortable in the role which allows him to let his own personality come through in his leadership. Ferdinand tries "to make as few decisions as possible without consulting," but he sometimes gets feedback and encouragement from the faculty to "just do more things on my own."

Ferdinand's identities that are meaningful to him are a mix of his professional and personal life. He identifies strongly with his discipline and with academia in that he wants to be part of a well-regarded department in his field. His goal is a balance of "feeling like we have a high functioning family and trying to figure out what that integration is between commitment to my [discipline] and my school commitments and family."

**Sarah Eldon.** Sarah and I met in her office on a sunny, spring day. Her office was very small and longer than wide. The front space was occupied by a bookshelf and a round table with three chairs. The back space contained a computer desk with storage



cabinets. I noticed a couple of personal photographs and items around her desk and in the window sill, but the walls were noticeably bare. Before her first meeting of the day, Sarah proudly showed me around the building. I was impressed by its many beautiful, elegant spaces and the well-designed layout.

Sarah began her explanation of her career path to department chair by stating that she never expected to be a faculty member. She then went on to describe how her career began through her involvement in a particular type of community organization that is related to her discipline. She earned a master's degree and was an instructor at a research university when she was invited to join the Ph.D. program in her discipline. At first, she did not want a doctorate but became convinced that she would need it to keep her position. While working on her degree, she continued to be active in community organizations and was elected to a national board of directors. After completing her Ph.D., she applied for an opening for a tenure-track position in her field at her current institution and was hired. She moved through the ranks up to full professor while also being active in service to her department, school, and university. Sarah learned through her leadership experiences in the community organizations and university committees that administration was something that she could effectively do because the groups that she worked with were often able to accomplish larger goals than they had before her involvement.

Sarah said she became chair of her department because it was her turn to do it. She was unanimously elected because no one else wanted the position in the rather small department. Beyond this extrinsic reason for taking on the role of chair, she viewed it as

taking on another service role rather than something to advance or promote her career. She felt that her prior leadership experiences gave her the skills to bring a “higher quality of leadership” to the department. Sarah admitted that while things have been a “little rocky,” she thinks they are making progress.

Sarah finds that there are many challenges that she faces as department chair. One of them is the rotating nature of chairs in her department. Chairs typically serve one three year term. She has found that it took a year to get her feet on the ground and another year to figure out the possibilities. That only leaves one year to really accomplish something because of the steep learning curve. Sarah also said that dealing with difficult colleagues is challenging. She commented, “The interpersonal relations with difficult faculty members is very difficult, and I think if I were younger, I wouldn’t be able to deal with it.” Faculty members have lifetime jobs, and she explained, “People have been working together for a long time, and some have very long memories, and you don’t even know what they’re holding as a major grudge that’s driving their behavior.” The faculty has been critical of her and some of her decisions, but she also recognizes that they have been just as critical of previous chairs.

The rewards for Sarah in academia continue to revolve around her interactions with students, despite her administrative role. She has not taught while being chair, but she still has opportunities to work with students as an adviser and on projects and research. Sarah also enjoys the outreach activities that are related to her scholarly work. As far as the chair position is concerned, she finds her mentoring relationship with her staff person to be rewarding. She has also worked well with some of the faculty members

in the department. Lastly, Sarah also explained that there are few ways to get a raise and being chair is one of them, even though it is not a very large increase. It is a small reward to her to get her base salary up prior to eventual retirement.

Sarah summarized her leadership approach through how she tries to run meetings. She noted:

I think that one of the things that I try to do is gather people together and focus what they're going to talk about. I think carefully about the agenda, and then try to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to speak to a point, that everyone is heard fairly, and that if there is confusion, I try to clarify.

She said she does not dominate the conversation, but rather facilitates it. Interestingly, she does not try to get consensus because her experience has been that if everyone agrees, "you've watered things down to the point that you don't make progress." Instead, Sarah tries to make sure that everyone can "live with the decision." At the end of a meeting, she also makes sure that the next steps are discussed.

The identities that hold the most meaning for Sarah are those of wife and mother. She stated that they are "inextricably twined" for her and cannot be separated. She also identifies as a professor, "much to her amazement." Sarah reflected, "I'm proud to be one here and to have been able to make what I think is a successful career out of very non-traditional career path, and so that's important to me that I've been able to do that." She also emphasized the teaching aspect of being a professor as particularly meaningful. Lastly, Sarah also described some characteristics that are salient to who she is including being a good friend, approachable, fun to talk to, and someone who laughs a lot.

**Bill Gibbon.** Bill and I met for the observations and interview on a warm, spring day. He seemed full of energy and on the move right from the beginning. We went to get coffee and then did the interview first since that worked best for his schedule of meetings that day. After the interview, I had a chance to observe Bill during some time spent working in his office. His office was located in an older building on campus with lots of woodwork, high ceilings, and old cabinets. The room was surrounded by bookshelves on all four sides with three large desks in the middle. There were papers everywhere. As Bill hunted and pecked at the computer, I noticed that he had a photograph of his partner on his desk and another one with his partner and children. The image of his children seemed quite dated because they were much younger in the photograph than what he told me they were. In keeping with the retro feel of the office, Bill had an old style push button phone – a kind I had not seen in years.

Bill's career path in academia has been closely tied to his partner's career. She began her academic career as an assistant professor at another research institution while Bill finished up his dissertation. They were then hired at their current institution to basically fill two halves of a position. Over the years, their positions were both increased to full time. Bill's department is relatively small so eventually everyone takes a turn at being chair. He was chair for three years previously, took a year of sabbatical leave, and was finishing up a second year for a total of five years as chair.

Other than simply taking his turn, Bill did not have a lot of other motivations for taking on the role of chair. He explained, "I didn't consider myself to be a leader. I wanted to be someone who wanted to put in a certain kind of service . . . but it was

mostly, I felt it was just something I should do.” There were a couple of things that he was concerned about and wanted to get done during his tenure. Bill had a couple of years of previous administrative experience as an interim director of a program and also in leadership roles for the association affiliated with his discipline, but he mostly had to learn about being department chair on the job.

When asked about his leadership approach, Bill explained that he tries to be there as a “discussion facilitator” who gets people to focus on the issues and to reach solutions. His job is not to impose solutions. He also described himself as “somewhat anarchistic in his demeanor” and “a little more iconoclastic.” Not particularly a rule follower, Bill stated, “I do stuff that I’m told to do by the college when I see a reason for it.” Bill does not see himself as having a leadership personality, but rather as “someone who sort of gets involved with stuff and tries to see it through.” Reflecting on his time as chair, he commented that he thinks he has been “a good steward” and “at least an okay leader and maybe a good leader.” Despite his statements about not really seeing himself as a leader, he admits to trying to lead through persuasion and shape the department in certain ways by developing things that serve their long-term interests. Bill stated simply, “The most effective way to lead a small department like this is to really bring people along in an idea.”

Bill finds aspects of the role of department chair to be challenging and at times stressful. He particularly does not like dealing with conflicts. Bill described another frustration that leads to burnout as “you’ve worked very hard to cultivate the department’s well-being, and again it’s everything you do that is invisible and everything

that goes wrong is remembered forever.” He also believes that it is stressful to be chair because the university has been under so much stress due to budget cuts which has caused “a sense of being under siege.”

There are also enjoyable parts of the position for Bill. He likes dealing with the people in the college and believes that he is a good representative and advocate to the college for his department’s interest. He also managed a search process well and found that to be satisfying. Of all of the things he does, though, teaching is what he loves.

Bill struggled a bit when thinking about what identities were meaningful to him as a person. After a lengthy speech about his interests in gender and racial equity and how that tied into his personal research interests, he decided that his primary identification was that of teacher.

**Avery Target.** I met Avery at the door of her office when she came in the building for the day. My first impression of Avery’s office was that it was very dark because it had no windows. She immediately turned on some indirect lighting rather than the overhead fluorescent lights creating a warm glow in the room. Once lit, I realized the office was quite large with two doors – one to the hallway and one to the department office. Her desk and computer were in the back of the office with the back of the computer screen facing into the office. When I went behind her desk, she showed me that her screen saver had a phrase on it that included the words, “herding cats.” Avery smiled at me. I understood it to be a tongue-in-cheek description of her job as department chair. The rest of the office was filled with the usual trappings of a department chair: a table for meetings, filing cabinets, and bookshelves. I noticed that she had several books on

leadership and being a department chair on her shelves. Overall, the office had a homey feel because it was slightly cluttered and messy, and there was a couch along one wall as well as a small refrigerator and microwave. I did not see any personal photographs. I observed Avery at a meeting on campus, during her office hours, and at an end of the year awards event.

Avery recounted her career path for me. After her undergraduate education and a year and a half of graduate school, she started a career in her profession. She spent 13 years working for her own firm, learning business skills and working with clients. She had always envisioned that at some point she would like to teach, so she went back to graduate school to finish her terminal degree. The transition from professional work to academic life happened sooner than she thought it would.

The day after commencement, she got a call from a university asking her to be a visiting assistant professor for a year. Avery was not initially thrilled with academia, but she thought the teaching was fun. She stayed another year and was not planning to apply when they did a tenure track search for the position. The day before the search closed the dean and associate dean were in her office asking her if she was planning to apply. She told them no, but then decided to apply and got the position. She ended up staying there another four years through promotion and tenure. At that point, she felt it was time to leave for a number of reasons, and Avery was faced with the decision of whether to go back to her profession or continue in academia. She decided that she probably could not get back to where she was previously in her profession and she liked teaching, so she applied to a number of universities. The position at her current institution was one of

them. Avery admired the reputation and alumni of the program, so when she had the opportunity to be a part of it, she felt it was a real privilege. She went through the tenure and promotion process one more time.

Avery took on the role of chair as a newly tenured person who had only been at her university for three years. She was not even thinking about the possibility when several of her colleagues approached her about it. Avery recalled, "It wasn't even on my radar screen, but I guess they hit me on a good day or whatever." Unsure of how receptive the department would be, she sent out an email to the faculty letting them know that she was thinking about it and asking for feedback. The response was overwhelmingly positive, so Avery put her name on the ballot and got elected.

She did not go into the role of department chair with an agenda, although she knew of some issues that she wanted to address. In particular, Avery felt that there was little structure within in the department making it confusing to know who to go to for what and how the place worked. Intrinsically, the position appealed to her because it was another challenge, and she has always like challenges. Avery commented:

I was interested to see if I had what it took to be chair of a department because I had no idea. I didn't even know what the job entailed, so I guess it was a personal test as well as trying to solve some issues in the department.

When I asked Avery about her leadership style, she quickly stated that she uses situational leadership as an approach. I mentioned that I was impressed that she named a specific leadership theory, and she pointed to the leadership books on her shelf which she had been reading lately. She expounded that leadership really does depend on the



situation because there is not a “one-size-fits-all” approach. She has found it to be a difficult approach to use as department chair. Avery observed,

It can be a challenge because sometimes you’re not right. Maybe you don’t read the situation correctly . . . I would say five years ago it was scary. Having now been a chair for five years and knowing all the players, I’m more right on than I’m not, so it’s less scary now. It doesn’t mean sometimes it’s easy, but knowing the players helps.

Avery’s leadership style was also influenced by negative experiences with an administrator at her former school who used an “it’s my way or the highway” approach. She realized that it was not effective and made for a “very antagonistic atmosphere.”

Avery was able to name the identities that are most meaningful to her very quickly and easily. She named four identities. Teacher and mentor were the most important to her. The second two identities were related to her specific profession and discipline. She did not mention any identities related to her personal life.

### **Findings and Themes**

The participants in this study were very different people with unique perceptions, experiences, and identities that influenced their leadership in the role of department chair. Through my study of the data, I found themes that appeared across a number of cases. I chose to organize and present the findings as themes because I believe they will provide more useful information when considering the implications and recommendations of the study. The first four themes are closely related to the research questions because the protocol was specifically designed to answer them and therefore the majority of the data

was focused on these topics. The last two categories of themes are based upon additional analysis by the gender composition of the discipline/department and by institution. To give voice to individual participants, I used a significant amount of their “actual words” which is a manner of writing used frequently by feminist qualitative researchers (Sprague, 2005, p. 169). The findings and themes are presented in six categories: (1) perceptions of the effects of gender and other identities on leadership; (2) perceptions of leadership expectations; (3) effects of expectations on leadership performances; (4) definitions and expressions of power; (5) findings by gender composition of discipline/department; and (6) findings by institution.

**Perceptions of the effects of gender and other identities on leadership.** In this section, I summarize how the department chairs perceived their gender and other identities to affect their leadership. These findings address the first research question of the study: How do department chairs perceive that their gender and other identities affect their leadership? Since this research question focused on the chairs’ perceptions, I utilized primarily interview data for the analysis.

*Gender.* When asked about how their gender affected their leadership, several of the participants (Avery, Bill, and Robert) responded that it did not affect them. Avery, aware that her answer may not be what was expected for a woman answered, “Not really. I know that sounds weird, but not really.” Bill said simply, “I’m not sufficiently aware of ways it affects me.” Robert also replied that his gender did not affect him, but his explanation was about his response to others rather than his own gender. He expressed a high level of confidence that he does not allow gender to affect his work. Robert replied,

“I certainly have no, again we all could be blind to our own failings, but I would say there’s not an iota, not a scintilla of gender bias in any of my thinking or any of my attitudes.” It seems unlikely that Robert has avoided gender bias in his work because of the ubiquity of categorizing individuals by gender (or sex) and the assumptions that are tied to that categorization. This lack of gender awareness may actually make him more susceptible to gender bias. Eagly and Carli (2007) posit that “sex provides the strongest basis of classifying people” and that “classifying a person as male or female evokes mental associations, or expectations about masculine and feminine qualities. These associations are pervasive and influential even when people are not aware of them” (p. 85).

Sarah was initially unsure of her gender’s affect, but later in the interview Sarah predicted:

If I were a guy, this would be a different environment entirely. I don’t think that my, so I may be contradicting myself, but I think that if I were a senior male faculty member, I’m not sure that as a senior male faculty member I would tolerate some of the things that happen here, and I’m not sure that they would happen here because the women would respond differently.

Interestingly, Sarah also said:

I’m not so conscious of gender things, and it may be because there’s so many women around us. I think at base people are people, and I don’t think gender gets in the way too much, but I might be just blind to that part of what happens here.

Sarah's comments do seem to contradict one another; she expresses awareness that things might be different if she were a man, but because she mostly works with women, she's not conscious of it on a day-to-day basis.

Carol, Carolyn, Gus, and Ferdinand responded that they believed their gender affects what they do. Carol was the most certain, at least at first, and said, "Oh, I think it definitely affects what I do." When I asked her to describe how, she backpedaled a bit and added, "Well, maybe gender isn't so much of it, but I think people think I'm approachable. I think that I'm fairly easy to talk to. I hope that they think I'm trustworthy and will hold their confidences." Carol feels that these traits are a part of who she is, and is not sure whether or not they are related to her being a woman. She also explained that she thinks she has a "soft approach" to leadership and was raised to "make everybody happy, serve, don't put yourself first, put others first." While Carol was not sure about the effects of her gender, the traits she described are consistent with gender norms for women.

In Carol's follow-up interview, I asked her if there was anything that she had thought of about the effects of gender on her work since we last spoke. She proceeded to tell me about two situations that had occurred recently in which men faculty members tried to go around her to the dean to get the response they wanted. They were not following the appropriate procedures or chain of command for their concerns. In both cases, Carol was handling the matter through the proper channels and the faculty members were aware of her actions. I asked her if she thought their attempts to go around her were because she was a woman, and Carol replied:

I think that's partially it. I think part of it is just who they are as individuals.

There's one in particular I feel like there's really, he's respectful to my face, but I have this underlying current that he doesn't respect me.

Carol was still in the midst of handling these two situations and was not sure how they were going to turn out. Fortunately for Carol, her dean was supportive of her and aware of the faculty members' actions.

Carolyn's description of how her gender affects her work as chair was an amalgamation of characteristics that both reified and disrupted the norms of her gender. Carolyn attributed her "soft edges" leadership style to her southern upbringing and her gender. As she spoke further, she mentioned other aspects of her style or personality that were not consistent with gender norms, such as her temper and being competitive, opportunistic, and "quite a tomboy." By juxtaposing her feminine quality of soft edges with more typically masculine characteristics, Carolyn described herself in a way that disrupts the simplistic binary concept of gender and reveals a more complex view of her identity.

Gus found that his gender affects him in how he works with faculty members that have children or family concerns. He noted:

It affects it in so far as I try to, and you learn this, some of this you learn the hard way, you may make assumptions as a male and in my case I'm single, I have no children, that may not apply to someone you're dealing with that may be exactly wrong for them or may have an extra effect that's inappropriate, and that you, if you're not conscious of it, you can step on toes.

Gus was the only man to bring up a specific example of how his gender affects his work.

Ferdinand also responded affirmatively that his gender affects his leadership; however, when I asked him to explain further, he spoke about the gender imbalance in the faculty of his department rather than his own gender. He stated:

There's a historical imbalance that we're still in the process of correcting, and there's a lot of things that used to happen that I don't think happen as much anymore, but I think there's still vestiges of it, and it changes through the hires we make and the retirements that happen.

When looking across cases for themes, it may seem as if the women and men participants were similarly divided in their responses, with half believing that their gender has an effect and half believing that it does not; however, there were some differences when examining the details of the participants' explanations. The women were more likely to share specific ways in which their gender had an effect on their leadership and what they do as department chair. Two women, Carol and Carolyn, used the word "soft" to describe characteristics of their leadership. The women also expressed a more nuanced view of the effects, sometimes contradicting themselves in an attempt to explain the complexity. The men seemed to have more difficulty in addressing this question than the women. They were more likely to turn the question into the effects of others' gender rather than their own or were not able to discuss the impact of gender in more than a superficial way which made them seem less aware of gender issues than their women counterparts. The men were also more likely to see no connection between their gender and their leadership. These findings are consistent with the literature that suggests

that “because women occupy a subordinate status, they may be more reflexive about gender” (Martin, 2003).

