

# Pathways to Leadership Women Leaders and Their Stories

[MUSIC PLAYING]

DR. NOEL SCHULZ: I guess we're starting. Are we?

[LAUGHTER]

Everybody's quiet. I'll keep talking if we need.

DR. MONICA JOHNSON: How are you?

DR. COURTNEY MEEHAN: Good, how are you?

DR. MONICA JOHNSON: Good.

DR. MELANIE-ANGELA NEUILLY: We say the same thing in France. Maybe not an angel. It might be a ghost.

ANA MARÍA RODRÍGUEZ-VIVALDI: So it just went by.

ANNE COX: Welcome, everyone. You all look so official. Thank you all for being here.

DR. NOEL SCHULZ: Do you need her to have a mic?

ANNE COX: Do I need a microphone? Oh, I do need a mic. And the microphone is not for this room, so you won't hear me projected. It's only for global, so.

DR. ZOE HIGHEAGLE STRONG: So we need to talk loud--

ANNE COX: It's going to feel weird, because it's not projecting my voice in this room, but it's on. So thank you all for being here. I feel like it's a presidential debate or something, right?

[LAUGHTER]

Sorry, that just was floating through my head.

DR. NOEL SCHULZ: Well, five women debating for president, that would be a good day.

ANNE COX: We have really tough questions for you.

DR. COURTNEY MEEHAN: We might not disagree.

AUDIENCE: That would be a day to celebrate.

ANNE COX: It would. That would be amazing to have these five. Before we introduce our wonderful panelists, we're going to start with just really brief introductions of everybody who's in the room here. We won't introduce everybody on global, but we have a number of audience members on global as well. And we'll go around and just say if you're in an AFW officer and what your unit is just really briefly. So I'm Anne Cox. And I am the current AFW President.

ANA MARÍA RODRÍGUEZ-VIVALDI: Ana María Rodríguez-Vivaldi and I'm part of AFW-- the officers. And I'm in charge of the Sam Smith Award.

AMANDA HUSSEIN: Amanda Hussein. I am a graduate student in the School of Languages, Cultures, and Race in American Studies. And I just became a brand new AFW member tonight, so yay.

[LAUGHTER]

KATHLEEN RODGERS: Kathleen Rodgers. I'm with the Department of Human Development. And I'm a co-officer for the graduate scholarships.

CARRIE CUTLER: I'm Carrie Cutler in Psychology and I do membership and outreach with AFW.

ELIZABETH CANNING: I'm Elizabeth Canning in Psychology and I'm new faculty.

MELISSA PARKHURST: Melissa in Music and Program Co-Chair for AFW.

MIRANDA BERNHARDT: Miranda Bernhardt from the Center for Reproductive Biology.

LISA GLOSS: Lisa Gloss, Graduate School in Molecular Biosciences.

JENN SHERMAN: Hi, I'm Jenn Sherman. I'm in Sociology. And I'm the AFW secretary.

ASHLEY BOYD: Hi, I'm Ashley Boyd. I'm in the Department of English. And I am AFW caterer.

ROBIN BOND: I am Robin Bond from Honors College.

LORENA O'ENGLISH: Lorena O'English from the libraries.

CHELSEA LEACHMAN: Chelsea Leachman from the libraries and President-elect for AFW.

DONNA POTTS: Donna Potts, Chair of English.

SUE GILL: Sue Gill, Chair of Accounting.

ANNE COX: OK, we have a couple more people coming in, but we'll go ahead and get started without further ado, I think. So I'm going to hand it over to Ana María. Ana María really was the

one who conceived of this idea and kind of structured the objectives of this event and how it would all play out. So she was the visionary. And I'll let you introduce the panelists. And then I will help facilitate some of the questions, which will integrate with audience questions as well.

ANA MARÍA RODRÍGUEZ-VIVALDI: So I just want to just name those here. And I think most of us know our panelists and know them very well. First of all, we're very happy to have you here. And we're very grateful, as well. And I just wanted to let you know, both the panelists and the attendants here, in Pullman that we have over 50 people joining us through the kind services of our global campus colleagues who facilitated this. Thank you very much. And welcome to all those people on our other campuses, as well.

So today, I'm just going to briefly introduce our panelists. I'm not going to read their bios. They're online and also on a handout that we have. But we are very pleased to introduce Dr. Noel Schulz. She's our WSU first lady. But most important for us all. So she's a professor in the Edmund O. Schweitzer, the third chair, over at the Voiland College of Engineering and Architecture.

Then she will be followed by Dr. Melanie Neully. She's an associate professor in criminal justice and criminology. But she's also working as a interning associate vice president for faculty development. So she plays an important part as well in what we are and what we want to do. And then we have Dr. Courtney Meehan. And she's an Associate Dean in the research-- and she's in charge of research and grad studies at the College of Arts and Sciences. And she's also an associate professor in the Department of Anthropology.

Then we have Dr. Monica Johnson, who's the chair of sociology. And she conducts a lot of research that also has to do with women-- very interested in diversity issues. And then we have Dr. Zoe Higheagle Strong. She's the executive director of tribal relations and special assistant to the provost. And she's also director of the Center for Native American research and collaboration. Welcome to all of you and thank you for being here.

[APPLAUSE]

ANNE COX: So we have about an hour or so for the main program here. And hopefully we'll have a lot of discussion. And then followed by dinner. So we hope that many of you will stay for dinner for more interaction and more discussion following the main event here. So just to begin-- and then I will be asking for more audience questions at certain points as well.

