We Did It Our Way: Motivations, Satisfactions, and Accomplishments of Senior Academic Women

Dr. Eugenia Proctor Gerdes

Abstract

In a survey of senior academic women whose careers began around 1970, over half of the 98 respondents cited the desire to serve or make a difference and sought personal fulfillment in their work. Most saw men's motivations as dissimilar, typically as more self-interested and competitive. Despite generally high satisfaction, dissatisfaction with time pressure/workload and with support was common. Satisfactions and accomplishments overlapped. Frequently mentioned were teaching, scholarship, and their discipline, especially by faculty, and programmatic accomplishments, especially by administrators. Many respondents mentioned helping women; many mentioned a collaborative, nurturing style as integral to their success and as different from their typical male colleagues. Context is provided by the metaphor of immigration (Martin, 1997, 2000), the concept of ambivalent sexism (Krefting, 2003; Glick & Fiske, 1999), and recent work on women and leadership by Eagly and colleagues (e.g., Eagly, 2005; Eagly & Carli, 2007).

Keywords: women, higher education, academic women, accomplishments

Introduction

The situation of women as professional employees in higher education has changed dramatically since the early 1970s. This change can be examined on several levels, beginning most simply with the sheer number of women. In approximately 20 years, from 1976 to 1997, women as a percentage of full-time employees increased from 25% to 36% of faculty positions and from 26% to 45% of executive-administrative-managerial positions (NCES, 1998, 2001); and the gradual increase in representation of women continues, reaching 42% of full-time faculty and 53% of full-time executive-administrative-managerial positions by 2007 (NCES, 2010). On another level, the change in representation of women and in attendant attitudes can be viewed in terms of the underlying causes, powerful influences that began in the early 1970s—most notably, the application of affirmative action to higher education (Astin & Snyder, 1982), the creation of commissions on women (Glazer-Raymo, 1999, 2008a), and, perhaps more subtly, the development of women's studies and feminist perspectives in many disciplines (Boxer, 1998). Finally, on the most personal and complex level, women whose academic careers began in the 1970s were both affected by the transformations and responsible for many of them. Few empirical studies have dealt with the lived experience of these women as they changed the landscape of higher education, an omission this study seeks to correct.

Two conceptual models seem particularly appropriate to viewing academic women as active, rather than passive, participants in the changes since the early 1970s. These models also address some of the obstacles faced by academic women, particularly gendered expectations. Jane Roland Martin (1997, 2000), an eminent philosopher of education, introduced immigration as a metaphor for women's increasing representation in higher education; she described women as moving from the private sphere and traditionally female occupations into the somewhat hostile male-dominated land of the professions, including higher education. Martin argued that, to succeed as students and later as professors, women must neglect the private sphere's "three Cs of care, concern, and connection" and assimilate into higher education's emphasis on logic and competition. Moreover, because the traits associated with success in the academic culture are valued when they are possessed by men but not when they are possessed by women, women academics must become "living contradictions" unless they enter traditionally feminine (i.e., "ghettoized") academic fields. A similar double bind for academic women is described by Linda Krefting (2003), using Glick and Fiske's (1999) social psychological concept of ambivalent sexism (see Cikara & Fiske, 2009, for a more recent review of ambivalent sexism). Academic women who are perceived as highly competent violate prescriptions that women should be nurturing rather than competitive, and thereby lose likability and influence. According to ambivalent sexism, regardless of academic women's accomplishments, they cannot be seen as simultaneously competent and likable when they are competing with dominant (i.e., male) interests for positions and resources.

Krefting's essay also included a more optimistic possibility, the post-structural feminist perspective that academic women themselves can deconstruct and resist dominant ideologies, including ambivalent sexism. Krefting mentioned women's consciousness raising during the 1960s and 1970s as an example, and she associated women's resistance with their progress in higher education since that time—but her review did not include evidence on whether such resistance is common among academic women, and she acknowledged the power of dominant

interests to contest change. Martin (1997, 2000) likewise held out an alternative to assimilation; she advocated changing our criterion for academic women's successful immigration to acculturation, making the distinction that the dominant culture also changes when acculturation occurs. Under acculturationism, women would not be expected to totally adopt the androcentric culture of higher education or to the hide traditionally feminine strengths in order to be successful in higher education. The resulting culture would be a blend that is no longer a harsh filter or chilly climate for women and that extends the benefits of care and connection, as well as rationality, to both men and women. Martin assumed that assimilation still was the usual path to women's success in her 1997 article, and she seemed more pessimistic about the possibility of acculturation in her 2000 book—but there is little evidence on whether women whose careers have spanned this transitional period since the 1970s feel that they have assimilated to the dominant norms or, instead, that they have made their own way (resisting the dominant expectations as suggested above) or even changed the culture of higher education in line with Martin's ideal of acculturation.

In spite of the historic position of this cohort, surprisingly few studies ask senior academic women to look back over their careers and assess the factors in their own success. For example, although Krefting (2003) noted the importance of examining lived experience as well as statistical data in assessing outcomes for women in academic employment, the sources she cited are autobiographical reports or case studies of problems faced by small numbers of women in specific disciplines or situations. Two cross-disciplinary studies of a small number of senior women are more relevant to the current project. In their classic study of women educational leaders, Helen Astin and Carole Leland (1991) collected 77 case studies, separated into three "generations." Their youngest generation, the Inheritors, began to assume leadership in the mid-1970s and reported receiving greater support than the earlier generations. The Inheritors often reported developing an awareness of the problems remaining for women as they confronted disparities themselves or became involved in women's studies or feminist groups. According to Astin and Leland, the Inheritors believe in collective action; and they see themselves as problem-solvers who lead by enabling and empowering others, but also as politically savvy. Unfortunately, evidence from the Inheritors is limited both because they were treated primarily in comparison to the earlier cohorts and because most had only reached their early to mid-forties by the 1991 publication date.

