
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

education—in various positions—is complicated, with both productive and contradictory tensions.

This “new momism” closely followed the media-fueled “mommy wars” between stay-at-home mothers and mothers who work outside of the home. Women compose 47 percent of the total U.S. labor force, 73 percent (approximately 66 million women) of whom are working full-time (U.S. Department of Labor 2010). Moreover, the participation of mothers in the labor force has risen over the past twenty-five years. As of 2008, more than 60 percent of mothers are working outside the home for paid wages (U.S. Congress Joint Economic Committee 2010). In U.S. academia more specifically, women compose nearly 50 percent of the workforce, and of that population it is estimated that more than 65 percent are working mothers. In other words, many women working at colleges and universities across the country are also parenting. These percentages not surprisingly correspond with the shifting demographics in higher-education institutions, where female students compose almost 60 percent of all students in the United States and 47 percent worldwide (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization 2002). Indeed, the emerging workforce changes anticipated for the twenty-first century inspired the publication of several books aimed at addressing the ongoing struggle of work–life balance for women. As more women graduated with college degrees, the challenge of becoming a supermom and superemployee has dominated the literary conversation since 2000 and has since become a central theme especially for women with professional white-collar careers (A. Crittenden 2001; Hewlett 2002; Mason and Ekman 2007; Stone 2007a, 2007b).

The ideal of the supermom-employee-student is especially poignant in academia, where the existence of flexible schedules as well as extended winter and summer breaks creates the misinformed assumption that the demands of the academy are compatible with the demands of parenting. However, the bureaucratic, hierarchal, and swelling expectations that characterize so many institutions of higher learning make it difficult to maintain a forty-hour work schedule, even in the summer. Academics and professional university/college staff often work overtime week after week. In addition, the different institutional structures and gradations of faculty/staff positions place uneven and inequitable burdens on workers, which are increasingly evident in the blogosphere discussions about working conditions in academia. There are vast differentiations between two-year, four-year, and doctoral public and private colleges and universities that impact the rising standards for faculty members employed as adjuncts, lecturers, instructors,

assistant professors, associate professors, full professors, and administrators. For full-time, tenure-track, and tenured faculty, excellence is expected in three areas—research, teaching, and service, although scholarly output is often considered the most important, particularly at Research I institutions and increasingly at historically “teaching-oriented” four-year colleges. A forty-hour work week is simply not enough to produce excellent scholarship, engage in master teaching, and cultivate service and outreach partnerships. Staff and students are also not immune to these rising standards. Pressure is increasingly put upon graduate students to achieve excellence in their student, research, teaching, and service years before becoming professors. This very real pressure is deeply influencing female scholars in their decisions to become mothers and remain in the realm of higher education.

As a consequence, academia as a collegiate and professional work environment and its impact on mothers have become an important site of analysis. Andrea O'Reilly, for instance, established the Association for Research on Mothering and promoted research on mothering, including how to be a mother and negotiate an academic career. From this association emerged a number of projects, conferences, and essays that address motherhood in all of its configurations, including the Motherhood Initiative for Research and Community Involvement. O'Reilly also helped spur a new area of interdisciplinary feminist scholarship on motherhood, called “motherhood studies,” which is concerned with mothering not only as an institution, experience, or identity, but also as an important site for empowerment (see O'Reilly 2010a, 2010b). As O'Reilly reminds us, feminists such as Adrienne Rich and a long list of others have been grappling with the distinction between mothering and motherhood for decades. Motherhood is “not naturally, necessarily, inevitably oppressive”; reproduction and child rearing need not be perceived as a private, nonpolitical undertaking limited to specific patriarchal nuclear family structures (O'Reilly 2010b, 18).