But we'd like to begin by asking the panelists to take two to three minutes each, so you each have kind of an introductory period and you have the floor for each of you to talk a little bit about one or two skills that you learned along the way that helped you succeed. So basically things that were really instrumental in helping you get where you are today, but keeping it relatively brief as we move through. I don't know which end we want to start out or we can start in the middle.

DR. COURTNEY MEEHAN: No, I think--

ANNE COX: Everybody's pointing at Noel.

[LAUGHTER]

Noel, you're on.

DR. NOEL SCHULZ: Thank you. I just want to look at my phone.

ANNE COX: We won't time you, but we might--

DR. NOEL SCHULZ: Oh, no I'm timing myself. So good evening. Thanks for being here. I was trying to think of one or two skills that I've learned along the way that helped me succeed. And when I was thinking about that, in both my positions, when I've been Associate Dean and some other positions at a university, but also my volunteer position. I was president of my professional society in 2012 and 2013, the second woman president of electrical engineers with about 35,000 members worldwide. So some of that is both with my day job, as well as a volunteer, because a lot of us do volunteer work like AFW.

I think that the first thing I learned is it's better to over communicate than under communicate. I think that's one thing that sometimes leaders think everybody knows everything. And we don't know everything. The other thing as PES President, I learned that leading volunteers is a lot different than leading employees. So it's very challenging to fire a volunteer. And not that you want to fire employees, but there's a process with that, but when people are volunteering.

And I think the other thing I learned, which was probably the biggest thing, is not everyone sees the world and likes and thinks exactly like me. And not everybody wants to spend all their time and energy on things the same things I want to do. And I think where I learned in that and what I took away from that was the fact of understanding my spheres of influence and what I could impact and what I couldn't impact.

And I think that was a big discovery for me, because I would get upset of things that were outside my control. And I would just get all flustered about them. And I couldn't change them, because someone else wasn't going to do something. I had to only do what I could help control. And that was a big moment for me when I learned that what can I influence and what can I not and then I focus on the things I can influence and not the things I can't influence, because that's really wasted time. So those were a couple of things that I thought about with this question.

DR. MELANIE-ANGELA NEUILLY: Thanks, Noel. Is this close enough? Thank you, everybody. Thank you for having me. I'm really excited. Things that I've learned. So I've now learned more things.

[LAUGHTER]

Because I think those things are definitely very true. I would--

DR. NOEL SCHULZ: Hold on a second. Are our mics on? Yes? OK, you can hear us. OK, good.

DR. MELANIE-ANGELA NEUILLY: Yes. OK, we're all good. OK. I would add-- or I would maybe go in a slightly different direction. And some of the things that I've learned throughout my career here in informal or formal leadership positions are that you should trust yourself to know that you're going to know-- like, you're going to know what to do. And even if you don't know what to do, you're going to figure it out.

So I think that's been kind of a big kind of empowering lesson that you don't have to wait until someone comes in and tells you how to do things and you can trust yourself to figure it out and you can trust yourself to have what it takes, even if it isn't-- I mean, as women we usually think that we're not qualified. And I'm not saying that I am. And whether or not I'm qualified, you know, I have to trust that I can do these things.

And the other thing that I've discovered, and it's something that I believe for a long time but I've truly come to embrace it and really apply it, because it's become more and more apparent that it was very necessary, is to know why you're doing what you're doing. That if you don't know your why, then nothing is going to be easy and nothing is going to happen and fall into place. It's going to be kind of a challenge and a struggle.

But if you know your why-- I mean, I'm not saying it's going to be easy and there won't be a challenge, because there definitely will be, but it will make the challenges worth it. And also it will make you a better fit for what you're doing and it'll allow you to make the decisions that you need to make if you know your why. So these are my two things.

DR. COURTNEY MEEHAN: Hi, thank you for inviting me tonight. I'm also excited to be here. And I would say the two things, one would be just to-- actually following up a little bit on what Melanie just said-- is to you feel that you have the power to create your position and your job. And to feel confident in going out and making it what you want it to be.

And then in terms of some lessons or skills that I've learned along the way as well, I've spent much of my career working internationally and around the world. And I think that has definitely provided me with some skills just in terms of being able to sit back and listen and hear what people are saying. And maybe that's a skill I'm actually still trying to develop and learn, because I'm certainly not perfect at that. But trying to listen and hear what people are saying before jumping in. And so that's probably a skill I'm still working on, but one that I think that I focused on coming from my research and then moving into leadership. So I'd say those two things.

DR. MONICA JOHNSON: Thank you. Yeah, I think this is great that we're having this conversation. So I'm happy to be a part of it. The two things that I think I would say I learned and that I try to implement in my position are related to the things that have come up so far. My first is that a conversation goes a long, long, long way. And I usually think of it as an in-

person conversation, but with our multi-campus system, that's sometimes a phone, but it's not email.

And that's one where I have to sometimes relearn. But it's something I engage frequently when something's going to be happening. And sometimes it's because, oops, there it goes, I need to have a face-to-face conversation. And everything that I worry will get it big or starts to get big, it is so much easier. And maybe it matches my skill set or maybe there's inherent things in that, but we're all a little bit more reasonable when we're talking to another person instead of a machine. So that's one that I think is really critical.

And then the other one I would say-- and it relates to your, what's the why-- is having a really good sense of my own values and remembering that other people have them, too. And so a lot of the conflict resolution that I do involves finding out what it is that someone cares about. Because we're upset because something we care about is threatened or damaged or something like that.

And it's usually something that we would all agree is a valid value. If we can get to the heart of that, sometimes it just opens up a lot more solutions, because the thing that is being disagreed about or know under attack isn't really what is at issue. What is at issue is something really-- something closely held, if it's fairness or if it is I'm worthy or any of those things, when you can get at that.