More nearly completed careers were examined in Florence Hamrick's (2003; Hamrick & Benjamin, 2004) mid-1990s interviews of 26 women who were full professors at a large research university, and whose average completion date for their terminal degrees was in the mid-1970s. In describing the competing demands for their time over their careers, these women communicated the difficulty of "doing it all." They described compromises they had made during their careers and their acceptance of the consequences; and even though some referred to gender bias or to academe being premised on men's lives, they emphasized their own choices in allocating time among teaching, scholarship, and service activities and between work and personal/family life (Hamrick & Benjamin, 2004). Both the one-third of these women who were full- or part-time administrators and the two-thirds who were full-time professors described their current willingness to assume leadership roles to improve their departments and the university (Hamrick, 2003).

In order to collect retrospective reflections from a larger and broader sample of academic women before those who were newcomers in the early 1970s reached retirement age, I began to survey senior academic women from a variety of institutions in the spring of 1997. Previously published analyses of these data demonstrated that those surveyed were aware of the tremendous changes for women over their careers but also aware of continuing problems. As reported in Gerdes (2006), these senior women often cited the increased presence of women, improved policies or behavior toward women, and/or improvements in beliefs or attitudes toward women. However, almost half noted continuing family problems for women, and over two-thirds described continuing biases, primarily subtle or stereotypical biases. Further, in describing their own careers, these senior women, especially the administrators, reported a high level of stress (Gerdes, 2003b). Major sources of stress included time/workload pressures; responsibility to and for others, others' expectations, and conflict; resource problems; and high expectations of oneself. Difficulty balancing work with other roles over the course of their careers also was described by a majority of these academic women. Their advice to younger women, reported in Gerdes (2003a), included appropriate cautions about remaining pitfalls but also striking optimism about current prospects for women if appropriate strategies were followed.

Statement of Purpose

The lived experience of women who began academic careers in the 1970s is important. Yet, their story is incomplete— more research has covered barriers to their success than their resistance to expectations and their accomplishments in changing the landscape of higher education. My three earlier analyses raise the question of whether senior women's assessment of their achievements will accord with their high stress and the cautionary aspect of their perceptions of higher education or, instead, with their sense of agency and optimism concerning women's progress. What were their goals and priorities in their careers? What do they identify as their accomplishments? Are they satisfied with their careers? Do they see their gender as determining their motivations or accomplishments? Moreover, are their answers on the whole indicative of concern about being judged according to stereotypical prescriptions (ambivalent sexism) and assimilation or more in accord with resistance to ambivalent sexism and acculturation?

A qualitative research design is most appropriate to address these questions. Many authors have noted the natural link of qualitative methods to studying lived experience and listening to women's voices, goals emphasized by feminist scholars since the 1970s (Kitzinger, 2004; Marshall & Rossman, 2006). For this qualitative study, I chose to use open-ended survey questions rather than structured interviews in order to produce a large sample that was geographically diverse, represented different institutional categories, and allowed the possibility of comparing different types of academic women. Motivations, satisfactions, and accomplishments would be expected to diverge for those who chose different paths over the course of their careers. Given the large sample, frequencies of similar responses were counted, a strategy that facilitates nuanced conclusions from qualitative research (Deem, 2002). The design can be characterized as "mixed" because of the use of statistical analysis (Patton, 2002); in addition to collecting qualitative data and performing content analyses to assign answers to categories, the frequencies in categories were statistically compared across groups of women.

Method

Survey

In order to maximize the number of appropriate respondents, I used one of the four dominant types of qualitative research sampling, snowball sampling (Gobo, 2004; Patton, 2002). In the spring of 1997, I emailed a letter of explanation and an open-ended questionnaire to women identified through acquaintances at my own and other institutions, multi-disciplinary listservs of faculty members, and listservs of academic deans and higher education administrators. The letter invited confidential participation by faculty women and academic administrators or other administrators who began their careers with faculty positions, especially those who assumed their first positions in higher education in the 1970s or a few years earlier. The letter also asked recipients to forward my invitation to other academic women who might fit these criteria.

A series of open-ended questions addressed respondents' positive and negative experiences early in their careers and in their current work. The three questions relevant to the current report appeared near the end of the questionnaire, before the final questions about higher education in general, and asked respondents to reflect on their own careers as a whole:

> Looking over your career, what do you think has motivated you? Do you think your goals and priorities have been any different from those of men in comparable positions and on similar career paths? Have women's issues been a priority for you?

> What would you describe as your major accomplishments and innovations in your career? Do you think there are contributions you have made that arise from your being a woman, that might not have been made by a man in your position?

> How would you rate your overall satisfaction with your career—Very High, High, Moderate, Low, or Very Low? What are your greatest sources of satisfaction? What are your greatest sources of dissatisfaction or disappointment?

Respondents

Ninety-eight women responded to the survey. Of these, 11 were current or recent presidents or chancellors; 40 were academic deans, vpaa/provosts, or their associates working in academic or faculty affairs (hereafter called deans); nine were other administrators; and 38 were faculty members. Respondents' disciplinary backgrounds spanned the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences including medicine. They were located across the country (plus several in Canada) and at institutions that represented every Carnegie classification and that included some women's colleges. Respondents were invited to identify characteristics besides gender, including ethnic background, that might have affected their treatment; few identified race or ethnicity, so it must be assumed that most are white.

It appeared that either date of degree or date of first academic job could indicate the start of their academic careers. Although 96% had received doctoral or terminal M.F.A. degrees, a

good number began academic positions before obtaining the terminal degree; other women received their final degrees well before they sought or were able to obtain a full-time position. As intended, these respondents began their careers in the crucial juncture when affirmative action was beginning to be applied to higher education and women's studies were beginning to be introduced as a discipline. Only five women had not received their highest degree or begun an academic job before 1980, and 84% either received their highest degree or began an academic job by 1976. For more information on the respondents, see Gerdes (2003a, 2006).

Qualitative Analysis

Each question was analyzed separately. The questions allowed respondents to state multiple motivations, accomplishments, and sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction; so each respondent's answer was broken into separate elements where the respondent appeared to shift to a new point. An inductive process was used to determine categories that were distinct and internally consistent (see Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Patton, 2002). After familiarizing myself with the answers, I formed preliminary categories based on patterns in the data; new categories were added when elements of an answer did not fit any existing categories, and categories were combined when elements appeared to fit either of two categories. Each separable element from a respondent was placed into only one category. Answers were counted in each of the categories for which they contained an appropriate element; consequently, the number of motivations, accomplishments, sources of satisfaction, and sources of dissatisfaction is greater than the number of respondents.

