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Why Gender Inclusive Leaders Matter in Academic Settings

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There is a great deal of evidence that gender stereotypes continue to influence perceptions of fairness (Cundiff & Vescio, 2016) as well as perceived fit with jobs and occupations (Heilman & Okimoto, 2007). What is less well studied is the subtle ways in which women are discouraged or disparaged when seeking success in an academic career. Even in university settings that have policies for providing paid leave or extended tenure clocks for new parents, there are social factors that operate to challenge women's success. In this presentation, I will use the lens of inclusion and exclusion to describe the social controls that enhance or undermine women academics' achievements. My contention is two-fold. First, those faculty who strongly endorse gender stereotypes use arguments of upholding professional standards as a justification for exclusionary treatment of women academics. Second, inclusionary treatment of women by academic leaders is not enough to address this issue. Academic leaders need to also reinforce among faculty more broadly that inclusionary treatment of women is a key element of the academic climate.