So as I've taken different roles, I've thought about what is it that's really important to me, because I'm going to have to justify my decisions and sometimes I'm going to have to make hard choices. And if it's tough, it's probably because there's some things that are pulling, some values that are in conflict. And if I have a good sense of what mine are, it helps me make those decisions. It helps me explain my decisions to other people. It helps me get input in the right way. So I would say those are my two things that I've learned.

DR. ZOE HIGHEAGLE STRONG: [NON-ENGLISH SPEECH]. My name is Zoe Higheagle Strong, as you mentioned before. And some of the areas that have really driven, I think, my leadership or help support my leadership is valuing relationships, valuing team, and valuing community. And previous before I began working here at WSU, I was executive director for a nonprofit worldwide organization. And then also started a nonprofit that's been running now for 15 years that serves Northwest youth and adolescent.

And I think what I realized over time is how much we need relationships. One, when we have a vision or we're motivated, we can't do things alone. And building relationships where I've always been committed to wherever I go, whether I'm in the communities or the schools, trying to build relationships without an agenda. And just getting to know people, listening, hearing, getting to know adolescence and youth and what they need. And really because of that, I think that's often driven the work that I'm passionate about it.

It led me to go back to school. I ended up getting my PhD at University of Washington. Just because I was a part of a team and we lacked some really core tenets in our nonprofit of evaluation. And we saw that there were systematic issues in education. And so that kind of drove me to go back and get my degree.

But building relations all throughout Washington and the Northwest areas with many tribal communities and with many schools, when I got to here to WSU, it was a smooth transition in research. Because I had all these hundreds of relationships across the state of Idaho and Washington and schools and with funders. And so that's really allowed just developing research teams or here at WSU a lot easier transition, but more rewarding, too. Getting into schools are a lot easier, because I'm not just now jumping in. I've had these relationships for 15, 20 years.

And really committed to building team at work, stepping into going from a researcher and faculty to a executive director. Getting to know my team really well and seeing our strengths and weaknesses. And I spent a lot of time just-- how to retreat, building one-on-one time, getting to know what they want, what they don't like. Because you can't move forward if there's people who are not happy or if they've had some bad experiences.

And so I think I've really learned that the process of relationships and building team takes time. But you don't want to forge ahead on a vision until you really have everyone behind you, or else you pay on the back end. And I've learned that many times. Like, just don't push it. I'm ambitious and I want to go fast, but the relationships matter and the partnerships matter. And so moving forward without people, even though it takes more time, is not worth it in the end. But then you get loyalty.

And so I love working here at WSU. I have a great faculty that I collaborate with. I have a great team that we work with and a lot of community partners. And it makes my job more rewarding when times get really hard and you're like, why am I doing all this, you have those relationships to fall back on.

ANNE COX: Well, thank all of you. And thank you for staying to your time. I keep making implicit gender comparisons. I shouldn't, but I just want-- you all-- you talked a lot about relationships and values. And I just keep thinking how it might be different, but that's why we're having this panel to hear from female leaders and what has worked well for you. We're going to ask several more questions, or at least two or three more that we want everybody to answer. We'll see how long those go.

But if you are coming up with questions in the audience, you'll have your opportunity in a little bit, but be writing them down. So if something occurs to you and you don't want to forget about it, do that and we'll open it up to the audience in a little bit.

So the second question is, what is the best advice you have received as you pursued opportunities in your career? And if you are having trouble remembering specific advice from

somebody else, you could offer your own advice, something that you tell others. And we'll go in a different order. How about I'll call you out? We'll start at the other end.

DR. ZOE HIGHEAGLE STRONG: Well, I had the privilege of Kelly Ward was one of my first chairs when I transitioned to WSU 4 and 1/2 years ago. And she really was a great model on work-life balance. And so she gave me the advice-- and her kids were in high school same time my kids were in high school. And so one, everyday she just asked me how my family was doing. And that helped my work environment. But she would really, as a new faculty coming in, really encouraged to leave at a certain time, make sure the holidays you spend time with your families, during the summer break that you take a chunk of time and set that aside.

The advice wouldn't have meant much if I didn't see her actually doing it, because it's a practice. But I think watching her do that, watching her relationship with her family, but then being this ambitious woman that just accomplished amazing goals here at WSU and leaving a legacy here, I think really left an impact. And so I really do fight for that, to make sure my weekends, especially, are with my kids. I may have to work longer during the weekdays, but I take most of time try to take Saturday and Sunday so that I'm there with my family. And that I can get refreshed to start the next week.

DR. MONICA JOHNSON: I'm thinking about advice that I was given sort of in the latter half of my career so far, when I was in more leadership roles and asked to do more things and not just be on the committee, but maybe lead the committee or take this office or please be chair. And I think that the thing that helped me the most was to ask myself, why would I want to do this and what do I want to do with it. Because there's a curse of competence, right? If you've done well at one thing, you're going to get asked to do more.

And so you're often in the position of making choices. And you can't do a good job if you say yes to too many things. And you can't have a healthy life if you say yes to too many things. So asking myself, what is this? And in the beginning part of my career, it was a lot about building it. I mean, I needed to-- and there's lots of advice-- pre-tenure in my case-- lots of advice about how to do that.

But after that, it kind of opened up. And I was able to say, well what is it I want to do? What is the contribution that I want to make in my research, in my leadership? And then kind of say yes to those that actually go in a direction that I want to go. Because there's lots of opportunities to do things, more than we should. So being very thoughtful and deliberate about, do I want to do this and for what purpose.