This process reduced a large amount of written material to a manageable number of meaningful categories by decisions that, admittedly, were subjective, and appropriately so in a qualitative analysis (Marshall & Rossman, 2006; Patton, 2002; Kelle 2004). However, the decisions are transparent because the respondents' own words are used in describing the content of the categories below; this both preserves the women's voices and allows the reader to evaluate the distinctions between categories.

Quantitative Analysis

Respondents were counted only once in each category regardless of the number of elements in their answer that were relevant to that category, so the percentage of respondents who fit that category could be calculated by dividing the number of respondents represented in that category by the total number of respondents answering the question. Yates chi-square tests, corrected for continuity, are reported when significant. Tests generally were conducted between combined groups of participants (e.g., comparing administrators to faculty) because of the small numbers in most subgroups.

<div align="center">

Findings

</div>

Motivations

All but eight respondents explicitly stated one or more motivations for their careers. The separate elements of their answers fit into six categories (see Table 1). Most answers contained

elements fitting one or two categories, but some contained elements fitting three or four categories.

Table 1

Percentage of Those Answering Question Who Listed Each Type of Motivation

Category of Motivation	Percentage of those answering question
Service, making a difference	56.7%
Intrinsic—traits or characteristics	53.3%
Intrinsic—discipline, teaching, scholarship	18.9%
Combined intrinsic motivations	64.4%
External rewards or recognition	13.3%
Unplanned career progression	12.2%
Family influence	12.2%

Note. Number of those answering question = 90.

Service, making a difference. The most frequently mentioned category of motivations was the desire to make a difference, to be a change agent, to solve problems, to be of service, or to help others; this type of motivation appeared in the answers of 51 respondents (56.7%). The difference in prevalence between administrators (64.9%) and faculty members (42.4%) was marginally significant, x^2 (1, $N = 90$) = 3.44, $p = .0636$. Nine of the 11 presidents (81.8%) gave this explanation for their career motivations, as did 24 of the 38 deans (63.2%) and four of the eight other administrators (50%). Three presidents provide good examples of these answers:

> What has motivated me is the desire to make a difference. With individual students at first, with larger groups, and later with institutions, and perhaps the direction of some educational policy.

> I think I got into administration out of some desire to serve and some desire to build things. My motivations have been to create things and to see change and improvements. I am now heavily motivated by how much of a difference I can make to the institution and energized by seeing the changes I have been able to make.

> I've always cherished the academy and looked for ways to enhance its best aspects for faculty and for students….My goals have been more to make a difference than to make a reputation.

Intrinsic— traits or characteristics. Over half of the respondents mentioned their own intrinsic traits or characteristics as motivating their careers. Examples of the traits or characteristics mentioned by 48 women (53.3%) include: love of ideas, learning, knowledge, or challenges; competitiveness; fear of failure; desire to excel, prove oneself, or to do one's best; desire to lead or participate in teamwork, wanting a job that is fun; love of variety; desire to use skills. For this intrinsic trait category the emphasis was on acting as necessary given one's nature or benefiting oneself by fulfilling a desire or doing what one loves. The intrinsic trait

category was difficult to distinguish from the service category, as well as from certain external rewards (see below). Benefiting others was the emphasis for the service category. Some answers had separable elements of both service and intrinsic traits and were counted in both categories. The third president quoted provides one example because, in addition to service, her answer included the sentence, "I love work, I love change, and this career has always offered plenty of both."

Intrinsic—discipline, teaching, scholarship. A related, but uniquely academic, category contained answers that referred specifically to love of one's discipline, the subject matter, teaching, and/or research, which were given by 17 women (18.9%). Even though the question referred to one's career as a whole, these answers were more common for current faculty members (36.4%) than administrators (8.8%), x^2 (1, $N = 90$) = 8.66, $p = .0033$.

Combined intrinsic motivations. Because the academic-specific motivations could be considered intrinsic motivations, the small academic-specific category also was folded into the larger category of intrinsic motivations, adding those women who were not already counted in the larger category. There were only five administrators whose answers contained the academic-specific intrinsic motivations; all of them were already counted in the larger category because their answers contained more general intrinsic traits or characteristics. However, 10 faculty women who did not express general intrinsic motivations gave these academic-specific intrinsic motivations, yielding 25 of the 33 faculty women (75.8%) who expressed some kind of intrinsic motivation. Considering the answers specific to one's discipline, subject matter, teaching, and/or research as intrinsic motivations in addition to intrinsic traits and characteristics, a total of 58 of the 90 respondents (64.4%) expressed intrinsic motivations for their careers.

External rewards or recognition. A surprisingly small category was external rewards, which was expressed as ambition or desire for specific outcomes such as money, power, status, success, or recognition. Somewhat surprisingly, only 12 respondents (13.3%) mentioned such external motivations as a driver for their careers. To avoid underemphasizing these women's interest in external rewards and status, ambiguous phrases (i.e., ambition, power, love of status, desire to succeed, desire to be respected) were counted in the external rewards category rather than in the intrinsic traits category—however, eight of the 12 answers citing external awards also included separate elements dealing with intrinsic traits (and another dealt with the academic-specific intrinsic category); so the decision to categorize these ambiguous answers as external rewards did not much diminish the intrinsic categories.

Other small categories. Two other categories were used infrequently. First, 11 respondents (12.2% of those addressing the motivation question) mentioned that their career progression was not a deliberate path but natural, unplanned, or circumstantial or that they were drafted rather than having aspirations for higher status roles. Not surprisingly, given their change in direction from their initial faculty positions, 10 of these 11 comments came from the presidents (27.3%) and deans (18.4%). Second, the influence of parents, spouse, or family in general was mentioned as a motivation by 11 respondents (12.2%).

Comparison to male colleagues. These senior academic women also were asked whether they believed their motivations were different from those of their male colleagues in

similar positions or career paths. For a few women who expressed their motivations in the first part of the question in terms of their gender or women's issues, it could be inferred that they considered their male colleagues' motivations necessarily different even when they did not address the latter part of the question separately. For example, "I am fascinated with organizational culture and the possibility of moving it from old, male-created models born of logical, linear thinking, to newer ones that may draw more on the perspective of women and make deliberate use of non-linear models." However, beliefs concerning men's motivations could not be inferred for 26 other women who neglected to address this part of the question or the four who explicitly stated that they preferred not to make comparisons. Of the 68 women who responded, 49 (72.1%) described differences or simply stated that the motivations are different, although some women expressed reservations about generalizing.