THE NEED FOR INCLUSIVE ACADEMIC CULTURES IN NEOLIBERAL TIMES

The publication of *Parenting and Professing* (Bassett 2005), *Motherhood, the Elephant in the Laboratory* (Monosson 2008), *Mama Ph.D.* (Evans and Grant 2009), and other such books in the past five years remind us that there is still much to do in terms of challenging the cultural notion that the ideal intellectual worker in the academia is male gendered. As is made clear in a

report issued by the American Federation of Teachers (AFT, 2011), the academy as a whole continues to wane as a welcoming place for women. The report offers recommendations for making positive changes, such as correcting inequities in compensation, expanding family-friendly policies on campus, clarifying and providing more flexibility in hiring and promotion policies, and ensuring that women have a voice in their workplace. A 2003 scholarly analysis of the *Chronicle of Higher Education* over the past decade clearly indicates that issues related to family and work are “on the mind and conscience of academicians” (Wolf-Wendel and Ward 2003, 112). Our own search yielded more than seventy-five articles on work and family published in the *Chronicle* between 2004 and 2011. In addition, the pool of graduate students and junior faculty no longer consists predominately of young men with stay-at-home wives; there is instead a generation of intellectual workers who envision dual-career couples sharing in child care (Mason 2009a). Yet the newer generation is operating within not only a cultural norm, but an increasingly neoliberal framework that requires unrelenting work hours in higher education with little room for a gratifying family life (Mason and Goulden 2002, 2004b; Mason 2009a). The *Chronicle* runs an advice column called “The Balancing Act” that addresses work–family concerns, and it often features heated debates regarding the accommodations academe should offer to professors who are parents.

See, for example, the barrage of comments in response to Mary Ann Mason’s recent article in the *Chronicle* on “the pyramid problem,” where she addresses the fact that women continue to heavily populate the lower faculty ranks: “There are far fewer women than men at the top of the academic hierarchy; those women are paid somewhat less than men, and they are much less likely than men to have had children” (2011, para. 2). The nearly all-male executive administrative team at Mari Castañeda’s university, for instance, demonstrates this point. Mason argues that this pyramid of gender inequity is unlikely to change its shape unless serious structural shifts take place in higher education. Interestingly, the comments page for Mason’s article showed that in fact many (male and/or nonparent) readers had an aversion to such changes. Yet mothers learning and working in academia are experiencing a reality that deserves to be acknowledged and taken into account. Mary Ann Mason’s scholarship is particularly informative on the state of women and mothers in academia. More than 50 percent of recent Ph.D.s awarded by American universities are now granted to women, with women accounting for 38 percent of faculty members overall (American

Association of University Professors [AAUP] 2006; AFT 2011; Mason 2011). However, there continue to be marked gender disparities in terms of faculty positions, pay, and family formation between men and women in academia. Women are best represented in less-prestigious teaching institutions (e.g., community colleges) and in less-secure positions (e.g., adjunct/part-time instructors or lecturer positions) (Wolf-Wendel and Ward 2006; Mason 2011). In addition, full-time women faculty members tend to earn less than their male colleagues at each of the professorial ranks (AAUP 2010; College and University Professional Association for Human Resources 2011). Women in academe are also far less likely to become biological or adoptive parents than other professional women or their male counterparts and are more likely to remain single for the purpose of achieving career success (Mason and Goulden 2002, 2004a, 2004b; Drago and Colbeck 2004). Moreover, the professoriate as a highly male-dominated occupation creates a “chilly climate” for women faculty. As Cheryl Maranto and Andrea Griffin (2011) examine, the reality and even the perception of exclusion, devaluation, and marginalization in academia serve as major impediments to women faculty members’ achievements.

Some exemplary reviews have been made of the status of women in academia (Hornig 2003; Ropers-Huilman 2003a; Philipsen 2008), but more telling are the personal narratives that describe college and university climates. As the volume editor of *Gendered Futures in Higher Education* notes in her introduction, “Higher education is one of the primary institutions that shape culture. While those of us who participate in that institution cannot take the blame, credit, or responsibility for current gender relations, we can insist that gender discrimination will not be perpetuated in the very institutions that hold promise for developing both knowledge and people—a development that is certainly stymied by gender discrimination” (Ropers-Huilman 2003b, 9).