DR. COURTNEY MEEHAN: Thanks. So I think-- I was trying to think about what advice I've gotten over the years. And I think it was kind of a combination between what I mentioned earlier in terms of some of the skills that I've learned along the way that one of the earliest pieces of advice that I received as a graduate student when I was transitioning into a faculty position was to really feel like I own that role and to step into it and to feel that it was mine to begin with. And so I've kind of taken that advice early on.

But then I've-- as I've moved forward in my career, I've tried to instill that in my graduate students so that they feel confident from an early stage going forward and that they are really in control of their career. And that they can make those decisions and aren't feeling like they have to appease someone else or go in a certain direction for someone else. That they are in control and able to direct their careers. And I think that would apply to early career faculty all the way through.

DR. MELANIE-ANGELA NEUILLY: So I've been given many good advice and some not so great advice, as well. But I think-- and I've also taken the very good advice and sometimes I've ignored the very good advice. I think that's maybe something that we should discuss at some point. I don't know.

[LAUGHTER]

But I would say some of the best pieces of advice I've gotten is to not get all your mentoring in the same place, that it shouldn't be one person is your person. Like, you will have a mentor, that you have a network of mentors. And that because you just naturally wouldn't necessarily go to the same person for everything in your life. And that in a lot of ways, you need various pieces of different advice, depending on your job, but also your personal situation. I mean, there is everything.

I always like to encourage people to think of themselves as whole human being. Like, often time we're so trained to be the ideal worker that we just shut the door to the rest of us, which is a big part of us. Like, the person we are when we get home. I guess we don't actually-- we can't actually just close that door and pretend like that person doesn't exist. That person does exist. And you bring her to work with you every day. And therefore, you need mentorship for that, as well.

And so you need to have all of these pieces. And I think kind of getting-- kind of following up on something that Zoe said, it's not a one-way stream. It's a relationship that you build. And it's not something that you just go to someone, you're like, you're going to be my mentor, or will you be my mentor. Relationships are very important to me. And so I'm not out to get a mentor. I'm out to meet people and to understand their perspective and to build relationships and hopefully become friends or maybe just nice acquaintances that I really like to see.

And and in the midst of all of that, I learned a lot about people. And I learned a lot about myself. And I can take advice. And then next thing you know, you're emailing that person being like, can I talk to you about this problem? Or you're texting that person saying like, can I just vent about my husband? I mean, slash kid slash cat slash whatever.

And that's really what it is. And we all do that, but sometimes we don't see it as a mentoring network. And I think once we start thinking about it like, oh, I do have this network of support, this network of advice, it kind of helps us then move through in a more intentional way about using that network.

DR. NOEL SCHULZ: Yeah, I think there's a lot of advice I've gotten over the years, but I was thinking with this question about two books that I think had a big impact on me. The first one was *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. I read that very early in my career. And I recently about two years ago taught a class on it. And I went back and reread it. And I was like, oh my gosh, all these things I've done over my career were because of that book, that I didn't remember that's where I'd gotten that advice. So that's a book I really encourage students and early career folks to read.

The other one I think that has been important to me has been *Lean In*. And the reason I bring that up is she talks about, instead of a career path being a ladder, being a jungle gym. And I think as part of a two body problem or dual career couple, you can-- Kirk has a very traditional path of a ladder, where you went step A to step B to step C. And my path has been very different. And I still feel that I've had opportunities, I've grown in that.

But there are some people that might say, well, you know, you're not a department head or a dean or an x or a y. But my path I've gotten done things that I've enjoyed. And I think that's something that's really important, especially today as we try to balance personal and professional activities-- or integrate them. They're never balanced-- is our expectations of ourselves that others put expectations on us that we have to go from A to B to C. And I think if you think of a jungle gym, where you do lots of different things, you can go down to go up, you can go parallel. And that's what I see from my career is doing some of those kind of things and learning and growing and having different leadership opportunities that aren't the traditional A, B, C.

ANNE COX: I love that. I have so many follow up questions, but I'm going to hold down for now. Let's go to this next question, maybe starting at Noel's end again. I really love this one, too. I want you all to think about-- and hopefully you were able to think about this a little bit before coming-- an example of a challenge or a setback that you've experienced on your path and how you addressed it. I don't if that plays into the jungle gym analogy, as well. It may or may not.

But I think one of the things I talk to my undergrads a lot about is failure. And I think there's a lot of-- when you have a panel like this sitting up here, there's a perception that everything just went lockstep for each of you, right? So I think this is a question that's so important for people to hear more about the nitty gritty of your path. So a challenge or a setback and how you overcame that.

DR. NOEL SCHULZ: I love this question. And if I'm the session chair, I use it on alumni. Because I think it's very important, as you said, to see that people have failed. So early in our career, I taught for-- Kirk finished his PhD early. And I taught at University of North Dakota as an instructor. And for one year, there were no women in engineering. I was the first woman. I got a Teaching Award. Kirk was an assistant professor.

And then I had to go back and get my PhD. So we lived apart for two years. I was in Minneapolis. Kirk was in Grand Forks. He had Timothy, our two-year-old. And I will get to the story here. I know I'm giving you some stuff here.

But anyway, so they had an opening in electrical engineering at North Dakota. And it turned out, nine days after I had Andrew, I had to interview. They required me to interview in nine days. The department head was from another culture and was not comfortable with women and picked a friend. And this was pretty tough for me.

And North Dakota had open access, open HR files. So I actually got to go see the file. And the department head knew if I was acceptable, because my husband was also a faculty member, the dean probably-- so he said I was unacceptable, that even undergraduates would not-- I couldn't even teach undergraduates. And so I made a copy of that. And I kept it in a file. And I used that as motivation any time we got another opportunity.

