ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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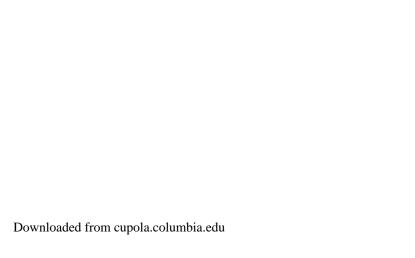
In addition, Kirsten owes an enormous debt of gratitude to Mari for asking her to be part of this project at a time when such pursuits were crucial to her emotional and professional well-being. As a recent graduate and a new mom with sixteen-month-old twins, Kirsten had just found out that one of her daughters had a rare and fatal degenerative disease. Specific staff members, faculty, and students at the Weismann Center for Leadership at Mount Holvoke College were instrumental in helping her transition to parenthood within academia under extremely trying circumstances; thanks also to Dr. Lois Brown, Michelle Deal, Kim Parent, Janet Lansberry, Patricia Scigliano, Jennifer Curran, and many fabulous students from the Speaking, Arguing, and Writing Program. Lori Walters-Kramer gave a careful reading of previous versions of this manuscript, and Eric Ronnis offered thoughtful conversation about being a parent in academia. Much appreciation and love to the Elson-Patch family, who provided necessary respite and haven in some very beautiful places as we planned, wrote, and organized this book project. Kirsten has tremendous love for and gratitude to her partner, Tom Schicker, who for more than twenty years has been a source of companionship, encouragement, frustration, laughs, and unconditional support. Without his constant care and attention to their daughters, Sylvie and Uma, this book may never have come to fruition.

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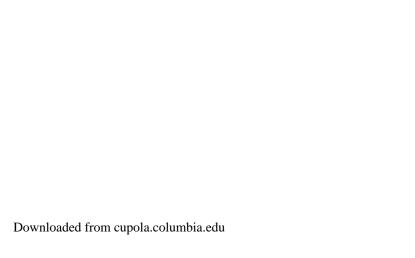
justice struggles inside and outside academia, and her teenage son, Miguel Angel Paredes. Mijo, you went to grad school with me, moved three thousand miles so I could begin my professorial career, and have seen the joys and challenges of academic life. Your love has sustained me all these years, y sin tí, este libro no sería posible. Te quiero mucho.

Mil gracias to all!

Mari Castañeda, Amherst, Massachusetts Kirsten Isgro, Plattsburgh, New York



MOTHERS IN ACADEMIA



INTRODUCTION

Speaking Truth to Power to Change the Ivory Tower

Mari Castañeda and Kirsten Isgro

WE MET in the autumn of 2000 in western Massachusetts, when both of us were embarking on new academic journeys: Mari was beginning her first professorial job fresh out of graduate school (a Chicana from the University of California—San Diego), with a five-year-old son in tow, and Kirsten was returning to her doctoral studies after a decade-long hiatus from graduate school. Mari relocated her family from Los Angeles, and Kirsten relocated from Vermont with her partner of five years and her aging dog. Both of us became parents while in graduate school, albeit with a fifteen-year age gap and at different points of our lives. Like most of us who become parents, we did not fully anticipate the delight, exhaustion, intense love, ambivalence, and distress that come with raising a child.

It is not coincidental that this project was spawned at a time when notions of motherhood were once again being contested at the turn of the twenty-first century. In 2004, Susan Douglas and Meredith Michaels's witty and controversial book *The Mommy Myth* came out, quickly becoming a best-seller. As communication scholars, we found this book incredibly useful in its critical assessment of the cultural representations of mothers in the media. This "new momism," as Douglas and Michaels call it, "is a set of ideals, norms, and practices, most frequently and powerfully represented in the media, that seem on the surface to celebrate motherhood, but which in reality promulgate standards of perfection that are beyond your reach" (5). How does this momism affect women professionally, especially those of us who have chosen careers in higher education? For many of the authors who contributed to this anthology, life as a parent and as an employee in institutes of higher