Consistent with these senior women's prevalent use of service/change-oriented and intrinsic motivations as explanations of their own careers and their low prevalence of explanations in terms of external rewards or recognition for themselves, 27 different women (39.7% of those answering the question and 55.1% of those expressing their belief in a gender difference) stated that men tended to be more self-interested or competitive in their motivations. These answers fell into two subcategories. In the first subcategory, men were described as more typically motivated by desire for power, advancement, status, recognition, or money or as less interested in helping others or solving problems by 16 women (23.5% of those answering this question and 32.7% of those expressing their belief in a difference). In the second subcategory, men were described as having a style that is more authoritarian, competitive, or confrontational or as being less likely to work collaboratively or nurture others by 12 women (17.6% of those answering this question and 24.5% of those expressing their belief in a difference). Only one answer contained elements fitting both categories; it provides good examples of both:

> I think my teaching and research have very much been influenced by my gender and my gradually increasing consciousness of gender issues. I think my teaching style and my interactions with students have always been, if you like, more nurturing than confrontational….Fame and scholarly recognition have never been a big value for me; for some reason (I suspect gender-related) I just don't seem to have the kind of ambition my male contemporaries have.

The only other descriptions of gender differences dealt less with motivations for academic careers and more with factors that impact men and women differently in academic careers. The belief that women care more about family priorities or domestic and personal satisfaction or that they are more aware of other roles was expressed by eight women. In addition, another woman stated that her late start for family reasons made her more motivated than males in similar situations. And, 10 women expressed beliefs that it was more difficult for women to achieve due to family, difficult circumstances such as part-time or temporary positions or lack of mobility, differential treatment, lacking a planned trajectory, or lacking wives. These answers came from 19 different women (27.9% of the women answering the question and 38.8% of those expressing their belief in a difference). In addition, nine women (13.2% of those addressing the question and 18.4% of those judging there to be a difference) suggested that they believed their desire to prove women can make contributions or to address women's issues in the

academy or to bring women's perspectives was different than the typical motivation of their male colleagues.

Women's issues. The part of the question asking whether women's issues have been a priority yielded a high percentage of positive responses. Of the 86 women who addressed this part of the question, 79 (91.9%) declared that women's issues had been a priority in their careers; plus, four others who said that women's issues were not a priority *per se* stated that these issues were an interest or present or important.

Level of Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction

One dean did not answer any part of the question on satisfactions and dissatisfactions. Of the 97 respondents, 83 (85.6%) stated that their satisfaction with their careers as a whole was High or Very High. Treating this question as a quantitative measure yielded average satisfaction of 4.3 on the five-point scale (with Very High scored as 5, High as 4, Moderate as 3, Low as 2, and Very Low as 1).

Sources of Dissatisfaction

In spite of their relatively high level of satisfaction, 84 of the 97 respondents (86.6%) did offer at least one source of dissatisfaction or disappointment. One respondent explicitly stated that she had no major dissatisfactions; it is not clear whether the other 12 respondents who failed to answer this part of the question simply overlooked it or also intended to communicate that they had no dissatisfaction, so the prevalence of categories of dissatisfactions is stated both as a percentage of all 97 respondents and as a percentage of the 84 who stated any dissatisfaction. The majority of answers contained elements fitting only one category, but about of a quarter of the answers had elements fitting two or more categories. The sources of dissatisfaction could be broken down into six categories (see Table 2).

Lack of support. Disappointment in support for themselves or for their agendas was expressed by 26 women (26.8% of respondents and 31.0% of those giving any source of dissatisfaction), nine of whom related the lack of support to gender. This perceived lack of support occurred on the personal level (e.g., male organization lonely for a woman, let down by others), on the institutional level (e.g., general lack of institutional support or, more specifically, lack of acknowledgement or recognition by department or institution, resources not in line with goals, next level not implementing or supporting decisions, respondent's program eliminated), or on the level of higher education or society (e.g., lack of respect for women in academe, marginalization of women's issues, too few senior women in academe, society's negative attitudes toward respondent's field or academe, affirmative action being undone). This type of dissatisfaction was especially prevalent among deans, being expressed by 15 deans (38.5% of the 39 deans and 42.9% of the 35 who gave any source of dissatisfaction). The comparison between deans and those in all other job categories who gave any source of dissatisfaction was marginally significant, x^2 (1, $N = 84$) = 3.08, $p = .0793$. Lack of support was the only category holding more than three of the 14 women (listing a total of 19 sources of dissatisfaction) who rated their career satisfaction below High; nine of the 14 less satisfied women (one president, three deans, and five faculty members) stated dissatisfactions that fit this category.

Table 2

Percentage of Those Answering Question Who Listed Each Source of Dissatisfaction

Category of Sources of Dissatisfaction	Percentage of those answering question
Lack of support	31.0%
Time pressure/workload	29.8%
Teaching, scholarship, credentials	23.8%
Limits to career advancement	19.0%
Conflict, intransigence	19.0%
Personal life	11.9%

Note. Number of those answering question = 84.

Time pressure/workload. Dissatisfaction due to time pressure, workload, lack of time to do everything or to do it as well as they wanted or to have a balanced life was expressed by 25 women (25.8% of respondents and 29.8% of those who gave any source of dissatisfaction).

Teaching, scholarship, credentials. The next largest category was respondents' concerns about their scholarship or teaching—especially productivity of scholarship, not having time for teaching (administrators), or not achieving a credential such as tenure or the terminal degree. This type of disappointment was expressed by 20 women (20.6% of respondents and 23.8% of those expressing any source of dissatisfaction).

Smaller categories. Regret over limits to their advancement, career progression, or salary was expressed by 16 women (16.5% of respondents, 19.0% of those expressing any source of dissatisfaction). The category of dissatisfaction due to dealing with conflict, lack of collaboration, criticism, intransigence, or irrationality also contained 16 women. Finally, a source of dissatisfaction in their personal life was expressed by 10 women (10.3% of respondents and 11.9% of the women expressing any source of dissatisfaction). The most common regret in this category was a commuting marriage; other dissatisfactions included a failed marriage, husband being punished for respondent's success, inability to relocate, moving too frequently, and inability to help parents financially.