***Other Identities.*** Most of the participants were able to describe ways in which other aspects of their identity affected what they do as department chair. Some focused more on the benefits of their other identities on their work (Carol, Avery). Carol’s identities as a woman, mother, scholar, wife, daughter, and [discipline specific], in addition to her religious affiliation and her characteristics as a thoughtful, empathetic, supportive, and compassionate person affect how she approaches and talks about problems as department chair. It also impacts who she talks to for counsel on issues. Carol explained that the identity that comes through most in her leadership is her religious affiliation. She responded:

It would probably be my core spiritual religious values because I have to live with myself regardless of what happens . . . I don’t wear my religion on my sleeve so it feels odd a little bit to say that, but I think that really is what drives a lot of my actions.

Avery also believes that her identities as a teacher, mentor, and [discipline specific] positively affect her work. In her words:

I think that they’re all part and parcel of the way I deal with people. They’re all part and parcel of the way I deal with the stuff, the mounds of stuff that I have to deal with . . . I think it all folds into what I do as chair.

She discussed how each identity helped her deal with specific challenges and duties.

Several of the participants (Carolyn, Sarah, Gus) brought up the challenges that other aspects of their identity caused in their leadership. The identities that were meaningful to Carolyn were survivor, resilient, friend, mother, grandmother, and photographer. Unable to separate these identities individually, she explained:

When I put all of that together . . . the hardest thing for me as a leader is to say, okay, this is your job, and you have to do this job, and if you don't do this job, you're going to get it . . . everybody has an outside life, and we have pressures from both of those . . . I don't lead by trying to separate that, which makes it very conflicted sometimes . . . One of the hardest things for me is to be an evaluator. I am an encourager.

Sarah also discussed how her identities as a wife, mother, professor, and friend cause some challenges in her work. She reflected:

I think that I may not be as . . . confrontational as I could be if those things hadn't been part of who I am . . . I haven't wanted to be part of the problem, and so I may have ducked some issues that I probably shouldn't have . . . but like everybody, I would like to be liked, and so I think that has affected it.

Sarah also recognized some benefits as well and stated, "I think I may be more understanding of people's problems and how family and personal catastrophes happen and how people need to be supported."

Gus brought up two identities other than the ones he said were important to him that affect his work. Gus' meaningful identities were that of teacher, scholar, and [discipline specific]; whereas the identities that affected him were his age and years of



experience. Gus has found that the younger generations of colleagues in his department have a different outlook than he does from not having been through as many ups and downs in the economics of higher education. Gus explained, “I have to remind myself to be particularly patient with some of them because they either haven’t been through this before, or they just don’t have the same perspectives as I do.”

Two of the participants (Robert and Ferdinand), did not describe any ways in which other aspects of their identity affected their work as department chair. In both cases, their responses changed the question from being about their identities into the identities of others. Robert’s self-reported meaningful identities were White, male, and gay. He responded, “Well, I hope not,” when asked if any of those identities affect him at work. Robert then went on to explain that his institution is very gay friendly, adding, “The important point about that is that you are known by your work rather than by your kind of gender identity.”

In a cross-case analysis of the data, two themes emerged: differences in meaningful identities and differences in perceptions of how their identities affect their leadership. The differences in meaningful identities were significant. In simple numbers, the women named more meaningful identities than the men. They were also more likely to name personal, non-work, or family-related identities, such as mother, friend, and wife. Only one person mentioned his race/ethnicity or sexual orientation (Robert). One woman (Carol) and one man (Robert) said that their gender was meaningful to their identity.

For the second theme, the majority of participants were able to describe ways in which their identities affected their work as department chair. Overall, the women were

better able to describe the effects of their identities than were the men. The women were also more reflexive about the benefits and challenges caused by their identities, whereas the men tended to bring up the effects of others' identities more than their own. As with gender, the women were more reflexive about the effects of their other identities than the men which is likely due to the subordinate status of many of their identities (Martin, 2003).

**Perceptions of leadership expectations.** Department chairs spoke at length about the number and variety of expectations placed upon them by faculty members. Gus summarized, "They want a hall monitor, they want a nursemaid, occasionally nanny, protector carrying the sword, lots of things." There were many similarities and some differences among the participants' perceptions. This section addresses the second and third research questions of the study: What do department chairs believe faculty members, students, and administration expect of their leadership? How do department chairs believe those expectations are related to the chairs' gender or other identities? The section is organized by the following categories of constituents: faculty members, administration, and students.

**Faculty members.** The chairs in this study dealt the most with their department's faculty members on a day-to-day basis; therefore, it is no surprise that they were able to discuss the plethora of expectations placed upon them by the faculty. A number of common expectations appeared across the participants' statements, including steward and provider of resources, accessible, and equitable. In addition, there were two types of expectations found in the data that were unique by gender: an emphasis on managerial

expectations by three of the men, and feelings of ambiguous or unrealistic expectations by two of the women.

*Steward and provider of resources.* All of the department chairs except one (Sarah) brought up that their faculty members expected them to care for or provide resources in some way. Carol said, “They expect me to be a good steward of our resources,” while Carolyn commented, “They’re always interested in me finding money.”

Gus and Robert were more detailed about their fiduciary expectations, and spoke about specific financial expectations held by their faculty. Gus explained, “They expect me to... protect the budget in the department, to make sure there’s money for them to go off to conferences and give papers.” Robert also gave specific examples of expectations, throwing in some humor along the way. In his words:

People will need a piece of equipment, and I’ll try to find the money to actually do [*sic*] the equipment. If someone wants to bring a lecturer in for their class, I’ll try to find the money to make sure that takes place. If someone wants to organize a meeting or something of that sort, we’ll try to make sure that there’s space in the department for that, so I try to be responsive to legitimate requests that people make. You know if someone comes in and says that they want to buy a giraffe, I probably would think twice about that.

Four of the participants (Carol, Avery, Ferdinand, and Bill) found that despite the expectations for resources, faculty had learned to temper their expectations with an awareness of department and economic constraints. Carol mused, “I think there’s a hope that I can find resources. I don’t know that they fully expect that I can because just the

way things have been for the last number of years. Resources have been tight.”

Ferdinand’s faculty members have also learned that he does not have funds at his disposal. He noted, “I mean they know I don’t really have access to any particular special resources. They kind of know the system.” Bill’s faculty members also understand the constraints and have become more resource independent as a result. He explained:

It’s a pretty self-help kind of, I mean . . . it’s certainly my job to make them aware of resources. If the dean explains that something is coming, I mean it’s my job to go to meetings and find out what resources are there . . . but for us, it’s pretty much go out and get your own thing.

The topic of resources was discussed by most of the participants. All but one brought it up in their explanation of faculty expectations. The chairs were aware of the demands and tried to accommodate them as much as possible, while some found that faculty members were understanding of department financial limitations.

*Accessible.* Six of the participants (Carolyn, Carol, Sarah, Avery, Ferdinand, and Bill) talked about the expectation that they be available to faculty members. Carolyn explained, “I think they think that I should be here, accessible most of the time.” Carol and Bill also believed they were expected to be available, and it has not been an issue for them. Carol commented, “I guess I haven’t had too much problem with, I think, people not thinking I’m accessible.” Bill complied with the accessibility expectation and said, “No one would claim I haven’t been accessible – [I’m] too accessible.”

The expectation of accessibility posed challenges for Sarah, Avery, and Ferdinand. Sarah perceived that some faculty members believed she was not there

enough, but she was perplexed that “no one ever comes to talk to me.” Avery also spoke about frustrations with the expectation of accessibility. She lamented:

I hear every semester that she’s never here when I need her. Sorry, but I could be here five days a week, 9-to-5, and they still would, I wasn’t here in the five minutes that they needed me because I went to lunch or something.

Avery and Ferdinand also discussed the difficulties of balancing accessibility with getting their work done. Avery found that being a department chair was not just about being available and in your office, but “that you have other meetings to go to, you have other constituencies that you have to deal with, as well as you’ve got to find time to get the work done.” Ferdinand noted:

A big thing is like when I’m working, do I leave my doors open because I want to leave them open because I want people to be able to stop in, but I also find that when I do leave them open, I don’t get anything done, but there’s usefulness in being interrupted, so it’s sort of a balance between the two . . . I close them more and more actually just because I’m like behind.

These six participants understood that accessibility was important to their faculty, and they made efforts to accommodate that expectation. In the eyes of their faculty, some were more successful at it than others. These chairs were also very cognizant of the balancing act required to be available for their chair role as well as fulfill the duties of their other roles.

*Equitable.* Half of the department chairs (Carolyn, Carol, Gus, and Ferdinand) addressed the faculty expectation of fairness or equity. Gus stated, “They expect the chair

to be fair in dealing with people, fair, evenhanded,” and Ferdinand said that faculty expected “equitable treatment and transparency.”

Carolyn and Carol went into more detail about the challenges of trying to meet the expectation of equity. Carolyn reported:

They expect me to be fair and equitable, but the kicker for that is that we all have different definitions of what equity is and what being fair is. I learned that, and my definition is many times not the person’s definition, so I think they do expect me to do that.

Carol also addressed the difficulties in applying fairness across faculty members and commented:

It’s not just being fair to the individual, but because we are a department with so many different components who are very different, I think they expect me to be fair to all of the kids in the family. I mean that’s kind of the analogy I would use is that everybody doesn’t necessarily get treated equally because they have different needs, but I think everybody needs to feel like I’m being equitable in the decisions, or it’s your turn now and it will be this other person’s turn later.

For Carolyn and Carol, the expectation of fairness and equity was not just simple equality; rather it was a more complex concept that required the recognition of understandings of equity other than their own and the differing needs of individuals.

*Ambiguous and unrealistic expectations.* Two of the women department chairs (Sarah and Avery) spoke a number of times about a variety of ambiguous and unrealistic expectations placed upon them by faculty members. When asked what faculty expected

of her, Sarah summed her feelings concisely and exclaimed, “I wish I knew. I would do it.” Sarah elaborated about the unclear expectations faculty have about transparency and said, “They want to not be bothered with minutia, and so now they think I’m not transparent enough, so I don’t know.” She also said, “They want more information, but I honestly don’t know what more information they want.” Sarah also described her frustrations with unrealistic expectations. In her words, “So I think they want me to do what they exactly want when it is impossible because we’re a group of people existing in a larger group of people, so we need to build things that are reasonable.” Sarah attributed the faculty’s unrealistic expectations at least partially on a lack of appreciation for the complexities of the department chair position. She postulated, “I’m not sure they understand fully what the chair’s job entails and how much reporting there is and meetings and that kind of thing. I just don’t think they understand that still, and you’d think they would.”

Avery also recalled an example of ambiguous expectations from the faculty. She articulated, “I think I don’t meet their expectations in the sense that I make them do the work.” Avery explained further:

They would just rather have me do the work, but that’s not what faculty governance is about, so I would say that their expectation is that I would make more decisions. I think it’s a mixed expectation. I think their expectation is that I would deal with things rather than make them deal with it, but at the same time they don’t want me to make decisions without their input, so it’s a mixed bag.

Like Sarah, Avery has also dealt with unrealistic or impossible expectations. When asked what faculty members expect of her, she remarked:

When they have a problem, to have an answer. And I think pretty much either I give them, I do give them an answer, or I tell them I will find out the answer. I am good at that, but they want the answer that they want, and I think that's always an expectation that you have to contend with is if they ask the question, they have to be prepared for both sides of the answer, and they're not always prepared for that.

Avery also brought up a specific situation where several faculty members expected her to respond to a situation in a way that she was unable to because of the faculty governance structure and other policies and laws in her institution and state. The faculty members were upset about how Avery handled a particular meeting and an important vote, saying that she should have “steered the conversation in a different direction” and “not have allowed the vote to happen.” Avery researched their demands and verified that she could not have done what they wanted her to do. When she told the faculty members what she had learned, she received an apology, but they were still not satisfied with her actions and the result.

Sarah and Avery's experiences with ambiguous and unrealistic expectations seemed to cause them significant frustration as department chairs. Faced with no-win situations and moving targets, they do their best to navigate the perilous waters of trying to satisfy their faculty's expectations.

*Managerial expectations.* Three of the department chairs (Robert, Gus, and Bill), all men, mentioned expectations of faculty members that were more managerial in nature



and less leadership focused. Robert stated simply, “They expect me to keep things running.” Bill declared, “They expect you to manage the paper, to not be late with stuff, to not lose stuff, to make sure that the department’s work gets done. They expect you to advance their interests.” Gus was even more specific when he described:

They want signatures. They want letters. They want the chair to make sure the department is running and providing for their needs when they need it. Whether it’s laptop computers to take to class, whether it’s temperature control. Well, they know not to bring it to me, but I hear about it if the administrator can’t quite make it work, if the rooms are too hot or too cold, the classroom is not right.

Robert, Gus, and Bill all spoke about the day-to-day tasks that keep the department running and the paperwork moving as being important to the faculty.

To summarize the faculty expectations of department chairs, I found several commonalities across participants, including the expectations of steward/provider of resources, accessibility, and equitability. I also identified a couple of differences that appeared to be gender related. Two women (and no men) spoke about the challenges of ambiguous and unrealistic faculty expectations. Role ambiguity has been shown to cause stress for department chairs (Lucas, 1994), although Gmelch and Burns (1994) did not find any significant differences in the amount of stress experienced by women and men in the position. Three men (and no women) discussed the managerial day-to-day tasks of keeping a department operating smoothly. When considering faculty expectations in particular, the men department chairs were more likely to emphasize managerial tasks than the women which is consistent with a more transactional style of leadership. This

supports previous research that has found that men leaders tended to be more transactional and laissez faire in leadership style (Eagly et al., 2003).

**Administration.** When asked about their perceptions of administration's expectations, the department chairs primarily discussed the expectations of their immediate supervisors who were deans or associate deans. Department chairs' perceptions of administrative expectations were, for the most part, quite clearly defined. Avery noted, "That's probably the one I know most clearly because they're pretty clear." There were two notable exceptions; Carolyn and Sarah expressed that expectations from administration lacked clarity.

Carolyn communicated an attempt to gain a better understanding of expectations with little success. She said she has to assume that because she's been in the position for 10 years, she must be meeting administration's expectations. Carolyn mused:

I don't know, you'd have to ask her [the dean]. Nobody has ever come to me and said you're not doing what you're supposed to, and I ask. I'm very direct. Are there things you wish me to do that I'm not doing? Are there ways in which you want this department to move and I'm not doing that? And I never get an answer.

Sarah also is unsure of expectations and commented, "The role of department chair is a little bit unclear so I'm not sure their expectations are real clearly defined."

I recognized two themes across the data about administration's expectations. The first was that department chairs felt administration wanted them to handle issues as much as possible in the department. Second, the participants spoke mostly about managerial-type expectations as opposed to leadership-related expectations. The three participants

who also felt that administration expected them to be effective leaders were women: Carolyn, Carol, and Sarah.

*Handle issues in the department.* Five of the department chairs (Carolyn, Carol, Gus, Robert, and Bill) discussed the perception that administration wanted chairs to handle as many issues as possible in the department, while keeping administration informed as needed. Carolyn contended, “She [the dean] wants really good people who can handle the issues and not come whining all the time. . . . I always try to keep her informed . . . and I try never to surprise her.” Carol expressed a similar sentiment and explained:

I think they expect me to handle the majority of things at the department level. I think they want to know what’s going on. . . . I make sure he [the dean] knows if anything is up or anything is going on because I don’t want him to be blindsided.

When asked if administration expected chairs to handle things in the department as much as possible, Gus replied, “Yeah, because they’ve got their hands full, and that’s why they have department chairs,” and Robert said, “That’s mostly true. I don’t go to the dean with much.” Bill also agreed that his immediate supervisor, an associate dean, wanted him to take care of most concerns himself and noted, “She [the associate dean] expects, mostly she has so much to do that she wants me not to bother her.”

*Managerial versus leadership expectations.* All eight department chairs addressed specific managerial-type tasks that administration expected them to do. A wide range of duties were brought up, including: budgeting, communication, documents, reports,

deadlines, feedback, and follow-through. Three of the chairs also focused on leadership-related expectations.

Gus, Robert, Avery, and Carol described very concrete tasks required by administration. Robert briefly explained, “They expect me to meet deadlines and push the paper around and write good reports.” Gus remarked:

They want answers to questions. They want documents delivered. They want reports that they ask for. They want the department’s programs explained and defended, and they want us to help them solve their problems, and they’ll call any time of the day, some of them, or send emails any time of the day.

Avery also enumerated a very specific list of expectations of department chairs from administration:

They want us to be the conduit through which their thoughts and wishes and desires are filtered down to the faculty and the staff. They want us to respond to all of the exercises and to make sure that the department runs in an effective and proper way in terms of the rules and regulations and doing all the legal things correctly, and that the funds, the state funds that we’re entrusted are in good hands, being good stewards of our resources, and our donors.

Carol summed up administration’s expectations and commented, “I think they just expect me to follow through with their requests.”

Sarah’s perceptions of administration’s expectations focused more on her interactions and less on specific tasks. In her words:

They want me to approach them nicely. It's really clear that their expectations are reasonable in that way that they appreciate that I'm not angry . . . They just want to know if they have to deal with a department chair that whatever has to happen will happen, and in an agreeable way.

While all of the chairs were able to describe specific managerial tasks expected of them, three chairs (Carolyn, Carol, and Sarah) also spoke of leadership-related expectations from administration. Carolyn expressed that she believed administration wants her to be "supportive of the policies and the activities of the college." Carol was clear about the leadership demands placed on her:

I think they expect a certain amount of strategic thinking or creative thinking from me. The college is always in transition, so some of that is going on now, and so I think that's definitely an expectation that I contribute to the vision or the way forward for the department.

