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NSF Workshop Fostering Gender and Work-Life Inclusion for Faculty in Understudied Contexts:  
An Organizational Science Lens

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## **Introduction: Fostering Gender and Work-Life Inclusion in Understudied Contexts from an Organizational Science Lens**

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# Introduction: Fostering Gender and Work-Life Inclusion in Understudied Contexts from an Organizational Science Lens

Ellen Ernst Kossek and Kyung-Hee Lee

Gender equality in the workplace and society is receiving heightened media attention at the same time as work-life pressures and job demands are increasing for nearly all demographic groups from singles to those with families (Kossek & Lautsch, 2018). There are several narratives why women are not advancing to the same extent as men; from gender discrimination, to career interests and values, and to work-family views (Kossek, Su & Wu, 2017). While we believe that disentangling these narratives can be complex as these factors are increasingly intertwined, how work-family-life balance barriers shape women's career equality is particularly important in which to take a deeper scientific view as a diversity and inclusion career barrier that intersects with these stigma and career values perspectives.

Career-life balance remains a challenge for nearly all research scientists (NSF, 2018) and professionals, and those in dual careers and juggling non-work caregiving demands (Khullar, 2017). It has critical implications for faculty gender inclusion, retention, and advancement in universities. Although addressing these issues in traditional STEM departments has received considerable research scrutiny such as through NSF ADVANCE grant funding, business schools have received far less attention even though many business schools offer STEM-relevant degrees (Newton, 2018). Improving faculty gender inclusion and work-life balance issues in business schools and related colleges is of growing societal and economic importance, given the critical linkages of these institutions to STEM labor market opportunities, as well as to the growing fields of "big data" analytical and start-up entrepreneurial jobs.

## **Serious Under-representation of Women in Leadership Roles in Business Schools**

In 2015, women held 41.6% of faculty positions (tenure-track and non-tenure-track) overall in the U.S. (National Center for Education Statistics, 2016), but the percentage was only 31.2% for business schools, less than a 5% increase from 2006 (Brown, 2016). Simply counting overall gender representation may obscure career upward mobility trends. The gender gap becomes larger as one goes up the faculty ranks. As shown in Figure 1, women faculty (the majority with doctorates) are increasingly overrepresented in non-tenure track positions. While

female faculty occupied 40% of instructor positions, only 20.2% of professor positions were female, suggesting a “leaky pipeline.” Mirroring STEM faculty trends, women are also underrepresented in quantitative disciplines (i.e., statistics; operations management) (AACSB, 2015), and higher-level leadership roles in administration such as at the dean level. Educational experiences are important for socializing students by offering faculty role models, mentoring, and a depiction of occupational work-life and career experiences. Yet, in business schools, faculty and leadership diversity simply does not match student diversity (Barnett & Felten, 2016).

In sum, despite growing scientific attention to advancing women in universities generally, and in business schools specifically, the gender and related work-life inclusion picture remains bleak. This gap was noticed by the White House and its Council of Economic Advisors in 2015, which convened a meeting that year of business school deans and thought leaders in order to encourage commitment of business schools to adopt best gender equality practices and lead in expanding opportunities for women in business and adapt to the 21<sup>st</sup>-century workforce (White House Press Office, 2015). Yet, it remains doubtful whether a significant change has occurred beyond this pledge and whether significant impacts are seen on women’s career progress at both universities and companies. As noted in a recent introduction to a special issue of the *Strategic Management Journal* (Mitchell, Bettis, Gambardella, Helfact, & Leiponen, 2014), while MBA programs actively admit women and graduate them to enter management positions in the business world, progress at the top remains limited. Ambiguity remains regarding what the structural and cultural barriers are, and how the lack of progress affects organizational performance and processes.

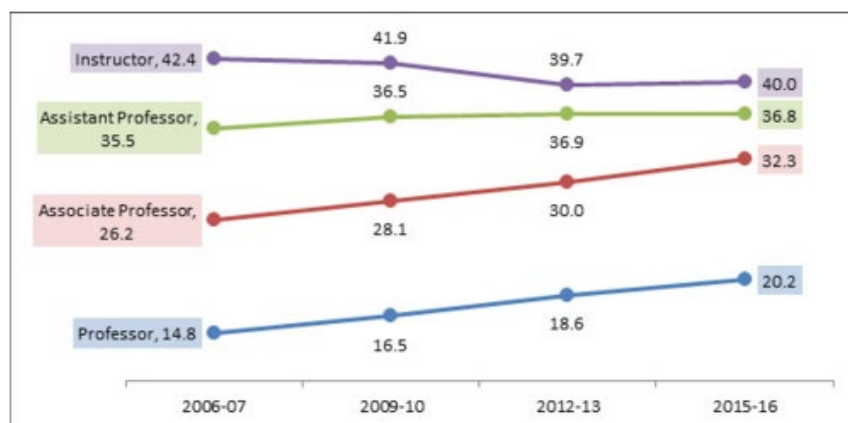


Figure 1. Percentage of Female Full-time Business School Faculty within each rank – U.S  
Source: Brown (2016)

## **Goals of Monograph and Origins**

In the fall of 2018, we invited leading scholars to attend a National Science Foundation workshop at Purdue University Krannert School of Management to present their ideas on how to improve work-life and gender inclusion in business schools. The workshop was designed to advance our understanding of these goals:

- (1) To assess work-life and career issues and linkages to faculty gender inclusion and diversity in business schools from an organizational science perspective.
- (2) To define the scientific terrain of faculty gender and work-life inclusion and intersectionality linkages using business schools as an organizational lens.
- (3) To increase our knowledge of the science of fostering gender, work-life inclusion, career success and organizational change in faculty contexts such as business schools.
- (4) To foster interdisciplinary conversation with thought leaders, researchers, and exemplary key decision-makers in order to identify scientific antecedents, outcomes and future research gaps.

This monograph is a collection of short research thought papers that the invited scholars prepared for their presentations. The workshop was organized to examine eight topic areas of critical inquiry: 1) gender and work-life inclusion in business schools & understudied faculty contexts; 2) intersectionality, diversity, gender, and work-life inclusion; 3) technology and boundary control in academic job design; 4) work-life stigmatization and overwork faculty cultures; 5) dual-career couples, singles, and organizational work-family support; 6) leader's roles in fostering work-life inclusion as an organizational strategy to close the gender gap; 7) discrimination, work-life and gender inequality, and closing the gap; and 8) work-life inclusion, organizational strategy, and performance.

## **Closing**

We hope this monograph will help advance gender diversity, and women's and minorities' career success in universities, business, and society by identifying scientific gaps, prioritizing studies; and addressing an under-researched critical area of organizational science. Taken together, the papers provide a research agenda that will encourage future interdisciplinary scholarship on gender equality and work-life inclusion in order to help policymakers to engage in evidence-based practices. The collection offers new insights on the

organization science regarding how to foster more gender and work-life inclusive businesses and universities.

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