But anytime I needed motivation, I used that to-- I had a lot of self-doubt issues for about a year. But I really used that to help motivate me to say, I'm going to show him that he didn't know what he was going to do. And I'm going to make him look bad. And Kirk wasn't real happy I saved that. He tends to be a glass half-full and look at the positives. But it was a motivation for me.

And it also really helped me-- reminded me that sometimes when a door closes, a window opens. And the opportunity we got into was better, but at the time, it was really tough. And so I share that kind of as-- and I agree, resumes are terrible, because all we-- we don't put the papers we got rejected, the jobs we didn't get on that. And so you look and you think oh, this person has just gone from A to Z and it's been easy. And that's not true for any of us. So that's an example. Sorry, long story, but--

DR. MELANIE-ANGELA NEUILLY: No, that's great. Thank you. I feel like-- I mean, everything is a challenge. So I'm in a jungle gym situation. And I did not get to my position in that classic one move after another. I've done a lot of university-level service and leadership in that capacity. And when the opportunity arose, I said, that's not for me. But I was lucky enough to have a network of support who convinced me that I could do it.

And then I said, well, what the heck, I'll try it. And it worked. So that's not the challenge part. But the challenge is that I am an associate professor. And I come at this with, you know, not the traditional, like, first you do this and then you do that and then that builds up to this. And so I'm having to face a lot of challenges on the everyday, where I'm having to learn and drink from a fire hose day in and day out, more or less. And I think-- and I'm in an interim position, which is a challenge. And next year will be another challenge.

And what I keep on going back to is everything is a learning opportunity. And so some things I feel I'm, like, totally rocking and it's great and this is my place and I'm in my zone of genius and this is great that I got this job, because I get to do this. And other things I'm like, can't go to

sleep at night, because I can't believe I said that. I probably won't be able to sleep tonight, because I'll think about something I said.

[LAUGHTER]

I'm like, I can't believe I said that. And so then you have to-- I mean, you have to do what you do. Like, you pick yourself up and you dust yourself off. And better luck next time. Or you try not to make the same mistake twice, which I'm sure I make the same mistake all the time.

But the biggest challenge right now is to balance all the things. So I mean, not just the work and the life, which is always an issue, but-- and it's not pretty. I mean, I was answering emails while folding laundry last night, so I'm not going to tell you which got the worst end of the stick.

[LAUGHTER]

But like balance, if I want to continue in my career, I have to become a full professor for what I want to do. Which means that I have to maintain my research agenda. Which means I have to figure things out, make things work, make decisions, have priorities every day for what is the most important thing that has to be done. And that's not easy. And it's not-- you don't see it. That's not something that you necessarily see. Unless you're like my office mate, who's like, oh, her door is closed most of the time. And so I don't know. That's my current challenge, I guess.

DR. COURTNEY MEEHAN: So I would say that I probably have lots of failures I could talk about. But I'll focus on the challenge for a moment. And then also end with a lesson that I learned myself just even a month ago. When I accepted the Associate Dean position, I had to explained to the dean that I had a trip to Japan scheduled the day after I took the job. And that I'd be back in two weeks. And so I accepted the job. And I got on the plane. It was announced. I got on the plane. And I got off. And I opened my email. And as you expect, it exploded.

And I went oh, this will be a fun two weeks, as I try to do this off schedule. And my phone rang. And it was my father. And I'm also a mom, so I have a kid at home. And he was like, we're moving to Pullman. We need your help. And so over the last year, I have been maintaining my lab and my research and doing the Associate Dean for Research position, the mom, as well as caring for two aging parents. And so that has been quite a challenge.

And about a month ago, I went out after work one evening with five colleagues. And I was like, I just-- we need to do something fun. And I emailed them an hour before. And I said, we should all go out and just catch up with each other. And we sat down. And it turns out that all five of us were going through this same exact thing to varying degrees.

And I realized right then and there that we should not keep that private, that we should communicate it and let other people know. Because there is a tremendous amount of support out there that probably doesn't-- that we probably don't seek out or know about. And that many of us are going through those same kinds of integration balance issues. And that we tend

to keep it private and we probably shouldn't. And so I recommend that when you're going through all of that that you connect with others, because it is incredibly helpful to do so.

DR. MONICA JOHNSON: That's really good. I'm kind of an open book on both the mistakes and the challenges. I talk to a lot of people. I just, you know, I find that other people have-- so let me back up. Some of my biggest challenges are chronic. It's not an event. It's trying to make something work and I don't have the resources to make it work or I don't have what I need to make it work. So there's a constant adjustment puzzle making kind of thing going on.

And by talking it through with other people, I get ideas. I also get understanding, because they get that a lot has to come together for things to work. And so it's a really great exchange of ideas and also just understandings. So that's good.

When it comes to the major screw ups, I'm also a big fan of naming it, owning it, and genuinely just saying, I messed up, I'm sorry. Sometimes I don't even know that I messed. And then I have to think, oh, wow, you know, even unintentionally, I did this, and I need to own it and move on. And I think it's part of the very direct and honest way I approach a lot of things that I-- it helps me stay focused and clear, but it also-- it maintains those relationships.

And so I actually can navigate through and have more ideas and more exchange. Because people know that I'm being straight and that I care. And that when I do mess up, I'll say that I did. So they're more willing to give, which helps me solve my problems, because some of them are too big to solve by myself.

DR. ZOE HIGHEAGLE STRONG: Well, I am my worst enemy. I think I really did just-- stepping into working in the academic environment in general, I think there was a lot of messages in my head that I've had to fight. One, I barely graduated high school, so for me to even go back and get my PhD was a big deal. And I didn't really like school growing up and so-- but I did it, because I saw the value in it. And now I love it.