Sarah also understood the administration's expectations toward leadership and stated, "I think she [the dean] is expecting that we're going to create teams out of our departments, that we're going to be very high functioning teams, that chairs are going to be leaders."

An examination of the data about administration's expectations by gender revealed a couple of similarities and one key difference. Both men and women spoke about how administration expected them to handle issues in the department and complete day-to-day management tasks; however, only three of the chairs, all women, also addressed expectations that could be considered more leadership-oriented in nature. The women's focus on leadership, strategic thinking, and creativity is consistent with

previous research on leadership style that suggested women leaders tend to be more transformational than men (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001). Women tend to work to motivate and empower their followers toward common goals, communicate values and purpose with enthusiasm, and innovate new solutions to problems; whereas men tend to be more transactional and laissez faire in leadership style, enacting more traditional, managerial, supervisory, or hands off ways of leading (Avolio & Bass, 2002; Bass, 1985).

*Students.* Department chairs' perceptions of students' expectations were less clear and less extensive than the expectations they reported from faculty and administration. The chairs described very limited interactions with students, particularly undergraduate students. In most cases, dedicated staff or faculty members serve as the primary interface with students. The expectations from students were mostly to handle serious issues. The chairs also perceived some additional expectations from graduate students.

*Limited direct contact.* Six of the department chairs (Carolyn, Carol, Sarah, Avery, Robert, and Ferdinand) indicated that they had limited contact with students, usually undergraduates. Carolyn said, "Undergraduates don't know very much about me." Sarah explained:

I don't see them. Students interact with [a staff person] a lot. She doesn't send them to see me. I think she's conscious of how much time it takes me to do this job. I think they see the department chair as a distant figure. I'm not in the classroom.

Avery also believed that students were unaware of her position as department chair and responded, “They probably have no idea actually what a chair does. I could say something like they expect me to guide the department in the right way, but they don’t know who I am.” Ferdinand spoke about his limited interactions with undergraduate students and declared, “Undergrads don’t have really much contact with me, so their interface would be almost 100% through [a staff person].”

*Limited expectations.* The limited contact with students subsequently brought limited expectations overall. The most commonly mentioned expectation was to solve serious problems that were not able to be solved in other ways. All of the chairs spoke of problem solving for students. Additionally, half of the participants (Carolyn, Carol, Robert, and Bill) were able to identify some graduate student expectations because the chairs tended to work with graduate students more closely.

Participants addressed the students’ expectation of problem-solving in a number of ways. Robert and Sarah reported that student problems they have to address are uncommon. Robert explained, “I occasionally . . . have to handle a student complaint about something or other . . . This is a very rare occurrence.” Sarah also said, “They don’t come to me very often, so I don’t know if they have concerns. I’m here. I’m always on email. I’ve had to solve a few problems, and I did for them.”

Carol, Ferdinand, and Gus spoke about the seriousness and challenges of issues that come to them as chairs. Carol mentioned, “I think they expect me to help resolve any serious issues that come up with their academics or guide them where they would go or how they would resolve it.” Ferdinand expressed his willingness to get involved with

serious student issues, but also brought up that the graduate chair should be the conduit. He elaborated by saying, “They make appointments with me when things happen that would probably most likely be some sort of a fire that needs to be put out, so I am accessible to them, but really things should come through the grad chair.” Lastly, Gus revealed some frustrations when he talked about dealing with student issues. He lamented:

They expect the chair to be able to solve all problems quickly with no great cost to them and to take responsibility and fix things if they can’t, and of course sometimes you have to spend half the session with a student explaining what I can do and what is out of my control.

In addition to problem solving, Carolyn, Carol, and Bill listed some expectations specifically from graduate students. Carolyn said that graduate students expect her to be respectful, while Carol reported that they expect her to provide funding. Bill had the most extensive list of graduate student expectations and said:

They require the chair to be someone who looks out for their interests to the faculty, they are the ones who I have to make sure that they are getting good mentoring from their advisors, I have to make sure that the financial aid distributions are fair.

From the chairs’ point of view, student expectations were the least clear and specific of all of their constituents. Overall, the participants were uncertain of what students expected of them other than problem solving. A few of the chairs were also aware of specific expectations from graduate students. There were no discernible or



significant differences across gender as all participants' responses were quite similar regarding the expectations of students.

*Relationship of expectations to gender and other identities.* Many of the participants seemed to have difficulty thinking of ways the expectations of their leadership might be related to their gender or other aspects of their identity. Two of the women department chairs responded that they thought their gender affected expectations; conversely, none of the men thought their gender had an impact on expectations. One man thought that other aspects of his identity may have an effect, while two of the other men attributed differences in expectations to other factors.

Carolyn and Carol both believed that gender may affect faculty expectations in particular. Carolyn explained:

I think the way they come to me may be related to my gender which is related to the way I lead, but sure, I think it probably is gender related. But I see it for me as I think about it, I don't often think about it as gendered. I think about it as the way I lead, and so I think that certainly goes into what they expect.

Carol felt that her gender as a woman made the faculty expect her to "be empathetic" and "listen to their crisis."

For the most part, Gus perceived that his gender and other identities did not have an effect on faculty expectations. In his words:

Not in obvious and overt ways. They would expect pretty much the same of any chair. They might deliver the messages, the courtesies, the rhetoric, the discourse with me might be a little different than it would be with somebody younger or a

woman, or, I don't know, if we had an African-American chair, I don't know how they would behave.

After thinking about it a bit, Gus said, "Age and experience are as important or more important in terms of what they expect of a chair and how they will treat the chair as anything else." Even though these two aspects of his identities were not ones that he previously mentioned as being meaningful to him, he recognized that age and experience might affect what others expect of him as department chair. Gus noted, "They'd be more, tend more to expect the chair to know everything than maybe an inexperienced one." Gus also thought students might treat a chair with other identities differently, but he was not sure how. Gus predicted:

I'm sure they [students] would deal with a younger person differently than somebody over 60. They might well behave differently with a woman compared to a man. Some of them would treat a person of color different from a white person . . . They might well respond differently or treat differently, a person of color. How they would? I don't know. I haven't witnessed it, and I haven't been gauging it. It's a little hard to gauge because you really need an a-b comparison.

Robert and Ferdinand attributed possible differences in expectations to other factors. Robert remarked, "I think more important than gender identity is being an open and welcoming person and giving the message that you're willing to listen." When I asked Ferdinand if he thought gender or other aspects of his identity might affect expectations, he replied:

I don't think so. Not in any way that I think about it or notice very much because if I think of the last four chairs including myself, our leadership styles are so different. The four of us are so completely different that I think people are just used to different styles. . . . I think they care more about efficiency or efficacy, you know what you manage to get done.

After analyzing the perceptions of the chairs about the potential effects of gender or identities on expectations, there were some differences between genders. Two of the women chairs expressed ways in which their gender might have an impact and gave examples, and none of the men did. Two men attributed differences in expectations to other factors such as personality and leadership styles. One of the men chairs thought there might be possible effects, but he was unable to identify any specifically.

**Effects of expectations on leadership performances.** This section provides an analysis of the data for the fourth research question: How do department chairs' perceptions of others' expectations affect their leadership performances? Since this question focuses on performances, I include examples from the observations and the documents that I collected in addition to interview data. First, I consider how the department chairs expressed their identities in their professional and personal lives. Second, I analyze whether or not and how the participants felt empowered or disempowered by their identities. Third, I describe my observations of gendered performances, including appearance and clothing, emotions, interactions and reactions, and silence or absence.

*Expression of identities in professional and personal life.* I asked the participants to think about whether they expressed their gender and other identities in a similar or different manner at work as compared to their personal lives to see if they adjusted their behaviors depending upon the setting. Most of the department chairs felt that they were the same or similar in both types of settings, although several were able to think of at least one way in which they were different.

*Same or similar.* Seven of the participants (Carolyn, Carol, Avery, Gus, Robert, Ferdinand, and Bill) felt that they were the same or similar in both types of settings. Carolyn, Gus, and Ferdinand talked about how the demands of being department chair either made having a personal life difficult or caused them to integrate work and personal life together. Carolyn said, "Because I work so much, I sometimes wonder how much of a personal life I have." Gus went further and explained that being a department chair required him to keep his professional and personal lives similar and integrated. In his words:

At this level of professional life, one, these jobs are very consuming. Your private life can't be all that separate or all that different given how consuming these jobs are - one, two - given how challenging these jobs are. If you're going to be a success, you have to have a well-integrated and stable personality. You have to know who you are and other people have to know who you are.

Ferdinand's personal life was also integrated with his professional life. His partner has been involved in the department and knows many of the faculty. She comes to

department events, both academic and social. Ferdinand admitted that because of her involvement in the department, “I think I don’t have very much separation at all.”

Robert and Avery both used the same idiom to describe themselves in their work and in their personal lives. Robert said “I think it’s a real case of what you see is what you get. I mean I don’t have one face for my private life and one face for my public life.” Avery, too, commented, “I’ve always been kind of a what you see is what you get.”

Carolyn used the word authentic to describe her overall way of being. She pointed out that regardless of the situation, she believes “that the core of me is authentic.” I asked Carolyn to define what authenticity meant to her, and she responded:

That my core values are reflected in what I do, and they are reflected in all the work that I do or the work interactions I have as well as the interactions that I have with others, which means that sometimes you do things that you didn’t really want to do and you do it at work and you do it socially because of your value to be respectful and to recognize that we all benefit from social support. So I would say that’s kind of where I think I am is that I do believe in collaboration. I do believe in not just being a friend in name only, in that if you’re going to be a friend, it comes with obligations just like this job comes with obligations. It’s not just that you are free when you feel like it, and so I guess that’s what I would say.

Carolyn’s definition of authenticity fits with the literature on authentic leadership.

According to Avolio, Gardner, Walumbwa, Luthans, and May (2004), authentic leaders “know who they are, what they believe and value, and they act upon those values and beliefs while transparently interacting with others” (p. 802). Authenticity within the

context of leadership is considered to be relational because “leaders endorse values that promote the interests of the larger community and transparently convey these values to followers” (Eagly, 2005, p. 461).

*Different.* One department chair, Sarah, was upfront about her belief that she is different in a number of ways at work compared her personal life. At work, she is more independent, patient, energetic, and analytical. At home, she is more dependent, creative, impulsive, and relaxed. In her words:

I think I’m different. I think I’m – not a lot – but a little more dependent at home, much more independent at work. I think I’m more patient at work and less patient at home. . . . I have more energy when I’m at work because I, a lot of my energy goes into my work so that I’m not as energetic at home. . . I think I may be more creative at home. I don’t know. At work I try to see all the different aspects. I try to see what are all the assumptions that I’m making or what are the potential consequences of inaction, and I’m not sure that I do that as carefully when I’m at home. I think I decide things much more on spur of the moment at home. I think I relax more at home.

Sarah also said that she dresses up more for work and explained:

I’m conscious, or try to be conscious, of my appearance more at work. I feel like I’m modeling whatever it is a department chair is, and people are looking to me to do that, and I don’t feel like I’m being watched as much at home.

Three of the other department chairs (Carol, Avery, and Bill) who said they had similar ways of expressing themselves at work and in their personal lives described at

least one way in which they were different. Carol said she was slightly more formal at work than at home. Avery acknowledged that her situational leadership approach caused her to have to make adjustments in her expressions at work. She explained:

We talked about taking on different sort of roles or persona in different situations. That's true. I don't have to do that at home. I can just not have to worry about selling the department or being the cheerleader, so there's some things I can leave behind.

I observed Avery as a participant in a meeting and at an awards ceremony, but I did not have an opportunity to see her lead a formal meeting. Avery dressed, spoke, and acted more formally at the awards ceremony than when I observed her in the meeting and during her office hours. Other than that, I did not notice any behaviors across contexts that I could attribute to her situational leadership approach.

Bill found that he had to consciously monitor his behavior in one particular aspect of his position – department meetings. He stated:

There's very little deliberate putting on a game face except for department meetings . . . I like going to interesting meetings. I don't like going to uninteresting meetings, and I want to choose, and so department meetings have been one place where I've had to really put on a game face because I tend to get crabby and short tempered, and it's come out sometimes over the years, but not that often, and so that's certainly one way . . . Most of the various chair roles I feel, except for department meetings, don't require me to consciously think about behaving.

Interestingly, I had the opportunity to observe Bill as he led a department meeting. I noticed at times he seemed a bit sarcastic and abrasive – behaviors I did not observe in his other interactions during the day. I did not see any visible reactions to these particular behaviors in the faculty members, but I was slightly uncomfortable. I felt as if I was privy to a private family argument because the department is small and the faculty members seem to know each other very well.

*Feelings of empowerment or disempowerment.* Most of the department chairs could not think of any ways in which their gender or other identities empowered or disempowered them as leaders. There was one exception, Carolyn, who described how her gender caused both positive and negative effects on her leadership.

Seven participants (Carol, Sarah, Avery, Gus, Robert, Ferdinand, and Bill) reported that they were not aware of any empowerment or disempowerment as a result of their gender or other identities. Their varied explanations provide insights into the reasons for their responses and are more informative than their initial responses might indicate.

Robert and Avery both explained that they did not feel empowered or disempowered because gender and other identities were not an issue in their departments. Robert stated:

I never have felt it . . . As far as being gay, there's nothing. This is not a place where this is an issue. A lot of people may not even know I'm gay. I don't know. I hardly ever talk about it, and I never make a big point of it, but it's never been even mentioned to me once. I mean there's complete acceptance, I think.



When asked if she ever felt empowered or disempowered, Avery replied, “Not really. I really have to say no . . . it’s all invisible in terms of race/ethnicity, sexual preference, it’s just invisible. We don’t even – it’s not an issue.”

Gus and Sarah could think of examples of feeling empowered or disempowered in previous positions, but not in their current positions as department chairs. Gus reasoned that this was because he was chosen as chair by people who already knew him and said, “You know when you’re appointed as department chair from inside, you’re a known quantity, both among your colleagues and administrators. They know who they’re getting.” Sarah also did not experience an effect, but admitted that it might be there. She stated:

I have been very conscious at times that it made a difference that I was a woman, and I don’t think that occurs to me in this job. I just don’t think it has had an impact. Maybe because I’m not willing to accept it, but I just don’t think it has, unless you know it may be that women treat women in authority differently.

Ferdinand explained that he did not think being male had empowered him because of the current awareness and emphasis on identity concerns. Ferdinand’s perceptions also seemed to prioritize issues of race/ethnicity over other aspects of identity such as gender. He commented:

I don’t think there’s any place where being a male has empowered me or given me more power because I think there’s so much more of a culture at the moment of you need to really be paying attention and being aware of what gender and

diversity issues are. If I was an American Indian or something, that would be a different question.

Ferdinand discounted the effects of his gender and seemed to convey that if he was a person of color, his response would be different and that he might then experience empowerment or disempowerment because of his identities.

Carol and Bill could not think of or were not aware of any ways in which they were empowered or disempowered by their identities. Carol mentioned some individuals who had concerns with her position, but she did not feel it was because of her gender.

She replied:

I can't really think of any instances. I know there's some interpersonal relationships I have that have an issue with me being the department head, but I think it would be [an issue with] anybody. It's not necessarily me or my gender. I don't know that I feel like it gives me any great advantage.

Bill also recognized no effect, but transitioned his response into how he deals with the identities of others. He responded:

Not that I'm aware of, not that I'm aware of. I don't, I'm very aware that I'm a guy, but I'm also very ironic and self-aware of that and so that makes, I think that makes me fairly easy-going with dealing with women or dealing with other guys.

Carolyn was the only department chair who identified ways in which she was empowered and disempowered by an aspect of her identity – gender. She first addressed how her gender has empowered her. Carolyn remarked:

I take great pride in the fact that I am a woman and that I make decisions in a gendered way, and I don't know that we talked about that before, and that I relish that, and on a number of occasions when students or faculty speak to me about being authentic and compassionate, those are things that I think we often say about women. I guess we said those about men too, but when I think of how gender has assisted me in my work, I'm proud of that fact.

She also provided another example of empowerment when she reflected, "I think the successes that I've had are related to a more gendered nuanced way of leadership."

Carolyn was also aware that her gender occasionally had some negative effects in addition to the empowering ones. There were times that she felt she was being manipulated because of who she was and explained, "I can almost name you the times that I felt people were trying to take advantage of me in light of what they knew about the important values I hold, but I don't think it's very often." Additionally, Carolyn attributed the belief that she can control more than she can to her gender. When talking about a particularly volatile incident in her department, she posited:

I questioned my leadership to let it get out of hand, but then I think that's gendered to think you can control everything. Why would I think it's my fault that somebody did something that ignited this? But I did think that, and so I would say assuming that I have more influence than I do.

Carolyn's perceptions of empowerment and disempowerment because of her gender are particularly interesting when compared to the responses of the other participants who seemed to be unaware of the effects of gender on their leadership or thought that gender

and other identities were non-issues. She is proud of her identity as a woman and the effect it has on her decision-making and leadership, while also believing that her gender has negative implications, such as causing her to question her leadership, thinking that she can control everything, and having people take advantage of her because of her values.

*Gendered expressions.* The department chairs expressed their identities in ways that went beyond their verbal statements alone. While an examination of language is a key component of using performativity as an analytical lens, it is also important to consider other ways in which individuals perform their identities, such as their appearance and clothing, how they express emotions, how they interact with others, and how they use silence or absence. Since performativity focuses primarily on issues of gender, I organized the participants in each topic by women and men.

*Appearance and clothing.* The women and men department chair participants expressed themselves through their appearance and clothing in a variety of ways during my observations of them. In this section, I briefly summarize how each participant appeared and conclude with a consideration of commonalities and differences across cases.