Sources of Satisfaction

Many respondents did not distinguish their sources of satisfaction carefully from their motivations and/or accomplishments, and explicit answers on sources of satisfaction were missing for seven women who had rated their level of satisfaction. One answer ("everything") did not actually give a source of satisfaction. Most elements of other answers could be placed in one of three large or two small categories (see Table 3). The majority of answers fit only one category, but about a quarter had elements fitting two or three categories.

Service, making a difference. One of the largest categories for motivations also was stated frequently as a source of satisfaction. Being able to make a difference, to be a change agent, to solve problems, to lead, to improve programs or the careers of others, to be of service,

or to help others (including helping students) was cited by 45 women (50% of those answering this part of the question). All 10 of the presidents who responded gave this type of answer.

Table 3

Percentage of Those Answering Question Who Listed Each Source of Satisfaction

Category of Sources of Satisfaction	Percentage of those answering question
Service, making a difference	50.0%
Discipline/academe, teaching, scholarship	34.4%
Inherent job characteristics	22.2%
Accomplishments	11.1%
Colleagues or network	8.9%

Note. Number of those answering question = 90.

Discipline/academe, teaching, scholarship. Pleasure in their discipline, scholarship, teaching, working in academe, and/or working with students was explicitly mentioned as a source of satisfaction by 31 women (34.4%). These academic-specific satisfactions were cited by a higher proportion of faculty members (62.2%) than administrators (15.1%), x^2 (1, $N = 90$) = 19.34, $p < .0001$.

Inherent job characteristics. Women also described other job characteristics that are less unique to academe that fit with their personal preferences. Some of these were general, such as independence, creativity, variety, control of their own activities, flexibility, intellectual stimulation, learning every day, or generally enjoying what they do. Others were narrower, such as being involved in planning and priorities or opportunities for public speaking. These types of inherent job characteristics that fit with women's personal preferences were cited by 20 women (22.2%).

Smaller categories. A specific instance of recognition or accomplishments in general were cited as a source of satisfaction by 13 women (11.1%). In addition, people with whom they work or a broader network outside their institution was mentioned by eight women (8.9%). Only one woman mentioned income as a source of satisfaction.

Accomplishments

One dean did not answer any part of this question. Two answers did not include a clear accomplishment, and a few contained only one category of accomplishment; but the majority of the 97 respondents listed elements fitting two or three categories of accomplishments. Accomplishments were categorized in four large categories and one smaller category (see Table 4). The small category will be described first as it represents the most literal interpretation of the question; the position they had achieved (e.g. tenured position, full professor, chair, dean, president, board member beyond their institution, office in professional organization) or their trajectory (e.g., rapid promotions) was listed as an accomplishment by 14 women (14.4%)**.**

Table 4

Percentage of Those Answering Question Who Listed Each Type of Accomplishment

Category of Accomplishment	Percentage of those answering question
Programmatic, administrative	71.1%
Scholarship or teaching	60.8%
Advancing women, diversity[a]	39.2%
Style, process	38.1%
Position, promotions	14.4%

Note. Number of those answering question = 97.
[a] Includes some elements also placed in other categories.

Scholarship or teaching. Overall, 59 women (60.8 %) mentioned their scholarly achievements and/or the quality of their teaching, including successful mentoring. Among faculty members, 86.8% mentioned scholarship, teaching, or work with students. It is perhaps more surprising that 44.1% of the administrators mentioned accomplishments in these areas that are the traditional areas of evaluation for faculty members. The difference between faculty members and administrators was significant, $x^2 (1, N = 97) = 16.00, p < .0001$. Separating scholarship and teaching, scholarly accomplishments were listed by 51 women (52.6%) who mentioned, for example, well-regarded publications, grant funding, discoveries, scholarly reputation, and awards but also more specific accomplishments, such as advances with applications that help others, textbooks, scholarship with students, path-breaking interdisciplinary work, nontraditional publications, and feminist scholarship. Scholarly accomplishments were listed more frequently by faculty members (71.0%) than by administrators (40.7%), $x^2 (1, N = 97) = 7.38, p = .0066$. Success in teaching one's own courses, development of one's own courses or, in one case, work with students, or serving as an unofficial advocate for teaching was mentioned by 37 women (38.1%), 57.9% of faculty members and 25.4% of administrators, $x^2 (1, N = 97) = 9.00, p = .0027$. The lower prevalence of teaching accomplishments than scholarly accomplishments should not be taken to mean that these women consider teaching less successful. Teaching or working with students was mentioned as a source of satisfaction by many women, including five who did not identify it as an accomplishment. From their answers to other questions in the longer survey, it is clear that almost all of these 97 women have taught college courses at some time in their careers. No woman stated that she felt unsuccessful in her teaching, although a few stated dissatisfaction that they had too little time to teach up to their own expectations, or to teach at all (i.e., administrators).

Programmatic, administrative. Some respondents described the accomplishments above as individual achievements. Another large category contained accomplishments on the programmatic level. Success in completing institutional projects, their role in improving their institution or the quality of the education delivered, institutional or national programs that they had developed or fostered, or simply the fact that they were effective administrators was mentioned by 69 women (71.1%). Not surprisingly, administrators (84.7%) were more likely to list programmatic accomplishments than were faculty women (50.0%), $x^2 (1, N = 97) = 11.95, p = .0005$. Among the administrators, 10 (16.9%) specifically mentioned financial

accomplishments: solving financial problems, funding new facilities, finding new resources, attaining institutional grants, or fundraising. All of these women also identified other programmatic accomplishments as well.