So stepping in, the evaluation process as faculty is not the most encouraging building process. And I didn't understand that. Because I used to be an executive director. And I'd give awesome evaluations in what do you want to grow in. And then you have these several page reports that you turn in and then you get back. And my first evaluation was average, average, average. And I only had worked there for four months, but I was like, I'm failing. Like, I'm only average. What's going on here?

And so I literally had to go back and talk it over and say, what does average mean? And what am I doing wrong? And so I picked up really quick they said, well, everyone's average. We rate everyone average. But if you really, really go overboard, then you're-- you get up there.

So I had really wrestle with that, because that wasn't OK to me. Because I really felt like I was trying to prove myself in the work. So every evalu-- and then I have this unique role. So when I got hired, I was originally a clinical assistant professor. And then half time in the Native

American programs, because I was a diversity hire. And so I felt like I had to prove myself, because I didn't go through the normal hiring process. And then people would make comments about that.

And so I always felt like, well, I need to get more grant money or I need to do more publications. And then I got into Assistant Professor role. And only halfway through it, I got offered the position-- or a year into it-- for Executive Director. And so then I went into another split role. And so they've been trying to figure out how to evaluate me this whole time.

And I think I spent too much time and energy trying to help people or think about it myself how to get evaluated. And it was very-- it took away a lot of my joy in my work. Every January, I would regret it. I just didn't look forward to the process. And then I had to go through this spiraling process again. Like, how do I build backup myself as-- I even got better and better evaluations, but it still wasn't enough. And also because I have this unique role that they don't know how to look at it.

So I think through all that, one, I think friendships, just talking through it, realizing, yeah, there's a lot of people in this. Saying, I'm not the only one that maybe doesn't feel great after an evaluation or feel valued or feel appreciated for all the extra things you do. And so I think just getting back to what am I passionate about? What do I feel good about?

And really even being more positive and giving myself a break. I've had to do that, because I've felt like-- and people have said at the beginning, well just do double to prove yourself that you're a native woman that can-- and I've had you know people challenge me with that. And I've had to really figure out, OK, what's right for me? And what does it mean to do good work? And what am I-- what can I feel good about myself regardless of what people think and feel?

But that's a process. I'm still working on it. [LAUGHS] Again, I-- and my husband's a great-- I come back and tell him. And I'm just tell me something good about myself, please. But thank goodness for friendships where you can just kind of encourage and support each other, because we don't really have a realistic picture of all that we do do in this room. But we can help each other kind of have a bigger picture, a better picture, of ourselves that maybe we don't have by ourselves.

ANNE COX: Thank you for being so candid. I really think we learn the most from these kinds of candid conversations about where our struggles are. And I really appreciate what each of you said to that particular question. I'm going to ask one more question to everyone on the panel and then open it up. So this last one is, I'm going to give you multiple parts and you can address whichever one resonates with you. It's about mentoring, which we've started to hit on.

But either how did you identify mentors along your path and/or how were they the most helpful? I think sometimes we don't know how to use our mentors. We have mentoring committees in the College of Education, but often on the mentee to kind of decide, how can I

best use this committee, so that part. Or just what has your experience with mentoring been. Zoe, I'll let you start with this one.

DR. ZOE HIGHEAGLE STRONG: Well, being hired as a clinical assistant, you don't-- originally you don't have a mentor team or you don't get assigned a team. But I did ask for one right away, because I-- well, one, I research mentoring, so I know it's very important. [LAUGHS] So I asked for, you know, can I have a team? Go ahead. Go look for somebody and suggest. But I do agree with what some folks have already said is that you just go after building-- I mean, obviously you ask your chair or different people, who would be good person? Because I didn't know folks that well.

So I needed to know who would be a good person for me that other people saw. But also just building great relationships with people that I thought would be good, so that I'm not a burden on them. I mean, that was important to me that I felt like that I'm giving something to them and it's not just a one way street. And so I think I just started building relations and people that I loved the way they worked. And then asked them to be on the committee. And that worked out. Anne is on my committee, which I so appreciate.

But there are different committee members that you don't need to go to all of them. I've learned that, too. Is like, you have maybe one person or a core person that you spend a majority of the time that you get feedback from. Everyone else, periodically, because we are busy. And I so appreciate those faculty that have kind of been there a lot longer, but they take on so much that I really want to be able to give back to them in that way. So being on research projects and things like that has really helped to be on my-- I think two of my committee members I'm on research projects with. So we get to work in different ways together, too, which I appreciate.

DR. MONICA JOHNSON: Other than my graduate school mentor, I would be hard pressed to identify people, individuals, like this person has been my mentor. I've had thousands of mentoring moments by just having conversations with people. And a lot of times they are more experienced or they've been through something that, you know, like, oh, my gosh, how did you do your first one of these in the role? Or I'm wrestling with this thing, what do you think? So lots of those conversations.

And I've reached out to people who were unavailable or not helpful. And I usually ask more than one. So by the time I do that, there's somebody who's kind of talking with it. It's people in similar jobs. It's my sister who's not. It's all these different moments of kind of thinking things through with people.

I guess one insight that I have in reflecting on this is that they are not all senior to me. Sometimes, it's other people going through things at the exact same time. And I think of it less hierarchically because of that. That I don't need someone who's been through it all and has all the answers. Sometimes I just need to bounce ideas or have somebody else share an experience. And those can come from a lot of different places.