Carolyn was dressed casually and comfortably. She wore a purple sweater over lime green sweater and gray pants. Carolyn's shoes looked like outdoor type shoes appropriate for the wintery weather of the day. She wore purple and silver dangly earrings, and wore modern style glasses. Her hair was short and her fingernails were natural, but longer in length. During the interview, Carolyn spoke about how a colleague

told her she needed to wear a suit when she began to interview for jobs in higher education. She chuckled and commented, “I said I would have to wear purple suede boots in order to feel comfortable trussed up in a suit like that.” Carolyn acknowledged that she is aware of professional standards of dress and adjusts her clothing choices accordingly, such as if she was going to a dinner or meeting with the president. She stated that she is more comfortable in pants and does not wear dresses any more, but she remembered that there was a time in her career when she did not have that choice.

Carol’s manner of dress was fashionable and neat, but not too formal. She wore a gray sweater with mid-length sleeves layered over a gray and white striped turtleneck, black pants, and black boots. Her hair was short, she wore glasses, and she had on some makeup including lipstick. Her jewelry was simple silver earrings and a ring on each hand. Carol’s fingernails were short and coated in clear nail polish. Carol admitted that she thinks about what she wears a lot. She explained her clothing choices as follows:

I would say semi-casual, but definitely with a sweater jacket or something that looks semi-professional. If I’ve got a big presentation to do or a meeting with the dean or people are coming in to visit, I might dress up a little bit more formally, but I think on a day-to-day basis, I do think about what I wear. It’s kind of more of a burden sometimes than I wish it was.

Sarah wore black pants, black casual athletic shoes, and a black and white sweater. There were dangling circular earrings in her ears, a silver bracelet on each arm, and rings on both of her hands, accented by bright teal nail polish on her fingernails. Sarah did not appear to be wearing makeup and her hair was short. Her glasses were

black with a funky design on the side. Sarah remarked that she does dress up more for certain meetings, but commented that “dressing up for me is not real dressed up.” She is, however, conscious of her appearance at work and feels like she should set an example because she is the department chair.

Avery’s style of dress was very casual. She wore jeans, a blue patterned shirt, and tennis shoes. She was not wearing makeup, her hair was shoulder length, and she had simple, rimless eye glasses. Around her wrist was a silver watch, and she wore simple stud earrings. I also observed Avery at an end of the year event where she was more formally dressed in a black blazer and pants with a green blouse. Avery noted that her department is “pretty laid back with the way we dress,” but she does dress up occasionally. She said, “Yeah, when I go to campus meetings certainly with the dean I put on my better jeans. I don’t change persona. I still, I put on black tennis shoes and my black jeans.” Avery went on to say that she does make:

A little adjustment, but I don’t completely swap personalities or I don’t do my hair differently. I don’t put on makeup because I don’t wear makeup. I just, I’ve never felt the need other than to dress up a bit to show respect. I’ve never felt the need to have this other persona.

Gus’ clothing choices were more formal. Due to scheduling complexities, I observed Gus in meetings on three different days. He dressed the most formally on the day he led a department meeting when he had on a blue suit coat, white button down shirt, red patterned tie, gray pants with cuffs, and black shoes. On one of the other days when he had two college-level meetings, he wore black dress pants with a light blue

button down shirt, a maroon v-neck sweater, and a tie. Gus' appearance was the most casual on the day that I observed him in a departmental office meeting. He had on black pants and a blue plaid long sleeve button down shirt.

On the day I observed Robert, he had a full day of activities that included meetings, attending a class, and moderating an event. He was dressed somewhat formally. Robert wore a cobalt blue long sleeve button down shirt with a sweater vest over it. Before we left his office to go to a meeting, he put on a black jacket and a scarf.

Ferdinand was casually dressed in black jeans and a green/blue plaid shirt with black athletic shoes. His keys hung off of a belt loop. His outer wear was colorful – a blue coat and a bright pink, green, and yellow stocking hat. Ferdinand also wears glasses with bold black frames. Ferdinand explained that he enjoys choosing his clothing and does not mind standing out from the crowd. He said:

There's a thing I've noticed about people in the Midwest, especially the men. They're really lousy dressers, like they wear jackets and ties, but they're really boring, and so I like to actually when I dress, I have nice jackets and nice ties and nice shirts, and so I kind of enjoy that. I don't understand why everybody wears, it's almost like they don't want to stand out, and so I'm not like that, but I like all aspects of choosing clothes.

Bill's apparel was very informal. He wore a long sleeved tan checked shirt, jeans, and athletic shoes. I noticed that his hair was a bit disheveled. Bill contemplated how he adjusts his appearance for different situations and noted:

I never wear a tie. That's why I got into this job . . . I think if I'm going to talk to the dean, I probably won't wear sneakers. I do want to look a little more serious – the dean not the associate dean. If I were to go to talk to the [high level administrator] or the [top administrator], I'm sure I would want to look a little better. When I teach, I dress a little more formally. I want the students to think that they are there, because I give, tend to do formal orations, but for chair duties not really.

At one point, I asked Bill if he thought that clothing choices might have more significance for women. He responded:

It's perfectly clear that women have to dress differently here than men do. I find it, I believe it's true. I don't believe it's in their heads . . . and I sympathize, but I'm not going to dress differently out of sympathy, and I don't mean that in a flippant way. I think that women have to work harder to establish that kind of leadership role. I don't really understand. I mean on a sociological level I understand. On a psychological level, I don't really understand why that should be necessary.

An overall examination of the department chairs' appearance and clothing reveals that they were dressed quite casually and comfortably. Many of the department chairs discussed dressing up slightly for meetings with higher level administrators. I observed the participants in formal attire like suits only two times: Avery at the end of the year event and Gus at a department meeting. The participants' comments in addition to their



clothing choices disclose that the women likely spend more time thinking about what they wear than do the men, which is not surprising given gender norms about appearance.

It is important to note that none of the women were dressed in an overly feminine way. For example, none wore a skirt, only Carol wore noticeable makeup, and only Sarah wore colorful nail polish. The men's clothing choices were conservative. There was one slight exception with Ferdinand's colorful stocking hat and pendant for standing out in a crowd. My initial assessment of the expressions of the department chairs' appearance and clothing were that they fit within the expected norms for their genders. Upon closer examination, however, I realized that I had come to understand this type of clothing and appearance as normalized in the culture of higher education. When broadening my perspective to culture in society as a whole, I recognized that the women chairs' appearances were more masculine than in common media depictions, such as in commercials, television, or magazines.

One possible reason for the more masculine clothing choices that was brought up by a couple of the women was that of comfort. Pants and low-heeled shoes may be more comfortable than more feminine clothing, but fashion choices often extend beyond comfort alone. It could be that a more feminine appearance may be detrimental for women leaders and is therefore consciously or unconsciously avoided. Several studies support this idea. In a study of hiring recommendations for managerial positions, Forsythe, Drake, and Cox (1985) found that the masculinity of the women applicant's clothing significantly affected interviewers' hiring decisions. The researchers reported that "within an acceptable range, the more masculine the costume, the more favorable the

hiring recommendations associated with it” (p. 378). “Within an acceptable range” meant that the applicants with the most masculine clothing were rated less favorably than those in moderately masculine clothing. The results of this study suggest that women have a very narrow range of clothing choices to perform if they want to be successful. Although this research occurred almost thirty years ago, the women in the current study were either coming of age or already in the workforce at the time and therefore may have been affected by this type of bias.

In a more recent study from 2006, participants rated individuals with a typically masculine appearance as having higher levels of leadership ability than people with a typically feminine appearance irrespective of sex (Sczesny, Spreemann, & Stahlberg, 2006). Lastly, in a meta-analysis of studies since 1973 that examined interventions that affect gender bias in employment applicants, Isaac, Lee, and Carnes (2009) found six studies that recommended women “avoid interviewing in overly feminine clothing (more masculine clothing and facial features may be beneficial)” (p. 1445).

Butler (1993) in her theory of performativity emphasized the body as a place for gendered performances. As such, the department chairs were not simply revealing their identity through their appearance. They were also constructing and shaping it through repeated performances. In a study of women faculty members in the community college setting, Lester (2008) found that many of the women adopted hybrid performances that combined feminine and masculine characteristics in order to navigate their department cultures. It may be that the women in this study are using such hybrid performances of

their bodies and appearance to try to fit into the dominant discourse on the way leaders should look.

*Emotions.* The participants discussed or displayed a wide range of emotions during the observations and interviews. The most frequent used emotional expressions fell into three broad categories: (a) humor, laughter, smiling; (b) anger, aggravation, frustration; and (c) crying and empathy. The following paragraphs examine the emotional expressions in this order.

The emotional expression that appeared the most frequently and across all participants was that of humor, laughter, and smiling; however, there were a couple of notable differences, particularly by gender. All of the participants used humor at one point or another, oftentimes with a hint of sarcasm. The department chairs seemed to use it as a coping mechanism to deal with difficult or challenging situations, such as Avery using the phrase “herding cats” in reference to faculty or Ferdinand using hyperbole in an email to the department’s faculty about the absurdly large number of approval steps – “200 (well-maybe only 150)” – in a particular process. Sarah spoke directly about the importance of humor at work and said:

I think there’s a huge amount of humor in the human condition no matter where you are, and I like to see it in meetings, and it’s hard when you’re chairing to be real funny, but I do like to encourage that people feel safe, that they feel they can laugh, that this is not earth shattering.

Robert used humor a number of times in front of groups of people and told a funny story in a meeting. Bill’s dry humor showed through in a large number of his comments. For

example, when explaining why he became chair, Bill said “In a small department eventually everyone who is not obviously disqualified by psychotic behavior is going to end up being chair so it was sort of my time.” Many of the chairs also laughed easily and seemed to enjoy aspects of their positions. Carol laughed easily at the creativity and humor of a video about one of her faculty members.

There were a few differences between the women and the men department chairs. From my observation notes, the men used humor in meetings, in front of groups, and in email communications more than the women did. This finding is consistent with prior research about gender and humor which found that men use humor more than women in the workplace (Decker & Rotondo, 2001). The men were also more likely to have a sarcastic element to their humor. The other difference was that of smiling. All of the participants smiled at one point or another, but in my observations, I made specific notes about the behavior when watching some of the participants and not others. Carolyn and Carol smiled the most of all of the participants. Avery, too, smiled frequently. Of the men, the only chair who smiled a noticeable amount was Ferdinand. I particularly spotted the behavior when he was in an oral exam committee meeting with a graduate student, and it seemed as if his smiling in this context signaled encouragement to the student. Again, this finding is similar to prior research which has shown that women smile more than men statistically (LaFrance & Hecht, 2000) and that women are *expected* to smile and be cheerful (Eagly, 1987).

The next most common emotional expressions were those of anger, aggravation, and frustration. Four of the department chairs, one woman (Carolyn) and three men (Bill,

Gus, and Robert) spoke about or expressed emotions in this way. Carolyn discussed her expression of anger, and she did so a number of times throughout the interviews. I also observed Carolyn show frustration and aggravation, but it was very mild and minimal in nature. Carolyn spoke at length about her “bad temper.” She explained when and how her anger comes out:

I think that when my temper flares . . . it’s because I believe that things should be happening, and the people who should be providing the resources to get to the issue and solve it in a timely way, and they are not doing that, and I find that really frustrating, and then I do lose my temper, and the way it comes out, I think I become more and more persistent in trying to solve the problem, and I refuse to settle for there not being an answer . . . I become very tenacious, and I am protective in a way.

Carolyn is very much aware of her temper and tries hard to not show it. She remarked, “I have it, but I don’t show it because I know it’s destructive and not a positive thing and because I am very collaborative and so I can’t show that.”

Carolyn talked about several things that help her to control her temper. One way is that when people make her angry, she tries to “think about the things that are happening in their lives or where they’re coming from or how do you see this viewpoint.” By doing this, it helps her to not see them as “enemies.” Another technique that helps Carolyn is to remove herself from the situation if it is getting too heated. She commented, “If you’ve got these hot buttons that people push on you and it makes you a nut, I’ve asked people to leave my office because I realized we we’re not going anywhere, and I

was not being effective.” The last way that Carolyn controls her temper is by forgetting about the details. She explained that by doing so,

I don't remember why I was aggravated or and I think in some ways that is helpful because if you remember every little thing everybody does to you over the time that you're a department head or chair, you're going to hate everybody, and they're going to hate you.

After Carolyn spoke about her temper and her attempts to control it, I asked her to consider whether or not expressions of anger from men might be viewed differently. She responded, “I would say that people expect men to blow up more than they expect women to.”

Bill was the only other participant to explicitly talk about anger. He brought up anger in the context of emails and said:

Actually, one of the things I'm proudest of is that in five years I have not sent a single message where the moment I hit the send key I wish I hadn't. . . . I never responded to anyone out of anger. I have deleted lots and lots of messages out of anger, but I've never actually [sent any].

While Bill has successfully controlled his anger in emails, he has been slightly less successful in reining it in at department meetings. Bill noted that he does not enjoy meetings in general and that he finds it difficult not to get annoyed. I observed Bill in a department meeting, and I did see glimpses of annoyance, frustration, and sarcasm in his behavior. I did not observe any noticeable reactions from the faculty members, but it was enough to make me a bit uncomfortable.

Gus also demonstrated frustration and anger several times during my observations. At a small meeting with a college administrator about a budget concern, he both showed and spoke about his frustration with the situation frequently. His anger came through most clearly when he disagreed strongly with a statement made by the administrator and exclaimed, "Wait a minute!" in a loud and forceful voice. His gusto seemed to make the administrator nervous causing him to stumble over his words. At one point, Gus also used sarcasm to make the point that the administrator finally understood something. As the meeting went on and the issue was clarified, Gus began to smile more and agree with the points of the discussion. I also observed anger from Gus during the department meeting I attended. The emotion came through in his remarks when he leaned forward and spoke loudly about a particular task that some viewed as having little value or as a chore. Lastly, I also observed frustration during a department officers meeting. Gus was aggravated about a proposed change in services that would affect the department adversely.

I also saw Robert express anger and frustration one time. I observed him as he introduced a guest speaker in a class and then remained for the presentation. At one point, Robert made a comment on a topic about which he was very knowledgeable and had first-hand experience. One of the students challenged Robert's comment as untrue. Robert responded with a strong and stern voice that his statement was in fact correct, but it was clear that he was somewhat upset about the challenge. The student did eventually back down and said that he believed Robert's account.

The findings on the expressions of anger in the department chair support previous research on gender and emotions. Carolyn's extensive efforts to hide and control her anger are indicative of the negative consequences that women experience if they show anger – an act that goes against gender norms (Eagly & Steffen, 1986; Zammuner, 2000). Additionally, researchers have found that women believe expressions of anger are less appropriate than men do (Smith et al., 1989). Also, by feeling the need to hide her anger, Carolyn is subject to regulatory powers that constrain her ability to express her gender in ways that differ from what is expected. Of the men who expressed anger, only Bill mentioned trying to control it in any way.

The last category of emotional expressions that were discussed or performed by the department chairs included crying and empathy. Carolyn was the only participant to talk about crying, but her comments were particularly interesting given her gender.

Carolyn stated:

I don't have any problem crying, and, you know, at my age I'm not going to change that. Somebody said well you could never be a dean and cry, so I thought, well, I probably don't need to try to be a dean then.

She boldly acknowledged the behavior and unapologetically accepts it as a part of who she is. Carolyn is also well aware that it goes against norms for professional behavior and that it might limit her opportunities. After Carolyn told me that she was not afraid to cry, I asked her if she thought it would be viewed similarly or differently if a man cried in the role of department chair. She replied:



I think it probably would not be viewed exactly the same way, but I think I've grown into an acceptance of who I am. I think that's developmental, and for me it's harder to be not who you are than to be who you are and have people be able to recognize that this is you.

Carolyn attributed her acceptance of her own crying at work as developmental, a product of her life experiences rather than her gender. Her emotions come from her care and concern. Carolyn explained, "I feel things really deeply, and I care really deeply about what I do."

Several other participants expressed empathy in their interviews as well as their actions. Carol recognized that one of her strengths is her people skills, particularly "empathy relationships." In a meeting, Robert expressed concern and empathy for individuals who were upset about a particular issue. These types of expressions, while less common than the other emotional expressions, were notable because they stood out as unique in the work setting.

The women participants spoke about the expressions of crying and empathy more than the men did. This is not surprising because researchers have found that women are socialized to allow themselves to cry more so than men (Vingerhoets & Scheirs, 2000). Carolyn was told that her crying behavior limits her ability to advance in higher education leadership. This is another example of regulatory powers that limit expressions related to gender. For those that do not control their expressions, there are consequences, such as difficulty advancing in their careers.

*Interactions.* The department chairs were involved in a diverse array of interactions with students, faculty members, staff, and administrators as I observed them in their positions. In the following paragraphs, I highlight a few of the most significant interactions that appeared to be shaped by the participants' gender or other identities. There were additional important interactions that appear in other categories of this section that will not be repeated here.

Carolyn shared with me a number of emails so that I could get a better sense of her written communications with administration, faculty, and students. In reading through them, I noticed how relational and communal her communications were, particularly with faculty members. Some examples included: "I wondered if you might be willing to allow us to use . . .", "I don't want to force you into anything, but I think this will be nice for everyone," and "If you have a minute, can you let me know how you feel about this?" I also reviewed emails written by Robert and Ferdinand, and I did not see this type of language in their written communications. Rather, their language was more agentic and directive in nature. For example Ferdinand wrote, "How about this for a format," and "If you can come, please bring some points that you want to make." Some examples from Robert include: "Please be clear, we are only making recommendations . . ." and "Please look at his credentials."

Gus also had some interesting interactions with others. I observed him in a college meeting of department chairs. There were approximately 45 people in attendance (about 20 women and 25 men). Given the large number of attendees, Gus spoke relatively frequently. His comments also often had a critical component to them, expressing

displeasure about the topic at hand. The room was set up with tables and chairs in a large rectangle with additional seating along the sides and back. I noticed that all of the people of color sat in the back corner of the room, while the chairs at the tables were occupied primarily by White men. In accordance with the physical environment, it was the White men who spoke or held the floor for any length of time. These observations were not all things that could be controlled by the department chair; however, they do indicate possible gender and race/ethnicity issues within the participant's unit.