Style, process. Another large category was formed by women who described their style as integral to their achievements. That is, 37 women (38.1%) addressed process as well as products among their accomplishments or as the skills underlying accomplishments. Of these, 34 women described themselves as: nurturers, healers, facilitators, sensitive listeners, or collaborators; or as being caring, consultative, cooperative, conciliative, nonthreatening, open, people-oriented, or skilled at teamwork; or as people who respect individuals, establish trust, motivate people, empower others, build connections or consensus, seek compromise and win-win situations, create positive environments, use networks, or seek better relations between constituencies. In addition, another three women mentioned that they do not shirk from leadership or are more likely to do the tough stuff than men. These process comments were made by 49.2% of administrators and 21.1% of faculty women, x^2 (1, $N = 97$) = 6.59, $p = .0103$.

Advancing women's issues, equity, or diversity. It was necessary to form one final category with four subcategories, two of which overlapped with categories above. For 38 women (39.2 %), one or two elements of their answers involved advancing women's issues, or more broadly equity or diversity. Of these women, 12 were already counted in the programmatic category for developing or supporting women's studies; developing support programs or offices for women employees and students; or, working for women through commissions on the status of women, professional organizations, or outside boards. Beyond this programmatic subcategory, 18 women listed serving as an exemplar/role model or mentor: achieving a position as a first for women (e.g., first woman department chair), proving that a woman could succeed in a tough position (e.g., single parent, non-tenure track position, "man's field"), representing women well, or serving as a role model or mentor for younger women or students. To avoid an artificial distinction, two women were included here whose statements on mentoring students were reported previously as teaching accomplishments. Finally, additional comments not previously classified included six by women who cited enhancing the climate for women or generally supporting women and six by other women who cited enhancing tolerance, diversity, or equity as an accomplishment. Four women listed accomplishments fitting two of the four subcategories, so 42 accomplishments were categorized for these 38 women.

Accomplishments due to gender? Over one-quarter of the 97 respondents failed to give an explicit answer concerning whether some of their accomplishments were due to being a woman and might not have been made by a man in their position. Perhaps some interpreted the question as requiring an answer only if they had accomplishments unique to a woman in their position; or, alternatively, perhaps some interpreted the latter part of the question as asking them to list accomplishments made because they were women rather than directly addressing whether that was the case. In fact, the answers of nine of the women who failed to directly address whether gender contributed to their accomplishments could be classified positively because of the accomplishments listed (e.g., being the first woman to hold a position or achieve a landmark, founding women's programs or professional organizations, serving as a role model for other women). Overall, with these nine women, the belief that some of their accomplishments might not have been made by a man in their position was expressed explicitly or implicitly by 67

women (69.1%). Only 13 women (13.4%) stated explicitly that they didn't know, couldn't or wouldn't compare or generalize, or that men's accomplishments were equivalent. Adding the 17 unclassifiable answers of those who did not explicitly engage this aspect of the question yields 30.9% of respondents as the highest estimate of the proportion of the respondents who do not attribute their accomplishments at all to their gender. Thus, a large majority of these women do believe that some of their accomplishments arose from their gender.

Discussion

The major advantage of an open-ended survey is that it avoids predetermining the answers considered by respondents. However, the corresponding limitation is that the open-ended technique generates the most salient answers, not necessarily the only answers with which the respondents would agree if other alternatives were offered; and the open-ended technique loses the opportunity to pursue the same alternatives with all respondents. In this study, respondents obviously interpreted the questions differently as well as answering on different levels of specificity. A possible self-selection factor also must be acknowledged; that is, highly successful women may have been more likely than less successful women to accept the invitation to participate. Also, because men in comparable positions were not sampled, we cannot directly compare the stated motivations, satisfactions/dissatisfactions, and accomplishments of women and men; and we do not know if their male counterparts would agree with the respondents' characterizations of the differences between women and men.

That being said, certain results are striking. Asking about motivations might be expected to pull for one's needs and rewards. It is surprising, and admirable, that these successful women mentioned service to others so frequently and rewards so infrequently. Although a good number of these women seek personal fulfillment through their work, few profess to seek external rewards or recognition. Many, especially among administrators, appear to be doing what they are doing more out of concern for others; and those who expressed a belief in a gender difference in motivations also gave answers consistent with women being more motivated to make a difference and to serve and less motivated by personal ambition and competitiveness than men. Making a difference, solving problems, or serving as a change agent also was frequently mentioned as a source of satisfaction; and nurturing, caring traits were mentioned again by a number of women who focused on process in describing their accomplishments or explaining why their accomplishments might not have been made by men.

In accord with these senior women's low emphasis on external rewards and recognition, many of their impressive accomplishments would not have been weighed heavily by the typical faculty evaluation system, which values service least and scholarship most highly, and which, within scholarship, favors traditional disciplinary contributions (Park, 1996). Due to expectations for tenure, promotion, and appointment as an academic administrator, we know that most of these women must have scholarship; however, 47.4% did not list scholarship as one of their major accomplishments, and many women who did list scholarly accomplishments were proud of contributions that would be considered less prestigious than those traditionally esteemed in their disciplines. Although administrative women, understandably, listed more programmatic accomplishments, 50% of faculty women also listed programmatic accomplishments, which would be considered service in faculty evaluation systems. An

important distinction must be made—even if not *valued* by the current evaluation systems, these women's accomplishments *are valuable* to higher education to the extent that change is considered desirable.

As one example, a social scientist listed her role in starting her institution's daycare center, writing program, women's center, women's studies program, and a national feminist organization and journal in her discipline. She worked with other women in some of these efforts and often was an unofficial activist for women's issues, particularly when she became one of the institution's few tenured women. Early on, she worked with other junior women to respond to her president's tenure quota plan that would have consigned almost all of the faculty's untenured women to the "revolving door." Although this woman did not mention her teaching accomplishments, she mentioned her joy in seeing students grasp a topic and learn to think critically as satisfactions. Even though, given her institution, she must have a credible publication record; she did not emphasize her scholarship except for starting and editing the feminist journal. The priorities that can be inferred from similar histories among both administrators and faculty in this study fit with Park's (1996) conclusion that faculty women care more about collective, transformative efforts and less about individual efforts to advance. Park's analysis and the current study suggest that why higher education undervalues such accomplishments may be a more fundamental question than why women, on average, are less productive scholars than men (Krefting, 2003; Park, 1996). Nevertheless, strong evidence that these senior women are content with their priorities comes from their high ratings of satisfaction.