DR. COURTNEY MEEHAN: I, like Monica, would have a hard time picking out a person or two people that have been those mentors in my life. But when I think about some of the most significant kind of events or mentor-like situations, it has been-- wonderfully it's been people that have surprisingly reached out to me and tried to make a connection and that have really altered my path. And so that's made me remember over time that although we might not be comfortable, necessarily, always doing that, that reaching out to somebody that you might not know and trying to make that connection can make an enormous difference in their lives.

Even-- I probably am in grad school because-- I went to grad school because of that. I pursued new areas of research because people who weren't necessarily required to, it wasn't a formal mentoring relationship, but reached out and connected with me and offered advice and support in certain areas. And so I try to remember that now to kind of make those moments possible and do that even if it is in a formal mentorship situation.

DR. MELANIE-ANGELA NEUILLY: So I already shared my general attitude towards mentoring. I would say two things. The first thing is mentoring is an affirmation. It can be affirmation. But sometimes it's constructive criticism. And I think for me, that's the piece that I was missing for a long time that I'm really glad that I found. I don't need people to tell me how great I am. I mean, I do need people to tell me how great I am. And I also need people to say, well, you could do this a little different. Or this was a little weaker and this is-- or no, you're not ready for this and this is what you should be doing or, you know? And to be a little bit more constructive about that.

But the other thing I would say is I would kind of flip it and say, we often put it on the mentee to be the person who seeks out mentors. If we're looking at a mentee-mentor relationship as a reciprocal relationship, I want to flip it to you and say, it's your responsibility to make sure that you reach out to people, that you bring them to AFW. Which, by the way, it was a place where I meet many of the people that I would consider mentors.

I'm so glad to see Elizabeth here, who's a first year faculty. And I've seen her in a lot of places. And I think that's wonderful and she's doing everything right. And hopefully someone is, maybe Carrie, encouraging her to come to these things. Because it's difficult when you're early in your career or where you're a graduate student or, you know. it is difficult and the fact that we're expecting people to kind of do that seems a little bit counterproductive, when, like, I can just be the person who's like, hey, why don't you come? Or hey, what's up with you? What's your story and tell me about you.

DR. NOEL SCHULZ: Yeah, I think two things related to mentors-- and I think we've talked a lot about this. I'm not sure there's a certain person. I was at a talk one time and someone said, you know, it's like Are You My Mother, the kids' book, Are You My Mother. Are you my mentor? Are you my mentor? That's not how it's supposed to be. And I thought that was a great analogy, because sometimes people think you're looking for this person. But I think networks are important.

One of the ones is build your own. When I was an early career faculty member, I actually had a senior woman in our department, which I was fortunate as an electrical engineer. But there weren't early career women like myself. So I sent an email and started a network by we just went to lunch. And then I convinced the dean to pay for lunch for all the women. And so we did that. And that was at our life stage. Because sometimes it's not just at your technical field, but also your life stage, early career, having a one-year-old and a five-year-old and trying to get tenure and some of that kind of thing.

I also in my professional field, we have when I started in '95, there are five women faculty in power. And so we would have lunch together. I sent an email and we all had lunch together once a year at our conference. Now it's over 35 women. And I send an email and we all get together.

The other thing kind of building on what's been said is, I really think at anytime, you should have three networks. One is where you're going. One is where you are. And one is where you've been. And I think it's really important. We think a lot of mentoring as where we're going, but there's a lot of peer mentoring. I mean, sometimes I found out that things I thought I was the only one, I found colleagues like myself. And it wasn't a gender issue. It was being an untenured faculty issue. And sometimes that was helpful.

But also, I think it's always very important, like Melanie said, to give back to those that are coming behind you. And make sure you're not always just asking for people to help you, but you're helping those that come behind. So those would be the two things is create your own networks and make sure you have all three of those networks. Because there are times that they're helpful in different parts of your life.

ANNE COX: Those are all fantastic. I'll open it up now and perhaps global support can let me know when there might be a question there, as well. Would anybody like to start with any question for the panelists? And if others have follow up questions-- A, not all of the panelists have to answer every question and we can let this progress a little bit more naturally. And then if somebody has a follow up or related questions, we can engage in more of a conversation, as well. So yeah. Yeah, Donna?

DONNA POTTS: --for everyone.

ANNE COX: Oh, yes, I'm going to have to run around.

DONNA POTTS: Oh, yeah, OK.

ANNE COX: OK.

DONNA POTTS: So sexism is pervasive, though maybe lately it's more often dismissed as locker room talk. I was just wondering if you've had experiences that you've had to deal with this and how you handled it.

DR. NOEL SCHULZ: Why is everyone looking at me, right?

[LAUGHTER]

Yeah, as a woman in engineering I had an internship as an undergraduate at General Motors. And one of the technicians asked me if I knew how to use a screwdriver and a hammer. And I said yes, I could. And I felt I had to prove myself. They also-- that was back in the '80s. They would have pin-ups and stuff like that on their carts and things like that.

And I have had some issues when I was-- early in my career, one of my colleagues said, well, are you going to stay home this summer and take care of your kids? And I said no, I'm writing research proposals and, you know. So I saw some gender differences in that.

But it is better now in engineering, even though we could have more women, particularly students. But there are some things. I found humor is a really good way to get back at people or to talk to people about something to try to-- especially in a group. And the one thing I found is you never embarrass those folks in front of a group. Because you'll go down a bunch of notches. But if you can use humor and then maybe talk to them later about some of those kind of things, that was helpful.

The last thing I will say is you have to decide which battles, which times, which hills to climb. And I would say early in my career was not as good at discerning that. As I've grown through lots of examples is figuring out which battles to make in that.

ANNE COX: Does anyone else want to address that one?