*Silence or absence.* Throughout my observations of the department chairs, I was particularly mindful of incidents where silence or absence might be meaningful in the enactments of leadership. Despite this attention, I was only able to recognize three instances of silence, all of them with women participants. The use of silence by Carol was pervasive throughout many of her interactions, whereas the silence from Sarah was relegated to a particular situation. Carolyn's silence and absence was because she did not want to show her temper as discussed earlier in the section on emotions. At times, she chooses to remove herself from situations in which she might express her anger. I did not see or hear of any other situations in which a department chair chose to be absent, although that may be because I observed them for a relatively brief time.

I noticed early on in my observations that Carol was a relatively quiet individual. She was always willing to answer my questions, but her answers were generally the most succinct of all of the department chairs. Carol considers herself to be an introvert and views her introversion primarily as a strength. She explained:

I also tend to be quiet and don't say a lot. I don't dominate conversations. I think I'm a fairly good listener, and I've come to find out especially at the administrative level that when I do talk, people listen to me. It's not that I'm kind of throwing out lots of ideas and nonsense, but I do take time to think things through. It's like I need to be comfortable with who I am and not try to fit some mold of what another leader is like.

In my observations of Carol, I did notice that she was quiet in meetings in comparison to the other department chairs. At times, it seemed like other individuals were leading. A variety of factors may contribute to Carol's silence in the situations I observed. It may have been due to her personality as an introvert. It may have also been a product of the particular meeting topics and attendees. Based upon the interviews and my observations of Carol as a whole, I was left with the impression that there was more to her silence than these other explanations. Carol was relatively new as a department chair and was the most hesitant of all of the participants about her leadership and power. She spoke about working to become more comfortable with leading and standing up to faculty members. Carol said, "There's been some times when I think well, you know, I really should have spoken up and said this is not okay or, you know, everybody needs to shift and start moving in this direction or whatever." Carol also discussed how she was raised to "make everybody happy, serve, don't put yourself first, put others first" – traits that follow traditional gender roles for women. Carol felt that leadership might not come as naturally to women. She observed:

I think overall our society still thinks that men are supposed to be the leaders. I disagree with that, but I can't say that I was brought up thinking anything different, but I certainly had some strong women role models as leaders so I guess mentally, intellectually, I don't have any, I think women make great leaders because they bring different qualities sometimes to the role, but kind of in my gut reaction, it's not as inbred or as deep.

All of this information points to silence rooted in a discomfort with leadership that may be connected – at least in part – to her gender. Carol has chosen to try to mitigate her silence by utilizing a leadership coach as well as recognizing and focusing on her strengths.

The other department chair who was noticeably silent in her interactions was Sarah. She was quiet during one particular meeting. The meeting was led by the dean of the unit, and all of the department chairs were in attendance. The dean was relatively new to the position. The dean did most of the talking, and all of the chairs, including Sarah, did not say very much. Part of the silence may have been because the chairs were still getting to know the dean and her expectations. I also got the impression that part of the unwillingness to speak was because of the power differential between the dean and the chairs which seemed to be more exaggerated in this meeting as compared to other meetings I attended with deans and chairs that seemed to be more of a partnership than a hierarchy. The dean was quite formal with her manner of speaking, sat at the head of the table, and seemed very much in charge of the meeting.

The three examples of silence that I observed were significant because they

revealed a complexity to the situations that was not apparent at the surface. The performances of silence were very different in each case, but Carol, Carolyn, and Sarah were affected by issues of gender, leadership, and power that caused them to feel like they should at times remain silent or be absent in their role as department chairs. The silence is a performance that is conscious or unconscious and is possible evidence of regulatory powers at work that constrain their expressions (Butler, 1990).

**Definitions and expressions of power.** In this section, I address the fifth research question: How do discursive framings of power affect department chairs' leadership? Power is an integral concept to the theoretical frameworks of feminist poststructuralism and performativity that guide this study. This section is divided into two subsections: definitions of power and expressions of power.

*Definitions of power.* The department chairs' definitions of power were each unique and affected by their individual experiences. There were several similarities across the participants. A number of the chairs spoke about persuasion and influence in some way within their definitions, while others viewed power as more collaborative and consultative. Most department chairs also agreed that the power of their positions was limited. Several participants also had negative reactions to the concept of power.

Four of the participants (Bill, Sarah, Avery, and Gus) emphasized persuasion and influence in their understandings of power. When I asked Bill about his definition of power, he focused primarily on expressions of power (addressed in the following section), but he also remarked that, "The most effective way to lead a small department like this is to really bring people along in an idea." The phrase "bring people along in an

idea” is very similar in meaning to persuasion and/or influence. Sarah’s definition of power was more complex and divided into two types. The first type of power is authority which she described as the ability to determine what is going to happen and then enforce consequences if it does not happen. An example would be the ability to hire, discipline, and fire an employee. The other type of power is the power of persuasion. Sarah explained that this is the ability to “communicate a direction that people buy into and are willing to follow you because they trust you and they believe that you’re leading them where they want to go.” She believes this is a more difficult and tenuous power to have, even though the first type can more easily be abused.

Avery and Gus both spoke about power in terms of leading others. Avery said she views the role of chair as more like a “shepherd,” guiding people “towards making good decisions.” Gus framed his definition in terms of persuasion. He stated,

So with the faculty it’s a matter of persuading, informing them, making sure they understand the constraints and why we’re in a situation where we have very limited choices, and being patient to give them enough time to figure it out, and understand why they’re going to have to do it the way I am telling them they have to do it, although some things, they just want to get done, and they really don’t want to know how, okay, but there’s not a lot of that.

Bill, Sarah, Avery, and Gus all used ideas related to persuasion or influence in their definitions of power. Their conceptualizations contain some similarities as well as differences. The underlying meaning seems to be that people need to be led, persuaded, or influenced into the appropriate decision. The assumption is that the leaders know what

the decisions should be and must persuade or influence everyone else to agree with them. It may be that these participants did not intend for that message to be conveyed, but their language choices gave that impression either indirectly or directly. The chairs' definitions differ in the extent to which they persuade. For example, Sarah used the word persuasion, but then went on to explain that she is leading them "where they want to go" which implies a level of participation on the part of the constituents. Gus, on the other hand, just has to provide enough information and time for people to figure out that "they're going to have to do it the way I am telling them they have to do it." Gus' language has a much stronger message of persuasion than Sarah's does.

Of the eight department chairs, three (Carolyn, Carol, and Ferdinand) highlighted collaboration and consulting in their power definitions. Carolyn believes her power comes through her "collaborative leadership." She explained:

I recognize that you can have great power as a collaborator and as a relational person, and I would say that's where my power comes from, and people will do things for me because of the relationships that I have and the way that I have tried to provide support.

Carol and Ferdinand both emphasized consulting when they defined power. By asking for advice and input, they are sharing power to some extent. Carol commented that she brings many issues to an advisory committee before going to the full faculty. She said she is still learning the balance of how much to consult and when to make a decision.

Carol stated:



I think part of the problem is I'm still trying to figure out, after I get faculty input, how much do I rely on the faculty to make the final decisions and where do I step in and say okay, I have collected all this information, this is the way we're going to do it, and it's kind of like I'm almost brave enough to be there. And I know that's probably where I need to be, but it's a process for me because I'm not, I don't have that power.

Ferdinand's emphasis on consulting is similar to Carol's. He noted,

I try to make as few decisions as possible without consulting. We have a steering committee, and then we have the faculty committee, so I try to run as many things as possible by steering, and through the steering and then faculty committees to the point where in the beginning I was actually getting encouragement to just do more things on my own.

Ferdinand also explained that he thinks that being department chair is more about "leadership than power" and that "power comes from good leadership and getting people to trust you."

Carolyn, Carol, and Ferdinand highlighted the importance of collaboration and consulting when considering what power meant to them in their leadership. Their language conveys that they believe in sharing power and making decisions together. Carol and Ferdinand found it challenging to find the right balance of consulting and decision making unique to their situations.

Most of the participants addressed the limited nature of power in the role of department chair. Gus explained that power is very limited in the role, and that he tends

to think about what authority he has rather than power. Sarah said, “I don’t feel like I have a whole lot of power. I feel like I have a lot of responsibility, and that the job is more meeting those responsibilities than it is one of exercising power.” Carol also wondered about how much power she actually has as department chair. She stated:

I guess particularly in academia I don’t know that I really do have very much power. Faculty are fairly independent and pretty much can do whatever the heck they want so, I don’t know that I really have very much power over them.

Robert also said his power is limited, but it does have an impact on the department. He explained, “The areas in which you can exercise some kind of power or authority, they are limited. They are small, but they can be very important in constructing the department as a whole.” He thinks that chairs have less power than they did because they used to have more money and resources that were gradually cut back. He recalled:

We actually had more power some years ago here, and we had more money, and we had more power, and we were able to dole out course releases with impunity, and they gradually cut back those prerogatives, so that’s been, that’s a little bit, that’s been a source of a little bit of unhappiness on the part of the chairs that they have less power than they once did.

Ferdinand and Avery both believe that their power, what little they have, is given to them by the faculty. Ferdinand’s rubber hammer was indicative of his feelings about how much power he has as department chair. He went on to say that the reason for the lack of power is because chairs come from the faculty and go back to the faculty, and “there isn’t really any power given to you when you’re given the department chair.” He

reflected, “We only have as much power as the faculty is willing to give us.” Avery’s explanation of limited power was similar to Ferdinand’s in that she believes “you only have as much power as people are willing to give you, so it’s not something you can demand just like respect. But it’s something that’s given to you and if you misuse it, you lose it.” There are very few things that she has control over, and everything else must be decided by consensus.

Carolyn, Carol, and Avery expressed some negative views about the concept of power. Robert also seemed at times uncomfortable with power, or at least how some people define power. The negativity about power was very strong in some individuals, while others have learned that power can also be positive. Lastly, Sarah believed power was not positive or negative, but rather emphasized how individuals use power.

Carolyn’s views on power in leadership and the role of department chair have evolved over time. Initially, power had a very negative connotation for her. Early on as chair, she had a consultant to help her with developing her leadership skills. She recalled that at one point he wanted to talk to her about power. She replied, “I hate power. I don’t want anything to do with power.” She realized that her negative views came from hierarchical systems and leaders who abused power and used it in destructive ways. Carolyn learned “to find power in a gendered way” – power that is “facilitative, not power as individual advantage.” She learned that she could have and use power as a collaborator and “how you use your other ways of leading to provide you with more power.” Even though she has reframed the concept of power to be collaborative and relational for herself, she calls it more of a “backdoor power.” Carolyn still seemed

uncomfortable with power because of how it is has been traditionally defined and expressed.

Power also has a negative connotation for Carol. She exclaimed, “I don’t like that word,” because when she thinks about defining power, she thinks about abuses of power. She went on to explain that she is still working on even being comfortable with the idea that she has power and is learning how and when to use it. Carol said about power:

I think it’s part of my responsibility, and I have to use it sometimes, but to me it’s like I’m not the kind of person who’s going to play the power card to try to get something done. It’s kind of like I’ll use it when I have to because the situation requires that I take the leadership, or I make the decision you know. That’s what I was hired to do so that’s kind of my approach.

Avery’s understandings of power were also initially negative. She said that after having been chair for a while, her view of power became less negative. She has seen it used both positively and negatively. She remarked:

I’ve seen power used badly. I’ve seen where it’s absolutely a dictatorship. I’ve seen power not used, not exercised, and so it sort of creates stagnant, and then I’ve seen power that makes things happen, so I was more afraid of that word five years ago than I am now because five years ago it did have bad connotations to me. I said, well, I’m not going to be the kind of chair that tells people what to do. To me that was power, that I’m going to decide everything, and that was not attractive. . . . I think less negatively of it now.

Robert did not say outright that he views power negatively, but it could be inferred from his statement that “the best leaders don’t have any power.” He understands that he does, in fact, have some power, but dislikes certain definitions of power. Robert noted, “I especially despise the idea that somehow power is some kind of zero-sum game - that if I have it, you don’t.” Rather than define power, Robert chose to focus on the limited ways that he can express power as a department chair.

Lastly Sarah did not view power as inherently positive or negative. Instead, she emphasized how people use it. In her words:

I think that used wisely with . . . the granting of power by the group, that a good leader can move a group forward in a very positive way . . . I’ve seen lots of people abuse it, and I think that anybody that has power has to be very careful that they aren’t abusing it. . . . It’s just either people do it well or they don’t do it well, and that’s the way it is. If you’ve got a dictator, it’s not so good. If you’ve got a charismatic leader that knows exactly what the group needs, it’s fabulous.

The definitions of power articulated by the women in this study support previous research on how women conceptualize power. The women were more likely to emphasize collaborative, consultative, or empowering ways of thinking about power as well as express negative feelings about traditional conceptions of power. Researchers de Casal and Mulligan (2004) found that women view power with negative connotations and as a means of empowerment; women also tend to emphasize the communal and cooperative nature of leadership. The men in this study were more likely to conceptualize power as persuasion or influence which is consistent with previous research that indicated

men were more likely to think of power as power over rather than the power to definition favored by women (Brunner & Schumaker, 1998).

*Expressions of power.* In this section, I highlight how the participants spoke about expressing power as department chair as well as how they performed expressions of power. Robert, Ferdinand, Sarah, and Bill addressed specific ways in which they were able to exert power in their roles. Robert articulated that he has small amounts of power that he can enact in limited ways. Some examples include setting faculty salaries, approving the suggestions of others, initiating projects, setting agendas, influencing promotion and tenure cases. Ferdinand also enumerated discretionary spending, having access to information, and determining agendas as ways to exercise power. Sarah said she supervises a staff member, makes hiring decisions about staff, determines teaching schedules, and assigns office space. Beyond those specific tasks, she has access to the dean that other people do not have.

Bill discussed the subtle ways that chairs can enact power, from how “decisions are presented” to “how options are framed,” but he stated that he has “deliberately tried to avoid exercising any power” except when he has to do so, like in setting the agenda. Bill commented that although it is still a “very finite” exercise of discretion:

The greatest power the chair has is right in this way of putting certain things on the table and other things not. . . . it doesn't go the way I want necessarily but at least, yeah, mostly it's the things I choose to discuss that get discussed.

Carolyn and Avery focused on how they choose *not* to enact power in their leadership and why. Carolyn said:

I don't believe in hammers. I think that you lose your ability for future collaborations and future buy-in by people if you use a hammer. Now I can make decisions, tough decisions, and I've done that, but my style is to try to work with people and to come to a decision that doesn't turn people to belligerence or to I'm not going to cooperate no matter what you do.

She also reflected that she believes her department is a space for women to use power when she explained, "I do believe that we are in a safe place where women have the ability to exert power in positive ways, and they don't necessarily have that in other places." Avery also discussed the types of power she chooses *not* to use as department chair. She said commented:

Well, not certainly the top down kind of power, the power over you, nor would I even try that. It's not in my nature, but I think the power with you, I think it plays a big part in getting things accomplished in the department, and then allowing me to speak on behalf of the department, and I guess that's where I am empowered by the department to speak on their behalf.

Brunner and Schumaker's (1998) description of "power over" and "power to" included a list of ethnographically observed differences to help distinguish the two concepts in how people think and behave. Examples of "power over" characteristics included authoritarian, task oriented, ability to persuade, and limit discussion/debate. Some examples of "power to" characteristics included collaborative, facilitator, community oriented, build relationships, ability to listen and compromise, and seek/listen to diverse views.

I examined the data for these observed characteristics of “power over” and “power to” and found that the participants’ performances of power were congruent with their understandings of power in some cases and somewhat different in other cases. Bill, Gus, Sarah, and Avery had definitions of power that emphasized persuasion and influence to varying degrees. Interestingly, I did observe examples of “power over” from Bill and Gus, but not from Sarah and Avery. This may partially be an indication of the effects of gender, but it may also be a product of the types of meetings that I observed. I also observed “power over” from Robert.

Bill, Gus, and Robert exercised “power over” types of power. I observed Bill during a department meeting, and I saw him be very persuasive to faculty members regarding issues about which he felt very strongly. He also tried to facilitate the conversation in an efficient way given his distaste for meetings, but it sometimes seemed to limit the discussion. I also saw Gus in a department meeting where he began the meeting formally with a gavel, spoke loudly and forcefully at times, and managed the discussion by calling on raised hands and occasionally cutting people off. Robert’s expression of “power over” characteristics came during a class presentation that he introduced and attended. He made a comment that was challenged by a student. Robert quite emphatically persuaded the student that he was correct until the student capitulated.

Sarah enacted a more “power to” type of power. I did not have the opportunity to observe Sarah in a larger meeting, but one-on-one with a staff member, I saw her be very collaborative and consultative. They seemed to support each other well, and Sarah is a



mentor to the staff person. If I had seen her leading a department meeting, I may have seen other expressions of power.

Carolyn, Carol, and Ferdinand described their conceptions of power as more collaborative and consultative which are characteristics within “power to.” In all three cases, my observations were congruent with their espoused viewpoints. Carolyn clearly demonstrated collaboration in her meetings with departmental staff. She said on numerous occasions how much she appreciated working with her staff and how grateful she was for their assistance. I also observed her teaching a class where she was also very collaborative and let the students lead the discussion. Her email communications also reflected this style of collaboration and relationship building (examples previously provided in interactions section). Carol, too, expressed “power to” collaboration in the meetings I observed. At times, she let others lead and was comfortable jumping into the conversation only when necessary. Ferdinand’s “power to” characteristics came through during an oral exam committee meeting when he asked insightful questions about the student’s work, deferred to others for questions, and kept the conversation focused while encouraging everyone to participate fully. He was very supportive and empowering of the student throughout the meeting.