The personal narratives expressed in Ropers-Huilman’s anthology and a variety of others illuminate the challenges that researchers, writers, teachers, and students face as women in academia—challenges that are often exacerbated for them if they are also mothers (Coiner and George 1998; Evans and Grant 2008; Monosson 2008). For example, having a child with any type of disability—chronic or not—adds to the long list of potential barriers for mothers in academia. There are indications that those individuals who are parenting children with disabilities may forego job changes that involve geographic relocation (something quite common in the academic job market) and experience a higher rate of marital disruption (Mailick

Seltzer et al. 2001; Yantzi and Rosenberg 2008). In their study of mothers of young children who are on the tenure track, Lisa Wolf-Wendel and Kelly Ward (2006) found that there is great diversity in how women experience academic life across disciplines and institutional types. Women faculty members with children are often encouraged to pursue their careers at lower-tier institutions (e.g., community colleges, four-year programs). This push has the potential to steer talented women away from pursuing faculty careers at Research I and II institutions based on the implicit assumption that the roles of scholar and mother are incompatible. Furthermore, even if women (with children or not) are granted tenure, fewer of them are promoted to full professor, which is often the result of poor mentoring and networking once women achieve tenure and the lack of standardized policies across departments (Stout, Staiger, and Jennings 2007). Such circumstances affect not only tenure and promotion, but also the future of leadership development and capacity building in all academic fields (Castañeda and Hames-García forthcoming).

Moreover, the “chilly climate” for mothers in higher education is compounded for women of color (Williams et al. 2005; González 2007; Flores and Garcia 2009). Although faculty positions have almost doubled in the past two decades, most faculty of color (except Asians and Asian Americans) remain underrepresented in higher education, and minority women—especially Latina, African American, and Indigenous women—are far less likely than their male counterparts to be on tenure-track lines (Tuitt et al. 2009; Cotera 2010; AFT 2011). Numerous scholars have written about the problematic climate for students, faculty, and administrators of color in higher education, noting the Anglo-centric paradigm that shapes the culture of many colleges and universities (Padilla and Chávez 1993; Valverde and Castenell 1998; Brown-Glaude 2009). Other collections have pointed to the particular challenges all women of color face due to the structural and personal racism and sexism on college campuses (Benjamin 1997; Johnson and Harris 2010). Despite some gains in position in the ivory tower for female students and faculty as a whole, many women of color who are both scholars and mothers find they continue to be blocked in their progress by sex and racial prejudice and biases.

Since 2008, *Inside Higher Ed* has hosted the “Mama Ph.D.” blog, in which various women with or working toward doctorates share almost daily their efforts in balancing parenthood with academics. Many women describe the productive intersections of such balancing acts as well the challenges, some

of which are made more difficult by institutional bureaucracy. Despite the growing body of blogs, literature, research, and media commentary on motherhood—as both an institution and an experience—the topic is far from exhausted. If truth be told, the issues facing mothers in the twenty-first century are perhaps more complex than in previous decades, thus making mothering and motherhood continual compelling topics for exploration (O'Reilly 2010a).

In attempts to navigate the less-than-hospitable culture of academia, many women (regardless of motherhood) have found particular strategies to (re)balance work–life priorities and stressors. For many, the degree of occupational stress in higher education is clearly gendered, where women experience heavier workloads and significant stress in managing multiple roles, juggling the work–home interface, and negotiating in a sometimes nonsupportive organizational climate (Michailidis 2008). The occupational stress of higher education often inhibits women's (and men's) ability to maintain life-affirming and health-promoting lifestyles. As some scholars have found, academic mothers sometimes engage in negative stress-management behaviors such as smoking, drinking, overeating, and maintaining a sedentary lifestyle (Michailidis 2008; Vancour and Sherman 2010). For other academics, self-care and stress management mean seeking out peer mentors that affirm one's work and create a more collegial work environment (McGuire and Reger 2003; Goeke et al. 2011). These individual efforts are only a few of the ways to deal with the hypertransformation of higher education that is fueled by neoliberal practices and the increasingly commercialization of academia.