The high level of satisfaction might seem surprising, given an earlier analysis (Gerdes, 2003b) that documented the high level of stress reported by the same women. One point of agreement between the current study and the stress analysis is that time pressure, workload, and difficulties balancing time demands were reported frequently as a stressor and, in this analysis, as a source of dissatisfaction. Another connection with previous analyses is noteworthy; although over two-thirds of these women noted remaining biases against women as a group (Gerdes, 2006), they did not frequently mention such biases as a source of stress operating for them personally (Gerdes 2003b) or as a source of dissatisfaction in the current study. Only nine women in this study mentioned gender in connection with their disappointment over lack of support, plus one other who mentioned being behind men in salary. Likewise, although eight women (one of whom was in the lack of support category as well) mentioned geographical constraints due to spouses or family, and one of them and one other woman explicitly mentioned difficulty balancing demands of children and career in connection with dissatisfactions, the prevalence of such dissatisfactions is far below the prevalence of family-career conflict revealed in response to direct questions in the study on stress (Gerdes, 2003b). In that earlier study, many women pointed out positive effects of family for their lives as a whole although not for their careers. The overall impression from the current study in combination with the earlier analyses (Gerdes, 2003a, 2003b, 2006) is that many of these women have chosen to try to "have it all" in spite of the stress and that they believe they have balanced the competing demands as well as possible, as indicated by their high level of satisfaction. Their lack of regret over their choices echoes the acceptance of past choices and the consequences found by Hamrick and Benjamin (2004) in their smaller sample of full professors.

Certainly, higher education still is a male-dominated culture, where women often are marginalized and their contributions devalued, as described by Martin (1997, 2000) and Krefting (2003) among others (e.g., Glazer-Raymo, 1999, 2008b; May, 2008). But, for the most part, these senior women at a wide variety of institutions gave answers that agreed with more optimistic aspects of Martin's and Krefting's conceptions of women in higher education. They see themselves as successful and do not see themselves as having assimilated. Almost to a woman, they were willing to make women's issues a priority in their careers. Some are consciously aware of their status as resisters of dominant ideologies, and some have just made their own way. Most see themselves as having had different motives than their male counterparts—motivations that fit the traditional expectations for women of "care, concern, and connection"—and they proudly include these traits along with their accomplishments and point to accomplishments that would not have been made by their male counterparts. Their perception of their traditionally feminine traits is more consistent with Sally Hegelson's (1990) book, *The Female Advantage: Women's Ways of Leadership*, than with the idea that care and concern for others are logically incompatible with competence or success.

In fact, trends discovered in research on women's leadership could help explain these senior academic women's resistance to defining themselves as clones of male academics. The complex relationships among roles, stereotypes, and behaviors suggested by Alice Eagly and her colleagues are especially relevant. Note that the explanations advanced by Martin (1997, 2000) and Krefting (2003) both are based on prescriptive stereotypes that limit acceptable behaviors, rather than on essential differences in traits possessed by women and men. Similarly, Eagly and colleagues have used role incongruity, specifically the mismatch between women's traditional gender role and agentic expectations of the leadership role, to explain prejudice against women leaders, particularly in male-dominated leadership situations (Eagly, 2005; Eagly & Carli, 2003, 2007; Eagly & Karau, 2002). However, Eagly's work has demonstrated positive trends that may apply to academic women as well as to women leaders. Although arguing that progress has slowed, Eagly's and Carli's (2007) book-length review, *Through the Labyrinth*, also argued that the glass ceiling now is a less appropriate metaphor for barriers to women's leadership than the more complex but permeable labyrinth.

Eagly's social role theory holds that gender stereotypes are based on the roles in which men and women typically are observed, which are changing as women's representation increases in high status occupations. Women are perceived as becoming more agentic while maintaining feminine attributes (Diekman & Eagly, 2000), and they also are developing more of the characteristics associated with previously male work roles (Eagly, 2005; Eagly & Carli, 2003). Prescriptive stereotypes as well as descriptive stereotypes appear to be evolving with social roles; college students' perceptions of past, present, and future women show increasing positivity over time toward male-stereotypical characteristics along with continued positive evaluations of female-stereotypical communal characteristics (Diekman & Goodfriend, 2006). A mix of agentic and communal behaviors appears to be helpful for women leaders; disapproval of assertive, highly competent behavior is moderated by the presence of warm, communal behavior (Eagly & Carli, 2003). Going beyond stereotypes, Eagly and Carli (2007) compiled convincing evidence that women are more likely than men to demonstrate highly effective transformational leadership behaviors. Eagly (2005) argued that women and men differ ideologically, with women placing more emphasis on social compassion; the recent shift in leadership norms to

supportive and collaborative behaviors, particularly transformational leadership, gives women greater leeway to express such values and "allows some resolution of women's role incongruity," (2005, p.469), while reducing the pressure on women to model themselves after their male colleagues. In a recent review, Cheung and Halpern (2010) used the work of Eagly and colleagues and the concept of transformational leadership to explain their own and other's findings: women leaders' narratives that feature service to others and conscious intention to promote gender equality rather than concern with competition or their own power.

The recent work on women's transformational leadership is consistent with these senior academic women's reports of their motivations and of having succeeded in their own manner rather than assimilating to male norms. On the other hand, it would be hard to argue that these women perceive higher education today as demonstrating true acculturation, as described by Martin (1997, 2000). Earlier analyses (Gerdes, 2003a, 2003b, 2006) indicate that these women, while acknowledging that higher education now is more open to women, are not yet convinced that the culture of academe is truly appreciative of women's presence and contributions. Like the Inheritors (Astin & Leland, 1991), women's issues became a priority for many as they confronted and observed disparities. They share the political savvy as well as the problem-solving orientation of the Inheritors, but they probably would not label themselves as "inheritors" because they accomplished so many "firsts" themselves and are so aware of the distance remaining to full acceptance by the dominant culture. They are somewhat buffered from disappointment by the fact that they generally are not oriented toward external rewards or recognition. Although not totally buying into the dominant culture of higher education or convinced that the culture is changing, these senior academic women are comfortable with themselves and their accomplishments. They see themselves as having made advances that they themselves value—but they apparently underestimate the transformative effect that their accomplishments and their presence will have on expectations of women working in higher education and on the overall culture of academe.