The department chairs’ expressions of power, in summary, more closely adhered to expected expressions based upon previous research than did their definitions and conceptualizations of power. Bill, Gus, and Robert showed more “power over” expressions of power. All of the women as well as Ferdinand demonstrated or discussed “power to” types of power. Once again, this supports Brunner and Schumaker's (1998)

research that indicated men were more likely to think of power as “power over” and women were more likely to think of power as “power to.”

**Gender composition of discipline/department.** The primary unit of analysis for this study was gender; however, one of the selection criteria for participants was the gender compositions of their disciplines based on data from the *2004 National Study of Postsecondary Faculty* (National Center for Education Statistics, 2004). I selected two chairs from departments in disciplines with mostly women (Carolyn and Sarah), two from disciplines with mostly men (Gus and Bill), and four from disciplines with relatively equal gender representations (Robert, Carol, Ferdinand, and Avery). The *actual* gender compositions of the participants’ departments differed somewhat from the National Center for Education Statistics data. Three of the participants were chairs of departments in which the majority of the faculty members were women (Carolyn, Carol, and Sarah), one chair was in a department with mostly men faculty members (Ferdinand), and the remaining four participants were in departments with relatively equal gender representations (Gus, Robert, Bill, and Avery). For the purposes of this analysis, I chose to focus on the gender composition of the participants’ actual departments as the unit of analysis because I thought it would best represent their lived experiences as leaders.

Overall, there were not many differences between departments made up of mostly women, mostly men, and relatively equal representation of faculty members. Three of the women participants were chairs of mostly women departments, so it was difficult to separate out the effects of the participants’ gender from the effects of the department gender composition.

The most significant finding when examining the data by department gender composition was that all of the chairs in departments with unequal faculty representation discussed serious concerns with issues of climate and civility that were absent in the interviews of the chairs in equally represented departments, and all four had more relational or communal styles of leadership.

Carolyn's overall view of her department climate was positive. She explained, "I'm in a really safe environment for women, and we hope a really safe environment for men and different races." Despite this, she discussed a serious conflict in the department. Carolyn noted,

We had a really bad clash about a year ago that was really scary for me as the department head because people were so diametrically opposed to one another, and I was determined that we would use that in a healthy way. . . . How could we heal from that? Now that may be very gendered, that another leader wouldn't care, but for me it's important that we accomplish, the unit work is important to me. . . . I'll never forget it. . . . The consultation, the compromises, the stand that I had to take that I thought was the important thing to move us ahead.

This incident was a significant event for Carolyn that caused her great concern.

The other three department chairs in unequal gender represented departments spoke about more long term and pervasive issues of climate rather than a particular incident. Carol remarked, "We have a fairly dysfunctional department." She expounded, Some of them can be downright nasty, mean, and it has nothing to do with their gender. Again I think academics are just a unique breed. Most of them are in this

field because of their focus on their own interests and the desire to be independent and kind of be their own boss.

Carol attributed the climate problems to the independent nature of the faculty members and changes in the work culture of higher education. She posited,

The culture has changed, and I think a lot of it has to do with email and cell phones and people working at home more. People just really, I think their plates are much more full. The bar keeps getting higher as far as expectations for faculty production, and there's very little time, probably very little interest to develop kind of that collegial atmosphere.

Carol is working to improve the climate of her department and reflected, "I do think I'm making small differences in the culture around civility and improving communication. There's a lot more that needs to be done."

Ferdinand, the only chair in this study who works in a department of mostly men reported some concerns with civility. He stated, "I think there's an issue going on now where some of the faculty feel that some of the department norms are being violated with the way opinions are being expressed." Ferdinand explained that at times, faculty members can be "abrasive, blunt, rude, in your face" and that "there are certain things that are definitely beyond on the line." Ferdinand attributed the cause of the incivility to the communication styles of the individuals who in this case were one man and one woman. He said, "I don't think it has anything to do with gender. . . . I think it's a style that rubs the other faculty the wrong way." Ferdinand also acknowledged that the department may also be contributing to the problem by not dealing with it. He explained,

If you talk about a dysfunctional family and talk about enabling that dysfunctional behavior, I do think we have maybe been, because it's a pain in the neck to confront the person. We've probably enabled it more than we should have.

Ferdinand is not sure of how to handle these individuals and the incivility. He remarked, I think there's a question of is it the department chair's responsibility to address this, and I actually feel that I won't be very effective, and that it really needs to be something that comes from the other faculty like a soft correction.

Whether or not the intervention comes from him or the other faculty, Ferdinand noted that "it will be interesting to see how it ends up getting corrected or how it plays out."

Lastly, Sarah also discussed concerns with the overall climate and culture in her department of mostly women. Sarah explained,

There's a strange inability in the department for people to acknowledge each other, either for the things they've done well and to congratulate each other. . . .

It's astounding to me but very few people in this department ever say thank you.

Sarah suggested that the problems with climate could be because the faculty members feel insecure. She reflected,

I often think that people feel very defensive, and this drive to overachieve is because of an insecurity about am I doing enough, am I smart enough, am I the best possible academic I can be. And we have a faculty member who has taken on the arbiter role of determining who's the best, which is pretty obnoxious, and makes it absolutely clear who isn't, so I think that makes people more defensive

and insecure. It's funny. We have very aggressive personalities, who I think at base are very insecure, and I don't know how to deal with that.

While Sarah is unsure of how to address the aggressiveness and defensiveness, she noted, "I just try to praise people when things are good, try to thank them for things they do that are considerate." Sarah is taking steps to improve the climate in her department even though it is challenging and time consuming. She remarked, "I could get through this just by pushing paper, but I just see the potential is so enormous to do good stuff and to be a good working environment."

The four chairs of the equal gender representation departments did not discuss or emphasize concerns of climate, culture, and incivility. It is important to remember that three of the four department chairs with climate issues were women, and three of the four department chairs who did not discuss climate concerns were men. This does not necessarily mean that departments with women chairs or more women faculty members *have* more climate issues. Rather, it may be that the women department chairs were simply more attuned to and concerned with relational and collegiality issues within their departments and therefore brought them up for discussion. This finding is congruent with research on the discourses about women leaders in higher education. Gordon et al. (2010) posited that "the discourse of professionalism, in tension with the caretaker strand of the discourse of femininity, produces the image of a relational leader" (p. 94). Another term for relational characteristics that are attributed more to women than men is communal, which includes behaviors such as "contributing to the solution of relational and interpersonal problems" (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001, p. 783).

It is also worth considering that unequal gender representation within departments may contribute to problems of climate and incivility since all four departments with concerns were made up of mostly men or mostly women. Allan (2003), a feminist poststructural researcher, suggested the discourses of university women's commissions "position women as victims, outsiders to the structure and culture of the institution" (p. 44). These discourses reflect and reify a culture in academia that places women in a subordinate position as outsiders from which they must fight to gain recognition and value. Men, from their dominant position, may then feel threatened and the need to defend their own insider status. Together, this struggle may contribute to increased climate and incivility problems because the differences in subject positions are more pronounced within unequally gender represented departments. The positioning of women as outsiders may have additional implications in higher education. Allan posits, "Perhaps an overreliance on the simplistic insider/outsider binary and the perpetual positioning of women as outsiders may unintentionally impede the attainment of women's full participation as equals in the academic workplace" (p. 59). While the findings in this section are interesting, further research is needed to increase understandings about whether or not and to what extent the gender composition of departments affects department chairs' leadership.

**Institution.** The final unit of analysis for this study was by institution. The department chairs were selected from two large public research universities in the Midwest – two men and two women from each institution. Within the participants from

each institution, two were from departments with unequal gender representation and two were from departments with relatively equal gender representation.

Few differences emerged when examining the data by institution given the similarities between the institutions and the sample of department chairs. One significant dissimilarity was shared governance. All four of the chairs from Institution B brought up shared or faculty governance during the interviews; only one of the chairs from Institution A mentioned it.

Ferdinand (Institution B) stated that his institution has the “strongest faculty governance culture.” He brought up faculty governance again when speaking about power. He said,

We only have as much power as the faculty is willing to give us, and plus the campus . . . has this whole tradition of faculty governance that we hear about constantly, and so I think most faculty – although they may or may not understand the details of faculty governance – realize that all of the power really resides at the bottom and the people at the top only have as much as they can bring the bottom people along.

Ferdinand also mentioned faculty governance when speaking about the difficulties faced by a previous administrator at his institution. He said, “People felt that [administrator] made too many executive decisions and wasn’t willing or wasn’t patient enough with the slowness and the inefficiency of the faculty governance model.”

Sarah (Institution B) also spoke about faculty governance when discussing some new faculty members in her department and whether or not they would be eligible to be



department chair in the future. She was unsure as to what the governance rules were going to be in the situation. She also mentioned governance when referring to training (or lack thereof) that new department chairs receive at her institution. Sarah said that there was some training on “governance stuff, but it’s very little.”

Bill (Institution B) brought up governance as well. It came up twice when he was speaking about the organization of his department and its relationship to another department on campus. He mentioned it again when discussing power and leadership. He stated,

There are certain kinds of administrative decisions which can be done without bringing them to the whole faculty, and I think some of the most effective chairs in our own department in the past were actually quite informal in the ways they made things happen. I lean much more towards sort of consensual transparency. I’ve pretty much deliberately tried to avoid exercising any power except the things which I have to do like set the agenda. But I can see that people with stronger leadership instincts of that sort would be able to do it even within the prescribed governance rules of university departments here.

Avery (Institution B) also spoke about governance numerous times. She first brought it up as a frustration as a new person in her department and not knowing how governance worked there. The confusion about governance was one of the reasons she took on the role of department chair because it was an issue that she wanted to solve. Avery also mentioned governance when discussing the committee structure for faculty reviews. It came up again when she spoke about faculty expectations of her as department chair.

Avery said, “They would just rather have me do the work, but that’s not what faculty governance is about.” She brought it up again when speaking about higher level administrators in her unit and when comparing her institution to other institutions when she stated, “It’s not a problem here because of faculty governance.” Avery also spoke of it two more times in the follow-up interview when she was telling me about an incident in which several faculty members thought she should have handled a meeting differently that she did. She remarked,

I received a follow-up email stating that I should have steered the conversation in a different direction which is certainly not, under our structure of faculty governance, basically I should not have allowed the vote happen which I can’t do. So there were expectations expressed about my position that are just simply just not in the chair’s purview.

Avery relied upon her knowledge of the faculty governance at her institution to guide her actions and received resistance from faculty members for doing so.

The only department chair from Institution A to mention faculty governance was Robert. He mentioned it once and in the context of decision making and consultation. He commented,

I have always believed in university life – in shared governance. . . . I think that without consultation, without wide consultation in a university community, we’re really, really going to be in trouble, just simply of terms of kind of getting along with each other.

Robert emphasized that shared governance was a way to “allow people to feel that they

really have a stake in decision-making.”

The responses of the participants suggest that shared governance has a greater influence on university life and the work of department chairs at Institution B than it does at Institution A. Most of the comments were straightforward descriptions of the effects of governance. A few comments about shared governance were negative in connotation, including the slow and inefficient nature of the system and frustration with not understanding how it worked. A few comments were also positive; for example, problems that other institutions had were avoided because of shared governance and that shared governance was an important part of university life and decision making.

While the finding on shared governance when comparing the two institutions is not directly related to the effects of gender and other identities on leadership, it is still an important difference to consider when examining the experiences of department chairs at research universities. Additional research is needed to shed light on whether a stronger or weaker shared governance system differentially affects women and men leaders in higher education.

The other significant finding was that there were no other discernible differences across institutions. This finding is important because it means the gender differences previously discussed in this chapter occurred in both institutions, thus adding to the credibility of the gender findings.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

In this section, I provide a brief summary and conclusion of the findings of this study. The first research question addressed the perceptions of the effects of gender and

other identities on the leadership of the department chairs. Overall, the department chairs were unsure of the effects of their gender or did not perceive effects of their gender on their leadership. While the women tended to express a more nuanced view of the effects of their gender, they sometimes contradicted themselves and stated at times that gender has an effect and at other times stating that it did not have an effect. The men seemed to have more difficulty considering the effects of their gender, and often turned the question into the effects of others' gender instead of their own.

All of the participants were able to list identities other than gender that were meaningful to them as individuals. Overall, the women department chairs named more identities that were meaningful to them than the men. The women were also more likely to describe family, personal, or non-work identities. There were also some subtle differences in the chairs' perceptions of how their identities affected their work. The women chairs were better able to describe the effects of their identities on their leadership, and they were more reflexive about the benefits and challenges they perceived were caused by their identities. The men chairs again tended to change the question into the effects of others' identities rather than their own.

The second research question addressed the chair's perceptions of leadership expectations. Both women and men chairs perceived that the faculty expects them to be stewards of resources, accessible, and equitable. Two of the women chairs discussed the ambiguous or unrealistic nature of the faculty's expectations. Three of the men chairs also spoke about the day-to-day, managerial expectations placed upon them by the faculty. When thinking about the expectations of administration, the chairs felt that they

were expected to handle most issues in the department. The chairs also discussed the variety of managerial tasks they were expected to complete. Three women chairs also mentioned administration's leadership expectations of them. The expectations of students were the least clear. In many cases, the chairs said they did not know what students expected of them because they have limited direct contact with students, particularly undergraduates. The chairs felt that students primarily expected them to solve serious problems that were not resolved through other means.

Research question number three examined the relationship of leadership expectations to the chairs' gender and other identities. Overall, the chairs had difficulty addressing this question. Two of the women and none of the men thought that their gender affected expectations. Three of the men attributed differences in expectations to other factors, such as age, experience, personality, or leadership style.

The fourth research question examined the effects of expectations on leadership performances. Most of the participants believed that they expressed their gender or other identities the same or similarly at work as compared to their personal lives. Several of the chairs were able to describe at least one way in which they expressed themselves differently depending upon the setting. Most of the participants also explained that they did not feel empowered or disempowered because of their gender or other identities, although one of the women chairs described how she felt both empowered and disempowered by her gender.

Gendered expressions were also analyzed as part of the fourth research question. The chairs expressed their gender through their appearance and clothing. Overall, the

chairs were dressed casually and comfortably, depending upon the context. The women all wore pants and did not dress in an overly feminine way. The chairs also expressed a variety of gendered performances through how they spoke about or displayed emotions. Humor, laughter, and smiling were the most common emotions expressed by all of the chairs. The men tended to use humor in meetings, in front of groups, and in email communications more than the women did. The women tended to smile more frequently than the men. Half of the department chairs spoke about or expressed anger or frustration. One women chair explained at length about her temper and how she tries to control it. The men were more likely to display anger or frustration. Crying as an emotional expression was also brought up by one of the women chairs who acknowledged that she is not afraid to cry at work. Silence or absence as a gendered expression also emerged from the data in three instances, all of them with women participants.

The fifth research question addressed the chairs' definitions and expressions of power. While the chairs' definitions of power were each unique, several themes emerged with their definitions. The chairs frequently used concepts such as persuasion, influence, and collaboration in their definitions of power. Most chairs spoke about the limited nature of their power. Additionally, several participants had negative reactions to the concept of power. Overall, the men chairs tended to express more "power over" types of power, while the women chairs tended to demonstrate more "power to" types of power.

The analysis of the data by gender composition of department indicated that the four participants in departments with unequal gender representation experienced serious issues of climate and civility. These participants (three women, one man) also had more

relational or communal styles of leadership that may make them more aware of climate issues. More research is needed to examine this initial finding.

Lastly, the analysis of the data by institution yielded no differences except that of shared governance. The findings suggest that shared governance has a greater impact on Institution B than Institution A. Once again, further research is needed on this initial finding.

The findings of this study reflect that department chairs' perceptions of the effects of gender and other identities on leadership, perceptions of leadership expectations, effects of expectations on leadership performances, definitions and expressions of power, climate, and shared governance are complex and vary greatly between individuals. While there were some similarities among gender, there were also ways in which women and men department chairs tended to perceive and perform their identities differently. The participants, rather than exhibiting a simple binary of sameness and difference by gender, described and performed behaviors were sometimes the same and sometimes different with shifts in context. In the next chapter, I highlight the meaning and significance of these findings and discuss implications for research, theory, and practice in higher education.

## Chapter Five: Discussion

In this last chapter, I review the main findings of the study and make meaning of them through the tenets of feminist poststructuralism and performativity. I end the chapter by providing a discussion of the implications of the study and recommendations for research, theory, and practice.

### Main Findings

In this section, I reorganize and make meaning of the study findings by utilizing the key concepts of feminist poststructuralism and performativity. There are numerous commonalities between the two theories; therefore, I present the concepts of the theories together in the following topic areas: (1) discourse and subjectivity; (2) identity and agency; (3) power and knowledge; (4) language; and (5) difference.

**Discourse and subjectivity.** Gee (2005) defined discourses as “a coordinated pattern of words, deeds, values, beliefs, symbols, tools, objects, times, and places and in the here-and-now as a performance” (p. 28). In feminist poststructuralism, discourse is broadly viewed as “the many and varied influences that are acting on and being expressed in a particular situation” (Ropers-Huilman, 1998, p. 2). Another important point about discourse is that it does not simply reflect culture; discourse produces culture (Allan, 2010). Discourse is closely related to subjectivity because discourse constructs an individual’s sense of self in relation to the world which is defined as subjectivity (Allan, 2010; Weedon, 1997). As discourses shift and change, this sense of self also fluctuates over time and in different contexts. Weedon (1997) stated that “poststructuralism proposes a subjectivity which is precarious, contradictory and in process, constantly



being reconstituted in discourse each time we think or speak” (p. 32). The two concepts are intertwined and are therefore presented together in this section.

The participants in this study experienced and helped to produce many discourses in their leadership and work as department chairs. I have selected three of the most important discourses as they are most salient to the research questions of this study, they may shed light on the subjective experiences of the chairs within these discourses, and they may provide the most effective ways to promote social change. The three discourses are: leadership is for men, women as relational leaders, and gender and identities do not or should not matter.