Katherine Romack argues in her commentary on the corporatization of the academy that, given the “negligible impact of education on the wage gap, women's continued legal and civic privatization within globalization, and their declining economic status, it is reasonably certain that women will continue to be second-class citizens of the corporate academy” (2011, 245). Over the past thirty years, state funding for higher education has been dramatically reduced, and, as a consequence, an inversion of the academic labor force has occurred wherein almost 75 percent of today's instructional workforce is employed on a contingent basis (AFT 2011). This move to a contingent model of employment for higher-education professionals also coincides with the increased numbers of women entering the instructional workforce, especially as the roles of community colleges expand, and there is an increased preponderance toward online teaching in order to raise more revenue by serving “student customers” in and outside the United

States. These changes affect female contingent labor disproportionately and more so those who are mothers because of the impression that there is flexibility in part-time (online) appointments. Higher education at the administrative level is simultaneously being touted as primarily a tool for securing economic achievement in a global marketplace as many progressive people on campuses argue for global citizenship (Gildersleeve et al. 2010).

In order to deal with the social inequalities that are deeply ingrained in higher education and the larger contemporary society, a fundamental shift needs to be made in how resources and power are managed. The AAUP's "Statement of Principles on Family Responsibilities and Academic Work" argues that the "development and implementation of institutional policies that enable the healthy integration of work responsibilities with family life in academe require renewed attention" (2001, 216). At the time this influential AAUP document was published, it gave new life and attention to the struggles mothers in academe face and offered instrumental principles and guidelines for academic institutions to construct appropriate policies and practices regarding family leave. It suggests family-friendly policies that include the creation of modified-duty policies to allow faculty to obtain relief from some teaching or service obligations while remaining in active-service status; provisions for child, elder, and other family care; and ability to craft flexible work policies and schedules. Yet even when family-friendly policies exist, faculty members may not know about or take advantage of them. The AFT revisits the negative impact that the lack of family-friendly policies has on the hiring process, retention, and women's prospects for career advancement. This national organization takes the position that "effectuating a diverse faculty and staff [is] an essential element in achieving a greater measure of economic and social justice in America" (2011, 6). Both the AAUP and the AFT documents highlight the double bind women faculty members with children may find themselves in because they are bearing and raising children at the same time that they are building their careers. These organizations point to the ways in which the creation and support of family-friendly policies may lead to the retention and promotion of women in higher education. Although the broader goal may be to change the sociocultural landscape of colleges and universities, it is undeniable that achieving success in changing the institutional policies is an important step toward shifting structural and cultural efforts. As a consequence, this book is an attempt to make transparent how mothers' voices about their lives in academia are critical for inspiring policy and cultural shifts.

IMPORTANCE OF *TESTIMONIOS*

Despite emerging changes, many mothers continue to struggle for a voice in an academic landscape that privileges Western, competitive masculine frameworks for learning, teaching, and research. In 2008, Mari first conceived of this project as discussion circles where academic women would share their stories about mothering. From these discussions, developed with the help of a mentoring grant from the University of Massachusetts–Amherst Graduate School, it was apparent that women have many thoughts and feelings on the topic of parenting in the academy. The very act of telling personal narratives reveals how the self is constructed, disclosed, and implicated in a society that has mixed messages about women, mothers, and parenting. Informed by feminist researchers and activists who have theorized the relationship between self and culture, the narratives included in this volume expose the “political–social dimension of motherwork” (O’Reilly 2010a, 14), thus giving agency to the women who are mothering in all sorts of circumstances. As is evident in the essays included here, several family structures are represented in academia: single, blended, traditional, and same-sex families. We are concerned with how mothers in academic settings have been represented and valued (or not) in the multiple forms of work we do in higher education. We are convinced that personal narratives have the potential to serve as a critical intervention in the social, political, and cultural life of academia. Patricia Hill Collins is but one of many feminists who assert that one’s lived experience can serve as a criterion for making meaning and producing knowledge. She argues that in the United States a scholar “making a knowledge claim typically must convince a scholarly community controlled by elite White avowedly heterosexual men holding U.S. citizenship that a given claim is justified” (2000, 253).