References

Astin, H. S., & Leland, C. (1991). *Women of influence, women of vision.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Astin, H. S., & Snyder, M. B. (1982). Affirmative action 1972-1982: A decade of response. *Change, 14(5), 26-31,59.*

Boxer, M. J. (1998). *When women ask the questions: Creating women's studies in America.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins.

Cheung, F. H., & Halpern, D. F. (2010). Women at the top: Powerful leaders define success as work + family in a culture of gender. *American Psychologist, 65,* 182-193.

Cikara, M., & Fiske, S. T. (2009). Warmth, competence, and ambivalent sexism: Vertical assault and collateral damage. In M. Barreto, M. K. Ryan, & M. T. Schmitt (Eds.), *The glass ceiling in the 21st century: Understanding barriers to gender equality* (pp. 73-96). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Deem, R. (2002). Talking to Manager-academics: Methodological dilemmas and feminist research strategies. *Sociology,36*, 835-855.

Diekman, A. B., & Eagly, A. H. (2000). Stereotypes as dynamic constructs: Women and men of the past, present, and future. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin,26,* 1171-1188.

Diekman, A. B., & Goodfriend, W. (2006). Rolling with the changes: A role congruity perspective on gender norms. *Psychology of Women Quarterly, 30*, 369-383.

Eagly, A. H. (2005). Achieving relational authenticity: Does gender matter? *The Leadership Quarterly, 16*, 459-474.

Eagly, A. H., & Carli, L. L. (2003). The female leadership advantage: An evaluation of the evidence. *The Leadership Quarterly, 14*, 807-834.

Eagly, A. H., & Carli, L. L. (2007). *Through the labyrinth: The truth about how women become leaders.* Boston: Harvard Business School.

Eagly, A. H., & Karau, S. J. (2002). Role congruity theory of prejudice toward female leaders. *Psychological Review,109*, 573-598.

Gerdes, E. P. (2003a). Do it your way: Advice from senior academic women. *Innovative Higher Education, 27*, 253-276.

Gerdes, E. P. (Spring 2003b). The price of success: Senior academic women's stress and life choices. *Advancing Women in Leadership Journal.* Retrieved from http://www.advancingwomen.com/awl/spring2003/GERDES%7E1.HTML

Gerdes, E. P. (Summer 2006). Women in higher education since 1970: The more things change, the more they stay the same. *Advancing Women in Leadership Journal.* Retrieved from http://www.advancingwomen.com/awl/summer2006/Gerdes.html

Glazer-Raymo, J. (1999). *Shattering the myths: Women in academe.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins.

Glazer-Raymo, J. (2008a). The feminist agenda: A work in progress. In J. Glazer-Raymo (Ed.), *Unfinished agendas: New and continuing challenges in higher education* (pp. 1-34). Baltimore: Johns Hopkins.

Glazer-Raymo, J. (Ed.). (2008b). *Unfinished agendas: New and continuing challenges in higher education.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins.

Glick, P., & Fiske, S. T. (1999). Sexism and other "isms": Interdependence, status, and the ambivalent content of stereotypes. In W. B. Swann, Jr., J. H. Langlois, & L. A. Gilbert (Eds.), *Sexism and stereotypes in modern society: The gender science of Janet Taylor Spence* (pp. 193-221). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Gobo, G. (2004). Sampling, representativeness, and generalizability. In C. Seale, G. Gobo, J. F. Gubrium, & D. Silverman (Eds.), *Qualitative research practice* (pp. 435-456). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Hamrick, F. A. (2003). Emerging from the academic pipeline: Senior women faculty members. *Journal of Women in Educational Leadership, 1,* 217-235.

Hamrick, F. A., & Benjamin, M. (2004). Seeking coherence and integrity: Personal and professional demands and expectations of senior women professors. *Journal of Women in Educational Leadership, 2*, 239-256.

Hegelson, S. (1990). *The female advantage: Women's ways of leadership*. New York: Doubleday/Currency.

Kelle, U. (2004). Computer-assisted qualitative data analysis. In C. Seale, G. Gobo, J. F. Gubrium, & D. Silverman (Eds.), *Qualitative research practice* (pp. 473-489). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Kitzinger, C. (2004). Feminist approaches. In C. Seale, G. Gobo, J. F. Gubrium, & D. Silverman (Eds.), *Qualitative research practice* (pp. 125-140). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Krefting, L. A. (2003). Intertwined discourses of merit and gender: Evidence from academic employment in the USA. *Gender, Work, and Organization, 10*, 260-278.

Marshall, K., & Rossman, G. B. (2006). *Designing qualitative research* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA.: Sage.

Martin, J. R. (1997). Bound for the promised land: The gendered character of higher education. *Duke Journal of Gender Law & Policy*, *4* (3), 3-26.

Martin, J. R. (2000). *Coming of age in academe: Rekindling women's hopes and reforming the academy.* New York: Routledge.

May, A. M. (Ed.). (2008). *The 'Woman Question' and higher education: Perspectives on gender and knowledge production in America.* Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar.

National Center for Education Statistics. (1998). *E. D. tabs: Fall staff in postsecondary institutions, 1995,* NCES 98-228, by S. Roey & R. Rak. Washington, DC: U. S. Department of Education. Retrieved from http://nces.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=98228

National Center for Education Statistics. (2001). *Digest of education statistics, 2000*, NCES 2001-034, by T. D. Snyder & C. M. Hoffman. Washington, DC: U. S. Department of Education. Retrieved from http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2001034

National Center for Education Statistics. (2010*). Digest of education statistics 2009*, NCES 2010-013, by T. D. Snyder, and S. A. Dillow. Washington, DC: U. S. Department of Education. Retrieved from http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo .asp?pubid=2010013

Park, S. M. (1996). Research, teaching, and service: Why shouldn't women's work count? *Journal of Higher Education, 67*, 46-84**.**

Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA.: Sage.

Biography

Eugenia P. Gerdes, Ph. D., is Professor of Psychology and Dean *Emerita* of the College of Arts and Sciences at Bucknell University. She has studied discrimination in hiring and stress for women in traditionally male work roles throughout her career; most recently, she has focused on

the experiences of women in academic careers and on other issues in higher education. Email: egerdes@bucknell.edu.