The discourse of leadership is for men is related to how the women chairs made meaning of taking on the role of department chair. The women tended to not consider themselves for the position until someone asked them. Carolyn was encouraged to apply by a friend, but was skeptical of her chances. She assumed she was asked to apply because “you don’t have enough women in the pool and you just have to round out the pool.” She never thought she would get the position, and it was to her “complete surprise” when she did. Carol also never had any aspirations to be department chair and was encouraged to apply by a few respected faculty members. She noted, “I guess they saw something in me that I didn’t recognize in myself.” Carol also discussed her notions of leaders. She said, “I think overall our society still thinks that men are supposed to be the leaders,” and that leadership is “not as inbred or as deep” in women.

Avery, too, did not consider becoming department chair until her colleagues approached her. She recalled, “It wasn’t even on my radar screen.” She also commented, “I was interested to see if I had what it took to be chair of a department because I had no idea.”

The discourse that the women chairs used to make sense of their experiences was that leadership is primarily for men. The women tended to not think of themselves as leaders until they were judged to be worthy by others, such as their department colleagues. None of the men department chairs mentioned being asked to become chair or wondering if they were capable of fulfilling the duties of the role.

The second discourse of women as relational leaders is related to the responsibilities of being a department chair in a research university. All of the chairs discussed managerial-type tasks that they were expected by faculty and administration to complete, although the men participants tended to focus more heavily on the managerial duties. Some of these tasks include budgeting, filling out reports, and handling serious issues and complaints. Bill explained, “They expect you to manage the paper, to not be late with stuff, to not lose stuff, to make sure that the department’s work gets done.” In addition to these task-oriented responsibilities, the women department chairs were more likely to also discuss their concern and involvement with climate and incivility in their departments. Sarah summed this up most succinctly when she said, “I could get through this just by pushing paper, but I just see the potential is so enormous to do good stuff and to be a good working environment.” These relational types of issues seemed to permeate some of the women chairs’ work and take up a considerable amount of time and energy, particularly for the three women in departments with unequal gender representations. One

of the men chairs (Ferdinand) also brought up civility as a concern, but he indicated that he was unsure if it was part of his role to address it and seemed less concerned with trying to resolve it than the women department chairs.

Eagly and Karau (2002) in their role congruity theory posited that “expectations about leaders generally reflect an integration of the descriptive content of the leader role and the gender role” (p. 586). Women are expected to display communal and relational characteristics in leadership. If women enact a more agentic type of leadership, they would likely be viewed as not meeting the requirements of the female gender role. Eagly (2005) explained, “When the female gender role is inconsistent with a leader role, prejudice toward women as leaders or potential leaders is a common outcome” (p. 465). The discourse of women as relational leaders may cause women department chairs to feel obligated to address relational issues within their departments, whereas men may be able to (or allowed to) ignore them. The implications for women may be that the responsibilities of the role are viewed to be more extensive (including managerial *and* relational responsibilities) and complex because issues of climate and civility can be difficult to change. This may deter some women from taking on the role of department chair or pursuing further leadership opportunities.

The third discourse is that gender and identities should not or do not matter. For example, Bill remarked, “I’m not sufficiently aware of ways [gender] affects me.” When asked if his meaningful identities affect him at work, Robert commented, “Well, I hope not,” and went on to explain that “you are known by your work rather than by your kind of gender identity.” Avery also expressed similar sentiments when she said, “It’s all

invisible in terms of race/ethnicity, sexual preference . . . it's not an issue." Ferdinand commented, "I don't think there's any place where being a male has empowered me or given me more power."

The women's subjective positions regarding the effects of gender and identities were more nuanced and complex. Sarah stated, "I'm not so conscious of gender things . . . and I don't think gender gets in the way too much," but then later in the interview, she predicted, "If I were a guy, this would be a different environment entirely." Carol initially stated that gender "definitely affects what I do," but also troubled her statement when she said that "maybe gender isn't so much of it, but I think people think I'm approachable. I think that I'm fairly easy to talk to." Carolyn's statements about the effects of gender were also complex, juxtaposing more stereotypically feminine traits of having "soft edges" with more stereotypically masculine traits of having a temper and being competitive and opportunistic.

The women participants were more likely to problematize this discourse by discussing the complexities or their uncertainties of the effects of gender. While the women seemed to put more thought into the effects of gender, the discourse that it should not matter may cause women to understate its effects or attribute its effects to other causes such as leadership style or personality. Initially, I was surprised by the overall lack of awareness of gender and identity issues by all of the participants. I was expecting the department chairs, and especially the women department chairs, to be able to relate more stories and examples of how they have been affected by their gender in their positions. When considering this lack of awareness through a feminist poststructural lens, it

becomes less surprising because of the discourse reified in the responses of the department chairs. They may believe that if gender and identities do not or should not matter, then they cannot be affected by them. This lack of awareness or acknowledgement of gender and identities is concerning because leaders are less likely to disrupt dominant discourses if they are not conscious of them.

The three discourses of leadership is for men, women as relational leaders, and gender and identities do not or should not matter illuminate possible challenges for women in pursuing and persisting in higher education leadership. First, the discourse of leadership as a masculine endeavor was reflected in the tendency of women participants to not view the role of department chair as a natural fit for their skills and abilities; therefore, women may be less likely to think of themselves as leaders unless someone asks them to consider it. Women may also view the role of department chair as more complex and difficult as compared to men because women may perceive relational tasks as part of the role in addition to the managerial tasks. Lastly, if gender and other identities are not seen as having an effect on the experiences of department chairs, both women and men are unaware of the gender- and identity-based barriers that might inhibit women's success, thus leaving them unable to disrupt the discourse. These three discourses are possible factors contributing to the gender disparity in higher education leadership.

**Identity and agency.** The concept of identity within feminist poststructuralism and performativity is defined as how individuals understand themselves in relation to others and the world. Individuals have numerous identities that can shift depending upon the situation and over time (Lester, 2011). The discussion of identity in the research

findings of this study begins with an examination of the complex ways that women and men negotiate their gender and other meaningful identities as department chairs and leaders.

The findings related to the department chairs' perceptions of how their gender affected their leadership suggest that women were more likely to share specific ways in which their gender had an effect on their leadership and work as department chair. The women also expressed a more nuanced view of the effects, sometimes contradicting themselves while trying to explain the complexities of its impact. It seemed as if they did not want gender to have an effect initially, but yet they could often think of ways in which it did.

The men seemed to have more difficulty in addressing the issue of gender than the women. The men were also more likely to see no connection between their gender and their leadership. They were more likely to circumvent the question and morph it into the effects of others' gender rather than their own. By changing the question, they seemed to be implying that as men, their gender could not affect them, and they could not even consider the possibility. The men were not able to discuss the impact of gender in more than a superficial way which made them seem less aware of gender issues than their women counterparts.

The findings on the effects of other meaningful aspects of identity on the department chairs' leadership reflected two tendencies among women and men: differences in meaningful identities and differences in perceptions of how their identities affected their leadership. The differences in meaningful identities were apparent because

the women overall named larger, more complex lists of meaningful identities than the men. They were also more likely to name personal, non-work, or family-related identities, such as mother, friend, and wife.

When discussing how their identities affected their work as department chair, the women were better able to describe the effects of their identities than were the men. The women were also more reflexive about the benefits and challenges caused by their identities, whereas the men once again tended to bring up the effects of others' identities more than their own. It may be that the men were more uncomfortable discussing issues of identities realizing that they are situated in dominant positions as White men. Another possible meaning may be that the men simply never gave much thought to issues of identity because identity typically does not affect them negatively, and they may be unaware of their advantages relative to their dominant positions.

Another area of findings from this study that is related to identity is the perceived effects of identities on expectations of leadership from faculty members, administration, and students. There were a few differences when examining the data by gender. Two of the women chairs expressed concrete ways in which their gender might have an impact on expectations of their leadership and gave examples. None of the men did. Two men attributed differences in expectations to factors other than gender and other identities, such as personalities and leadership styles. Lastly, one of the men thought there might be possible effects, but he was unable to come up with any examples.

Across all of the findings on identity, most of the participants struggled in some way to talk about how gender and other aspects of their identity might affect their

leadership and expectations that others might have about their leadership. It seemed that many of the department chairs rarely think about these issues. While it is understandable to some extent given the demands of being chair and maintaining a scholarly and teaching life not to mention a personal life, I found it interesting that issues of gender and identity do not arise more often for these individuals – both men and women. This could, in part, be because these individuals are privileged in many ways. They are White, highly educated, professionals who are working in an environment that may insulate them to some degree from the effects of gender and other identities that others experience. At the same time, the department chairs and their leadership could likely benefit from a deeper and more thorough examination of what is meaningful to them as individuals and how that might affect how they enact their leadership. Awareness and understanding is the first step towards beginning to problematize and disrupt the discourses that negatively affect women and men in higher education.

Researchers have found that there are fewer women than men as higher education faculty members and in higher education administrative leadership roles, with the largest disparities occurring at doctoral granting institutions and in the position of president (Bryan & Kim, 2012; West & Curtis, 2006). When considering possible factors that contribute to this gender gap, it may be that women's more complex conceptions of identities disadvantage them or cause them to not assume leadership positions. Research universities may leave little space for leaders to perform identities outside of their professional identities. Women may, therefore, find higher education leadership roles to be less of a fit for their multiple identities as compared to men. Instead of communicating



to women that they need to de-value their personal identities in order to be successful in leadership, higher education institutions striving to reduce the gender gap in leadership would be better served by acknowledging and supporting the intersecting personal and professional identities of faculty members and administrators. This would enable more women to see administrative leadership as a fit and as Ropers-Huilman (2008) articulated, “Women faculty members’ dances of identities have the potential to contribute to the richness of our collective educational institutions” (p. 38). It would also allow men to be able to integrate more of their personal identities into meaningful parts of who they are at work.

Another key concept of feminist poststructuralism and performativity is agency, which is how individuals choose to perform their identities in different contexts. These choices vary across a continuum of rational and intentional to unconscious and non-intentional (Martin, 2003). Agency is limited by gender norms, and individuals exercise agency by obeying norms, resisting norms (Martin, 2006), or creating new performances with new meanings. The findings related to agency include the department chairs’ perceptions of expectations of their leadership and also how their perceptions affected their leadership and gender performances.

The department chairs in this study reported some similar expectations from faculty members, including steward/provider of resources, accessibility, and equitability. There were also a couple of differences across gender. Two women discussed the challenges of unclear and unattainable faculty expectations which seemed to make the job of department chair more stressful for them. This also indicated that the women may be

more concerned with the communal aspects of leadership as found by de Casal and Mulligan (2004). When considering faculty expectations in particular, the men department chairs were more likely to emphasize managerial tasks which is consistent with a more transactional style of leadership.

The findings of department chairs' perceptions of administrative expectations revealed two similarities and one difference. Women and men spoke about how administration expected them to handle issues in the department and complete day-to-day management tasks; however, only three of the chairs, all women, also addressed expectations that were more oriented to transformational styles of leadership (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001). Appelbaum et al. (2003) have argued that transformational leadership is more effective in contemporary organizations, which would seem to give these women an advantage in being successful leaders; however, the fact that three women, and none of the men, discussed the additional expectations of broader leadership goals may indicate that women view the responsibilities of department chair as more extensive compared to men. This broader, leadership-oriented view of the role may be more in keeping with what administrators would like of chairs, but it also may serve to make the job seem that much more difficult to women, thus deterring some from taking on the position.

The participants for the most part reported that they express their gender and other identities in a similar way in their professional and personal lives. When looking across the participants, three out of the four women brought up at least one way in which they were different at work than in their personal lives while only one of the four men did. The

differences discussed by each the person were unique, but the common thread throughout was that in order to do the work of a department chair, they had to somehow be or act differently than they would otherwise. More of the women felt they had to be different at work. One possible reason for this may be again due to the discourse of leadership as a masculine endeavor. The messages in this discourse may make women feel like they must be something other than themselves in order to be leaders.

The participants' agency also includes how they performed their identities through their appearance and clothing in different contexts. The most significant finding in this area was that none of the women were dressed in an overly feminine way. The women chairs' appearances were more masculine than the norms portrayed in society. It could be that a more feminine appearance may be detrimental for women in leadership and is therefore consciously or unconsciously avoided.

Butler (1993) emphasized the body as a location for gendered performances. The department chairs were performing their gender through their appearance as well as constructing and shaping it through repeated performances. The women in this study may be using their bodies to try to fit into the discourse on the way leaders should look.

**Power and knowledge.** A key concept of feminist poststructuralism and performativity is power. Foucault focused on the productive rather than repressive aspects of power and acknowledged that power can benefit some and oppress others (Foucault, 1978). Power is presented here in conjunction with the concept of knowledge because "it is in discourse that power and knowledge are joined together" (Foucault, 1978, p. 100). Ropers-Huilman (1998) explained, "Knowledge that is viewed as complete

and true in a given social context varies over time, and those whose knowledge is most highly regarded in any such context are often defined as those with the greatest power” (p. 6). Butler (2004) also emphasized another kind of power called regulatory power. Regulatory power is “the alignment of norms and power” (Lester, 2011, p. 145). Regulatory powers affect women and men leaders in a variety of ways. Individuals are evaluated by gendered expectations of how they should speak and behave as leaders. If they are viewed to be outside of the norms for their gender, they may be seen as ineffective, discriminated against, bullied, or sexually harassed (Lester, 2011).

The findings on emotional expressions discussed or enacted by the participants suggest that the men used humor in meetings, in front of groups, and in email communications more than the women did. The women department chairs smiled more than the men. The findings on expressions of anger indicate that the men spoke about or enacted anger, frustration, and aggravation more than the women did. Carolyn spoke about her temper and her efforts to control and hide it. By feeling the need to hide her anger, Carolyn may be subject to regulatory powers that constrain her ability to express her gender in ways that differ from what is expected.

The women participants spoke about the expressions of crying and empathy more than the men did. Carolyn was told by somebody that her crying behavior limited her ability to advance in higher education leadership. For both women and men who do not control their emotions, there are consequences that are considered to be regulatory powers that constrain expressions.

Emotional expressions may be a critical factor in workplace power differences by gender (Ragins & Winkel, 2011). Women are expected to be more nurturing and compassionate, while men are expected to be more proud and confident. The emotions that women are expected to demonstrate more may put them at a leadership disadvantage. For example, researchers have found that women and men who show sadness are conferred less status than individuals who show anger (Tiedens, 2001).

There were three instances of silence, all involving women, in the findings. The performances of silence were different in each individual, and may or may not have been consciously enacted. There are many possible meanings for the silences. They may be related to issues of gender, leadership, and power that caused them to feel like they should at times remain silent in their role as department chairs. Silence can also be a form of resistance against the norms or dominant discourses of a situation. Silence is also possible evidence of regulatory powers at work that limit and penalize their expressions (Butler, 1990), therefore, causing women to choose to remain silent rather than risk correction.

The department chairs' definitions and expressions of power were each unique, and there were several differences when examining the findings by gender. The women were more likely to emphasize and enact collaborative, consultative, or empowering types of power. They also expressed more negative feelings about power than the men. One reason for the women's negative feelings about power may be because as individuals in subordinate positions, they may have experienced more oppressive or repressive forms of power. The men in this study tended to conceptualize and enact power as persuasion,

influence, or “power over” more so than the women. Despite the variations in conceptions of power, all of the participants’ understandings support the idea that power is productive because they all, in one way another, described ways in which they exercise power rather than possess power, and they all recognized that the movement of power is not simply hierarchical, particularly in research universities. The faculty exercise power in numerous ways which limits the ability for department chairs to exercise power; therefore, power moves throughout all levels of the institution. There is not a binary of those who have power and those who do not.

The existing literature on leadership in higher education primarily focuses on positional leadership or the power/rights that are given along with the title. According to the participants of this study, there is very little positional power in the role of department chair. Power or influence must typically be earned. Most department chairs return to the faculty, placing them in the unique situation of being in the primary role of colleagues to the faculty members in their departments in addition to the temporary or secondary role of “boss.” This combination of limited positional power and the dual role of colleague/boss makes the position of department chair different from other leadership roles in the academy. When studying department chairs, it is important to recognize these complexities rather than focusing on the positional leadership of the role.

Power connects to knowledge through discourse. The data from this study suggest that power and knowledge are situated in the discourse of leadership as a masculine endeavor, and there were a number of examples where those with the greatest power in the given context were also viewed as being knowledgeable. Sarah pointed this out when

she said, “I think when the men speak – the few men that we have in our group – they’re very seldom, I think this is right, contradicted, but the women are rather fierce with each other.” Under the discourse, the men in her department have the power and knowledge, and therefore are not contradicted in the way that women are.

Another significant example of power and knowledge in the data was that of Gus at his college meeting of department chairs. Given the large number of attendees (approximately 45), Gus spoke quite frequently. The chairs at the main tables were occupied primarily by White men, and it was they who spoke or held the floor for any length of time. Once again, it seemed as if power and knowledge in this context were situated with Gus and the other White men in the room.

A final notable example occurred when Robert attended a guest speaker’s presentation in a class. Robert made a comment and was contradicted by a student. Robert forcefully refuted the student’s claims. The student continued to argue his point, and Robert became more insistent that his knowledge and experience of the situation were correct. Eventually, the student backed down. It is possible that the student was factually incorrect, but it also could be that the student’s view of “truth” was simply different from that of Robert’s; however, in the end, Robert’s subject position as a professor and expert gave him more power and thus more knowledge in this context.

The location of power and knowledge with men may work to impede women’s advancement in higher education if women tend to be viewed as less likely to have power and knowledge. Disruption of the discourse is therefore necessary to diversify leadership.