Inspired by the Latina Feminist Group’s process of collaborating, we approached this project with a commitment to creating knowledge and theory through our personal experiences as mothers in academe. This writing collective “arrived at the importance of *testimonio* as a crucial means of bearing witness and inscribing into history those lived realities that would otherwise succumb to the alchemy of erasure” (Latina Feminist Group 2001, 2). The result is a volume that provides a “polyphonic *testimonio*”—accounts by different women who have studied, worked, and taught at the college and university level (Beverly 2005, 549). We firmly believe in the importance and value of women’s autoethnography and oral history, and, as a

result, our own volume gives voice to women who are or have been mothers as undergraduates, graduate students, administrators, staff, and professors of various ranks in order to bear witness to their lived experiences of mothering and motherhood while learning/working in academia. These narratives often coincide with Patricia Stout, Janet Stagier, and Nancy Jennings's (2007) findings that female faculty, students, and staff feel demoralized based on their experiences in higher education, often as a result of believing that they have no voice or agency. The act of writing our testimonials is an attempt for us to maintain a level of agency in our birthing/parenting experiences, in all of their configurations, while collaborating with community and producing intellectual work. Each of the stories perceives mothering in a slightly different way, thus shedding light on how power and domination have uneven effects of those of us working in academe.

Carolyn Ellis and Arthur Bochner suggest that personal narratives serve as a mode of inquiry; the stating of one's own experiences "offer lessons for further conversation rather than undebatable conclusions" (2000, 744). Some scholars argue that, borne out of the desire for solidarity, personal and testimonial narrative is fundamentally a democratic and egalitarian form that affirms the authority of personal experience (Beverley 2005). This description is particularly relevant to those whose voices have been marginalized, such as, in our case, women who are mothers in higher education. As Ellis and Bochner explain, testimonials raise questions such as: "What are the consequences my story produces? What kind of person does it shape me into? What new possibilities does it introduce for living my life?" The crucial issues are what narratives do, what consequences they have, to what uses they can be put. . . . Often our accounts of ourselves are unflattering and imperfect, but human and believable. The text is used, then, as an agent of self-understanding and ethical discussion" (2000, 746, 748).

We share these *testimonios* as a way to illustrate what much of the feminist and higher-education scholarship has pointed to over the past twenty years: there is much to be grateful for, but there is also much work yet to be done within the walls of the ivory tower. The *testimonios* also illustrate how the complex contingencies of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic class, age, sexuality, and ability are intertwined into these women's lived experiences in higher education. Many of the authors included in this anthology have specifically drawn on the work of Patricia Hill Collins and her discussions of the importance of dialogue, an ethics of caring, and the significance of black women as agents of knowledge. For scholars such as Collins, the use

of an intersectional paradigm examines mutual systems of oppression in social organizations, with the potential to stimulate new interpretations of women's experiences.

Many of the authors in this volume also echo what Juliann Emmons Allison describes as "psychological adjustments" (2007, 26)—contradictions that repeatedly surface for women engaged within academic settings who are balancing dual roles as mothers and scholars. Although many academic institutions have made considerable progress in accommodating academic parents' pragmatic concerns, there is still a systematic failure to recognize the ways that motherhood can alter a female academic's career in profound ways (Mason and Goulden 2002, 2004a; Allison 2007; Mason 2011). This anthology confronts these biases and reveals the strategies we as mothers may engage in so as to not jeopardize our academic lives. Our collection aims to offer counterstories as to who constitutes a viable and reliable colleague, scholar, and student, which follows in the tradition of Chicana/Latina scholarship on counterstorytelling while also adding to the voices of women who are in academia (Yosso 2006; Chávez 2012).