**Language.** Language is important to feminist poststructuralism because it serves as a basis of analysis, and it is tightly linked to the concepts of power and knowledge. Language does not reflect reality, but rather it produces reality (Weedon, 1997). Poststructuralist theories purport that “language is socially constituted and shaped by the interplay between texts, readers, and larger cultural context rather than carrying any kinds of fixed or inherent meaning that can be ‘discovered’” (Allan, 2010, p. 13). Language differs from discourse in that it is the smaller, base unit of analysis, whereas discourse is the larger macro view of all of the influences in a situation.

Several key examples illustrate the important of language within discourses. The first example is the examination of the language in the emails written by Carolyn, Robert, and Ferdinand. Carolyn’s written communications were very supportive, communal, and relational, reflecting and producing the discourse of women and leadership. Some examples included: “I wondered if you might be willing to allow us to use . . .” and “I don’t want to force you into anything, but I think this will be nice for everyone.” Robert and Ferdinand’s email language was more agentic and directive in nature, reflecting and producing the discourse of men and leadership. Examples included: “How about this for a format,” and “Please look at his credentials.”

I also observed these types of communication differences in the participants’ spoken language as well. The department chairs had a variety of communication styles, but all of the department chairs used the qualifying phrases of “I think” or “I feel” at various times during the interviews; however, Carolyn, Carol, Sarah, and Ferdinand used them the most. These four individuals were also the most relational and communal. Their



heightened use of the qualifying phrases is consistent with the more feminine discourse related to their leadership styles.

In stark contrast to language such as “I think” and “I feel” was language that expressed such a high degree of certainty as to be impossible or unrealistic. The most notable example was that of Robert’s comments about gender bias. He said, “I certainly have no, again we all could be blind to our own failings, but I would say there’s not an iota, not a scintilla of gender bias in any of my thinking or any of my attitudes.” This level of certainty was more common in the language that the men used than the language the women used.

The findings related to language are consistent with feminist poststructural theory. Language is tightly linked to power and knowledge. Men are accustomed to having more power and thus more knowledge because they are situated in dominant positions. It is therefore not surprising that their use of language also reflects this position. Women who tend to use more communal and relational language may be viewed by faculty and administration as having less power and knowledge, therefore, diminishing their opportunities for advancement.

**Difference.** Another important concept of feminist poststructuralism is difference. Difference, as originated in Derrida’s writings, refers to the opposites and binaries, such as male/female, that are common in Modernist views of reality (Allan, 2010). Ropers-Huilman (1998) explained, “The acceptance of these dualisms as commonsense without problematizing the power relations they establish is a concern of those engaging in poststructural thought” (p. 8). Poststructural theorists work to deconstruct the

fundamental suppositions that lie beneath these binaries (Allan, 2010; Ropers-Huilman, 1998).

Throughout the analysis and writing of the findings of this study, I have attempted to trouble the existence of opposites and binaries. I have found this to be a challenge when writing about comparisons across cases utilizing gender as an analytical tool. I have tried to de-emphasize these binaries through the careful use of language such as “tended to be” and “more likely.” As unique individuals, the department chairs all had unique experiences, therefore it was also important to use as much of the participants’ own language as possible, allowing readers to examine comparisons for themselves.

I was also careful to point out situations in which individuals differed from the other participants of their gender as well as situations in which there were no differences across gender. Additionally, many of the findings in this study overlapped among men and women. While there were tendencies by gender, there were many times when several of the men and one of the women held a similar view. In other situations, a number of the women and one or two of the men expressed similar perceptions. Across the data, there were a range of perceptions communicated by a range of individuals.

This study’s findings support Derrida’s concept of difference because the department chairs’ perceptions did not fall into simple opposites that women perceive one thing and men perceive another. Perceptions of the effects of gender on leadership are more complex than a binary view would suggest. Through deconstructing the assumptions beneath this type of simplistic view of gender, the findings of this study

offer a deeper understanding of the how department chairs perceive the effects of gender on their leadership.

The key concepts of feminist poststructuralism and performativity provided a helpful framework to make meaning of the findings from this study. In the next section, I provide an examination of the implications and recommendations based upon the findings.

### **Implications and Recommendations**

A variety of implications and recommendations for research, theory, and practice can be made based upon the findings from this study. The implications and recommendations are discussed in this last section of the chapter.

**Research.** While this study provided a wealth of rich and detailed information about the effects of gender and other identities on department chairs, additional research is needed on higher education leaders from a broader range of disciplines, institutional types, positions, and identities. Additionally, the findings of this study generated new questions for further research utilizing a gendered perspective of leadership.

The participants were limited to department chairs working in the social sciences and humanities. Future research could also be expanded to include additional fields and disciplines. Of particular interest may be the pure hard sciences which continue to experience the most significant gender disparities by discipline. It would be interesting to learn if the differences in gender composition and discipline socialization have an effect on department chairs from a gender and identities perspective.

Institutional type is another characteristic of this study that could be expanded for additional research. This study was limited to research universities. Additional studies could examine leadership in the role of department chairs in other types of institutions, such as regional comprehensive, liberal arts, private, and two-year institutions. Also, some institutions in heavily unionized systems have different types of leadership structures in which department chairs remain in the faculty and deans are the supervisors of faculty members. These alternative types of organizational structures may also impact how gender and identities affect department chairs.

Another way to expand the understandings of leadership from a gender and identities lens is to study leaders in other roles, such as deans, vice presidents, provosts, and presidents. The effects of gender and other identities may vary in context as individuals advance up the administrative ladder and as their positional power increases.

Future research should also seek to include greater diversity of identities among participants, including individuals of color and lesbian and gay department chairs. It may be that these individuals experience heightened effects of their gender and other identities due to multiple non-dominant identities that intersect and interact with one another.

In addition to simply broadening the scope of inquiry, the findings of this study raised many new questions for future research. Most of the department chairs were not very aware of the effects of their gender and identities on their leadership or did not believe gender mattered in their work. Additional research could examine this further through interviews with faculty, administration, and students to learn if individuals who work and interact with department chairs perceive effects of gender and identities on the

chairs' leadership or view gender and identities as an area of concern within their departments.

Another area for research is the issue of climate and civility as it relates to the gender of department chairs and the gender composition of the discipline/department. Future studies could help illuminate if departments with women chairs and/or inequitable gender compositions experience more climate and civility issues and if women chairs are more focused on climate issues than their men counterparts. If women are more concerned with relational issues, does it make the position of department more stressful or deter women for pursuing other leadership opportunities?

The private and professional lives of higher education leaders are another topic for further study. The findings of this study suggest that the role of department chair can be very time and energy consuming. If a chair's private life cannot be very separate or different from his/her professional life, how do individuals with primary parenting and caregiving responsibilities manage this lack of separation?

Lastly, further research is needed on the intersection between gender and masculinity/femininity. In other words, what happens when leaders' performances do not match the norms of their gender? For example, what are the reactions and consequences when a man cries or a woman gets angry? An in-depth examination of the regulatory powers that affect leaders would provide added insight into the constraints that women and men experience.

**Theory.** This study utilized a conceptual framework based upon the theories of feminist poststructuralism and performativity. The first way this study contributes to

these theories is by providing support that both theories were useful lenses for examining issues of gender and identities in higher education leadership and could be used in future studies to expand the understandings of these issues. Specifically, the feminist poststructural concepts of discourse, subjectivity, power, knowledge, language, and difference provide the foundation for performativity's concepts of identity, agency and power, and all of these constructs were useful for understanding the experiences of department chairs.

A second way this study contributed to an understanding of these theories is that it highlighted a couple of areas in which the theories posed challenges. Although both feminist poststructuralism and performativity provided useful constructs to guide my research, these constructs can be complex and abstract when applying them to the lived experiences of individuals. For example, how can we know what discourses are really affecting particular individuals and to what extent? The findings of this study suggest a number of possible factors that could contribute to the gender disparity in higher education leadership; however, it is difficult to unpack what is *actually* contributing to the problem and to what degree.

Another challenge was that both feminist poststructuralism and performativity promote "an ethic of activism" (Allan et al., 2010, p. 5). While the theories help to make meaning of important constructs, they are less clear when considering how to translate this knowledge into action. For example, the findings shed light on three potentially problematic discourses related to leadership in higher education, but I am left with questions as to how to change the discourses. Is generating awareness enough to disrupt

discourses? How do we create new subject positions and remove constraints on gendered performances? Researchers have applied feminist poststructural perspectives to policy and policy analysis in higher education (Allan et al., 2010); however, a useful addition may also be the inclusion of a change model or developmental viewpoint. Activism and change might begin by identifying where individuals are positioned in discourses, what those discourses are, and how individuals exercise agency. Once this is more fully understood, the next step might be to raise awareness and increase agency for change, followed by recommendations for how individuals, institutions, and systems might disrupt the discourses to create new discourses and subject positions. Despite these critiques, feminist poststructuralism and performativity allow for an examination of the complexities of gender issues that may not be reflected in other conceptual frameworks.

**Practice.** This study contributes to the understandings of how gender and other identities affect the leadership of department chairs. The findings of this study can be used to inform higher education policy and practice in a number of ways, including improving awareness, designing programming for faculty and administrators, and systemic acknowledgement of multiple identities.

A key finding in this study was that in general, the department chairs were not very aware of how their gender might affect their leadership. This lack of awareness could serve to reify the status quo, thus contributing to the continuation of the gender gap in higher education leadership. In order to increase the number of women in leadership positions, university employees at all levels will need to become more aware of the ways gender and identity performances support, disrupt, and shape norms. In order to address

such a pervasive gender disparity, significant awareness, disruption, and resignification of the existing gender norms and regulatory powers that continue to inhibit the advancement of women leaders in the academy is needed.

Specific examples of problematic gender norms and regulatory powers that limit individual agency were present in the findings of this study. Women chairs were more likely to feel like they had constrain parts of their identities, such as the expression of anger or crying, and to alter how they behave at work as compared to their personal lives. They also felt more compelled to consider the communal and relational implications of their actions. While these leadership characteristics may be viewed as strengths and effective leadership strategies by some, it may be that they also cause women department chairs to experience more stress and frustration when the faculty members they are trying to work with do not have clear or reasonable expectations. Administration would benefit from an awareness of the norms, regulatory powers, and differences in leadership style and approach so that all department chairs feel supported and encouraged and that more diverse individuals feel comfortable taking on leadership roles in the academy.

The findings of this study could also be used to justify the need for programming opportunities about gender and other intersecting identities. Universities may provide programming for administrators, faculty, and staff to help increase understandings and awareness of race/ethnicity and sexual orientation separately, but it would be helpful to have programming that addresses the intersectionality of multiple identities. An increased understanding of the effects of intersecting identities may help faculty members and



administrators feel like they are able to express all aspects of their identities, rather than the need to hide, de-emphasize, or prioritize aspects of who they are.

### **Conclusion**

This study provides an understanding of the experiences of department chairs, including how gender and other aspects of identity affect their leadership, definitions and expressions of power, and how leadership expectations affect leadership performances. Through these findings, this study also increases understandings of factors that may contribute to the gender disparity in higher education leadership. Lastly, the study used the theories of feminist poststructuralism and performativity to provide new and useful lenses to better understand the effects of gender and other identities on leaders in higher education, while utilizing gender as a key analytic category. In conclusion, I believe that this study makes important contributions to the research on leadership in higher education.

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## Appendix A: Research Questions Mapped to Interview Protocol Questions

Research Questions	Interview Protocol Questions
Background/Foundational Information	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Why did you take on the role of department chair?</li> <li>2. How would you describe the roles you play as department chair?</li> <li>3. How would you describe your approach to leadership?</li> <li>6. What identities are most meaningful to you as a person?</li> </ol>
RQ1: How do department chairs perceive that their gender and other identities affect their leadership?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. How does your gender affect what you do as department chair?</li> <li>8. How do other aspects of your identity affect what you do as department chair?</li> </ol>
RQ2: What do department chairs believe faculty members, students, and administration expect of their leadership?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. What expectations do faculty members have of your leadership?               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Do you feel that your gender affects those expectations? If yes, how?</li> <li>b. Do you feel that other aspects of your identity affect those expectations? If yes, how?</li> </ol> </li> <li>10. What expectations do students have of your leadership?               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Do you feel that your gender affects those expectations? If yes, how?</li> <li>b. Do you feel that other aspects of your identity affect those expectations? If yes, how?</li> </ol> </li> <li>11. What expectations do your dean or other administrators have of your leadership?               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Do you feel that your gender affects those expectations? If yes, how?</li> <li>b. Do you feel that other aspects of your identity affect those expectations? If yes, how?</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
RQ3: How do department chairs believe those expectations are related to the chairs' gender or other identities?	
RQ4: How do department chairs' perceptions of others' expectations affect their leadership performances?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12. Do you feel you express your gender and/or other identities differently at work than you do in your personal life? Why do you think that is?</li> <li>13. How do the norms of your unit affect how you express your gender or other identities?</li> <li>14. Describe any experiences where you felt that your gender or other identities empowered you or disempowered you as a leader?</li> </ol>
RQ5: How do discursive framings of power affect department chairs' leadership?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4. What is your definition of power?</li> <li>5. How does power play a part in what you do as a department chair?</li> </ol>
Summary Question	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>15. Is there anything else about your gender, identities, and leadership as a department chair that you would like to tell me?</li> </ol>

### **Appendix B: Interview Protocol**

Thank you again for your willingness to participate in this study. As you are aware, I am interested in understanding how department chairs enact their roles, including how they may be affected by gender or other identities.

I have a number of open ended questions I would like to ask you. Please keep in mind that you may withdraw from the study at any time and you may choose not to answer any of the questions. Do you have any questions before we begin?

1. Why did you take on the role of department chair?
2. How would you describe the roles you play as department chair?
3. How would you describe your approach to leadership?
4. What is your definition of power?
5. How does power play a part in what you do as a department chair?
6. What identities are most meaningful to you as a person?
7. How does your gender affect what you do as department chair?
8. How do other aspects of your identity affect what you do as department chair?
9. What expectations do faculty members have of your leadership?
  - c. In what ways, if any, does your gender affect those expectations?
  - d. In what ways, if any, do other aspects of your identity affect those expectations?
10. What expectations do students have of your leadership?
  - a. In what ways, if any, does your gender affect those expectations?
  - b. In what ways, if any, do other aspects of your identity affect those expectations?
11. What expectations do your dean or other administrators have of your leadership?
  - a. In what ways, if any, does your gender affect those expectations?
  - b. In what ways, if any, do other aspects of your identity affect those expectations?
12. Think about how you express your gender and/or other identities at work and in your personal life. Do you express yourself the same or differently? Why do you think that is?
13. How do the norms of your unit affect how you express your gender or other identities?
14. Describe any experiences where you felt that your gender or other identities empowered you or disempowered you as a leader.
15. Is there anything else about your gender, identities, and leadership as a department chair that you would like to tell me?

Thank you for your time today. I will be calling you for a brief follow-up phone interview after I transcribe the interview and conduct the preliminary data analysis. For the follow-up interview, I would ask that you be mindful of how you enact your roles as department chair as well as how gender and other identities may affect your leadership.

### **Appendix C: Follow-up Interview Protocol**

Thank you again for taking the time to participate in this study. When we last spoke, I asked you to think about how you enact your roles as department chair and how you may be affected by gender and other identities as it relates to your leadership. I'd like to take this opportunity to ask you a couple of follow-up questions. Once again, please remember that you may opt out of the study at any time or choose to not answer any of the questions.

Do I have your permission to record this interview over the phone?

1. What have you noticed since our interview about how your gender or other identities affect your work as a department chair?
2. What have you noticed about how your gender or other identities affect how others view you in your role as department chair?
3. Has thinking about gender, identity, and leadership caused you to do anything differently over the past couple of weeks?
  - a. If yes, what did you do differently?
  - b. If no, why do you think that is?
4. Several themes have emerged from my preliminary analysis of the data from the observation and interview day. I'd like to discuss some of these findings with you. Do you think that these themes accurately reflect your perceptions and experiences as department chair?

Thank you for your time today. I will send a copy of both interview transcriptions to you. You may review the transcripts to see if they accurately reflect your meaning and intent. I also welcome any further feedback you may have. Where would you like me to send the transcripts?

**Appendix D: Institutional Review Board Approval**

FROM: [irb@umn.edu](mailto:irb@umn.edu)  
TO: [lepko002@umn.edu](mailto:lepko002@umn.edu)  
DATE: Mon, Dec 3, 2012 at 2:31 PM  
SUBJECT: 1211E24626 - PI Lepkowski - IRB - Exempt Study Notification

The IRB: Human Subjects Committee determined that the referenced study is exempt from review under federal guidelines 45 CFR Part 46.101(b) category #2 SURVEYS/INTERVIEWS; STANDARDIZED EDUCATIONAL TESTS; OBSERVATION OF PUBLIC BEHAVIOR.

**Study Number:** 1211E24626

**Principal Investigator:** Christine Lepkowski

**Title(s):** Gender, Performativity, and Leadership: Department Chairs in Higher Education

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This e-mail confirmation is your official University of Minnesota HRPP notification of exemption from full committee review. You will not receive a hard copy or letter.

This secure electronic notification between password protected authentications has been deemed by the University of Minnesota to constitute a legal signature.

The study number above is assigned to your research. That number and the title of your study must be used in all communication with the IRB office.

Research that involves observation can be approved under this category without obtaining consent.

**SURVEY OR INTERVIEW RESEARCH APPROVED AS EXEMPT UNDER THIS CATEGORY IS LIMITED TO ADULT SUBJECTS.**

This exemption is valid for five years from the date of this correspondence and will be filed inactive at that time. You will receive a notification prior to inactivation. If this research will extend beyond five years, you must submit a new application to the IRB before the study's expiration date.

Upon receipt of this email, you may begin your research. If you have questions, please call the IRB office at [\(612\) 626-5654](tel:6126265654).

You may go to the View Completed section of eResearch Central at <http://eresearch.umn.edu/> to view further details on your study.

The IRB wishes you success with this research.