Many of the essays in this volume push us to consider how parenting is gendered in the contexts of interlocking systems such as colonialism, racism, sexism, ethnocentrism, ageism, and heterosexism. They are in conversation with each other, revealing the often stark differences in how people experience the academy. What we expose are structurally informed disparities between ranks of women working in academia. The authors in this volume embody a variety of academic positions, working as administrators, professors of all ranks, graduate students, and academic support staff. As editors of this volume, we imagine the following pages as a forum where we can not only see the nuanced differences between mothers in the academy but also understand our commonalities. As a consequence, several authors in this collection discuss their experiences in academia as scholars and mothers of color—experiences that include a lack of valuable networks of mentors, the presence of tokenism, and the constant need to prove their academic qualifications. The women of color contributing their voices to our project bear witness to and also share their insights regarding what policies and cultural changes need to happen for more scholars of color to feel welcomed and taken seriously in academe.

In addition to the testimonial accounts, which lay bare women's lives as mothers in academia at various stages, the book also includes chapters that discuss theoretically and empirically the material and labor conditions of

mothers learning and working in increasingly inaccessible sites of higher education. As the political economy of academic institutions shifts toward corporate-based models of teaching in both blatant and subtle ways, it is critical to ascertain how women's lives in the academy and by extension their families will be affected by these structural-cultural changes. Gaye Tuchman describes in *Wannabe U* the growing organizational cultures in higher education that prioritize institutional branding and marketing, diminishing resources, increasing workloads, and a structural ambivalence toward diversity in all its forms. The global competition to become elite institutions is deepening the efforts by universities and colleges to "promote the transformation of knowledge into capital" (2009, 59). There is also the pressure to brand oneself as a professor—in short, to become known for a specific (scholarly) "product." Although personal branding allows each individual to be more marketable, the consequence is a lack of participation in or decreased service to his or her present institution.

The capitalist approach to academia inherently assumes an approach to the life-work balance that is unfortunately in fact imbalanced because revenue generation through research and teaching can occur only through longer work hours. Such hours disproportionately affect mothers, often negatively, and in the status-conscious consumer culture of the higher-education industry it is becoming progressively more difficult for all parents to keep up with the academic life. In the new transformed environment where universities and colleges are also struggling with the tension of education as a public good and commodity, it is more important than ever to reveal "emerging aspects of American life" and to bear witness to how mothers in academia are situated personally, culturally, and structurally "in the context of contemporary American higher education" (Tuchman 2009, 21). Through such bold acts, we are making visible what is often invisible and in the process shifting the conversation so that mothers' experiences are on the radar for university officials. Taking women's issues into account is vital if any institution of higher education wants to be successful in the twenty-first century, and motherhood is in the top ten of those issues.

BEARING WITNESS IN THREE PARTS

This volume is divided into three parts that are interrelated but distinct in particular ways. Each part features short testimonial chapters from mothers

who are students, administrators, and faculty, demonstrating the often tricky balance between home and work life. The collection also includes several lengthier research-based chapters. Part I, “Working/Learning in the Academy While Working/Learning as a Mom,” offers readers a larger political, social, and economic context of what women working in academia are facing. Part II, “Unexpected Challenges and Momentous Revelations,” discusses some of the serious unexpected challenges and unanticipated revelations mothers in academia have encountered. These unexpected circumstances include cultural relocation and acculturation, terminal illness and disabilities, and overt and covert forms of heterosexism, racism, sexism, and classism. Part III, “Creating More Parent-Friendly Institutions of Higher Learning,” contributes to the larger conversation on how academia can include more family-friendly institutions in order to change the ivory tower.

Our book ultimately demonstrates that *testimonios* are powerful tools for the production of new knowledge and that by focusing on mothers’ lives we are contributing to the feminist epistemology about gender, race, sexuality, and class in the twenty-first century. It is tempting to make gestational analogies when discussing a collaborative writing project pertaining to mothers in higher education and including more than thirty authors. Like many pregnancies, this project took on a life of its own. Spurred on by our belief that there is more to be said, this collection of first-person narratives sheds light on the lives of women who parent while learning, working, teaching, and researching in twenty-first-century colleges and universities. We acknowledge that most of the authors in this collection are from the humanities or social sciences. Although our initial call for papers was distributed widely, we did not receive any submissions from female faculty and students in the natural and physical sciences. For those readers interested specifically in the experiences of women in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) fields, Emily Monosson’s excellent anthology *Motherhood, the Elephant in the Laboratory* (2008) addresses an array of issues for mothers-scientists. Many of the contributors to Monosson’s book wrestle with what it means to be a “scientist” and how to reconcile various “career” trajectories that may or may not include mainstream academic or research positions. Clearly there are fewer women in the hard sciences than in the humanities and social sciences, although the percentage of female Ph.D.s in STEM fields has grown since 1958, when the National Science Foundation began keeping track (Burrelli 2008). Nonetheless, STEM female faculty continue to represent a microscopic percentage of all faculty, and, despite increases

in the number of awarded doctorates, the wide discrepancy in career paths demonstrates a rampant disregard for women professors, postdoctorates, and students in these particularly male-dominated/male-oriented fields. The *Chronicle of Higher Education's* coverage of a particular female postdoc's career derailment in physics due to the lack of institutional support during and after her pregnancy points to the "highly competitive nature of academic science, which leaves little time for female scholars to have children. Young scientists who works as postdoctoral researchers are particularly vulnerable because their careers are dependent on the goodwill of a single faculty supervisor," who is often a man (Wilson 2005). Disciplinary differences do exist between the natural and physical sciences on the one side and other fields of study on the other (for instance, the emphasis on laboratory-based research in STEM fields); however, we do believe that many of the larger cultural and structural issues for mothers are similar across academia.

We thus took great pains as editors to make sure that the chapters spoke to these broader realities of how to balance children with an academic career. To do so, we negotiated with and coached the women authors in this book, much as a midwife does with a woman who is in the throes of labor. We also ensured as much as possible that the writing process was humane, transparent, and encouraging, while also being rigorous. While the project was being born, at least three of the contributors literally gave birth to children; other women tended to a sick or dying child or parent, prepared lectures and conference papers, wrestled with research projects, and attended to an array of administrative tasks. At least two of our authors obtained their doctorates as the book developed, and four of the authors were granted tenure and promotion. Thus, some of the stories included here reflect the authors' positionalities prior to obtaining their degrees or tenure. We tell our readers this because it is this type of emotional and physical labor that is often invisible in academia. In the very act of writing, editing, and rewriting our manuscripts, we experienced fluidity between our professional and personal lives as academic mothers. It is our hope that through these narratives, we both reveal and revise the world of higher education as mothers know it.

PART ONE

WORKING/LEARNING IN THE ACADEMY WHILE WORKING/LEARNING AS A MOM

OVER THE COURSE of her academic career as a renowned sociologist, Arlie Hochschild (1997) made poignant observations about the precarious balance between home and work life. Her work therefore provides us with a vocabulary to describe the second-shift phenomenon where mothers employed outside the home continue to carry the brunt of domestic work once they return home. Hochschild's research also questions how human feelings have become commercialized in the global market place; she questions what emotional labor entails and the ways in which such labor is gendered. In many ways embodied through the chapters in this book, her work offers readers a larger political, social, and economic context for what women working in academia are facing. In this first part, we begin with "How We Learned to Stop Worrying and to Enjoy Having It All," by six academic mothers from four disciplines at the University of Wisconsin–Oshkosh, who investigate the media-generated "mommy wars" and the need for an academic community dedicated to a discussion of the work–life balance as it applies to their lives. Michelle Kuhl, Michelle Mouton, Margaret Hostetler, Druscilla Scribner, Tracy Slagter, and Orlee Hauser question the tone of media portrayals of working women, challenge one another's notions of feminism, confront the virtual absence of discourses on fatherhood and spousal relationships, and investigate their own reactions to stay-at-home motherhood. Larissa M. Mercado-López considers throughout her chapter, "Academia or Bust: Feeding the Hungry Mouths of the University, Babies, and Ourselves," how academia as an institution is not always accepting of