DR. ZOE HIGHEAGLE STRONG: I had a pretty serious situation. And so I won't get into too much of it. But I think in general, you just notice when men eyes look down or when they're talking to you and they're looking at the right place.

But I think a more serious situation, it was an actual person I was on a research team with. And I learned really quickly-- like, when you're traveling research conferences and you're presenting that you just-- boundaries of just not having dinner afterwards and those types of things. Because it just was-- it turned into, I think, inappropriate behavior on his part. The benefit was-- I mean, I was a long-term friend. And I think it was just the way he behaved generally wasn't like me personally, it was just the way he treated women.

And finally, I was able to-- I mean, after that trip, I was so uncomfortable that I called him on the phone, didn't talk to him in person, but just said how inappropriate it was. And that I talked to my husband and my husband would also like to talk to him. And my husband did. He got on the phone and he said, don't you ever treat my wife like that again. And then they were frie-- they knew each other, too. So I think it was-- and I normally wouldn't bring my husband into something, other than there was a history and relationship. And I think it was good for him to

have to face some-- basically apologized, not only to me, but to my husband. And so that was good.

It was uncomfortable, though. It was hard. And he did change after that and he did apologize. And he said, I don't think it's just you. I've had a history of treating women this way and I haven't even realized it, but there was several situations that brought it to light. Granted, he ended up getting fired from his job later on for that very reason. Yeah, but it was difficult, because I was in a lower position than him. And I was felt very depend-- I mean, it was a grant. We were on a grant. There was a lot going on. So it was kind of a scary situation for me. But dealing with it made me feel a lot better. And I was actually-- a lot of times, people do give a good response back. Not always, but--

ANNE COX: Yeah, thank you for that response, because I think we've had this growing recognition that we can now do something about it. I think that's where we are now. But we often don't know what exactly that thing is, whether it's in the workplace or conferences and those kinds of things. We are planning a sexual harassment event for February. So we won't get into too much of the nitty gritty here, because there's so much to dive into. But I think we're going to take it a step further so that there'll be more information we can provide to women at WSU. That's a great example. Another audience question. I mean, really, if you don't have one, I really want-- I've been dying to know what the bad advice was that Melanie got, so--

[LAUGHTER]

--I would throw that out there. And while we're waiting for the pause, think of your next question. Are you willing to share? Or anybody's bad advice. I mean, I thought that was a great thing to bring up. Or good advice you didn't take or anything-- or kind of those--

DR. MELANIE-ANGELA NEUILLY: Right. I mean, some of the bad advice I've gotten, I'm not going to share the details, because it would be identifying. But I think that bad advice would have been mitigated if I had had a broader mentoring network, including mentors that would have been outside of my department. And so I think, in that regard-- I mean, I guess I can say I was ill-advised on some of the expectations for my tenure, which is a really bad thing to give that advice on. I mean, I've gotten bad advice on shoes and things like that, but--

[LAUGHTER]

The good advice I didn't take is-- I mean, it basically always boils down to learn how to say no. And I still don't know.

ANNE COX: Does anyone else want to tackle that kind of theme about the bad advice or--

DR. NOEL SCHULZ: Well one of--

ANNE COX: --things not to do?

DR. NOEL SCHULZ: One of the things when I talk to people is as a scientist engineer, you want multiple data points and then you draw a line through-- you take the average. And so I said, don't just take my advice. I said, talk to multiple people and get multiple people's perspectives. Because we all have different personal situations, backgrounds, and all that.

And getting just one person's advice, they may not have the right advice or something like that. So I think that's a big thing is to get multiple pieces of advice and then decide where you draw the line related to your data. And one piece of advice, you can draw the line any way. And so that's why I think it's important to get multiple perspectives on things to help you see where you fit into that.

ANNE COX: Yeah, I like that. Both the mentee and the mentor can take responsibility for that as they seek out multiple perspectives, as well as doing that.

AUDIENCE: We have an online question. How do you deal with imposter syndrome?

DR. MELANIE-ANGELA NEUILLY: That's a good question. How do you?

[LAUGHTER]

DR. NOEL SCHULZ: Well, I can say that I still deal with imposter syndrome. So about five years ago-- five or six years ago, a colleague came to me and said, Noel, we want to nominate you for Fellow. I said, you know, I'm not ready yet. I don't have everything I need for this. And she goes, we can do it with or without you. It'll be easier for us if you help.

[LAUGHTER]

So I said, OK. So I gave her my materials. And I was fortunate. I became a fellow. And I'm just like, you know, I kind of do what I say, not what I do. So I think it's really important to have a support network, to have someone that you can talk to about these things related to that. The other thing is to not make rash decisions. That when something happens, don't make a decision that day. Sleep on it. Talk to a colleague, your support network. I'm fortunate that my partner is a lot of-- has been a lot of that over my career. So I think imposter syndrome, you just have to have a support structure. And that's the most important thing that you've got to do.

DR. MELANIE-ANGELA NEUILLY: I would say, don't spend your time comparing yourself to other people. Or if you're going to do that, compare yourself to people that are, like, less advanced than you, not more advanced than you. So I like to run. And for the longest time, I would only compare myself to my friends who run, like, sub 3 marathons and like-- and I finally realized that I probably shouldn't do that, because clearly, I'm never going to be that person nor do I actually want to be that person. So I mean, same thing for a lot of areas. I mean, I think it's helpful to have aspirations and to have role models, but we don't need to compare ourselves in that kind of way.

DR. COURTNEY MEEHAN: I can be your running comparison. I don't run.

[LAUGHTER]

DR. MELANIE-ANGELA NEUILLY: The only thing is I have to be faster than the slower person, so the zombies won't eat me. So Courtney, you'll get eaten.

ANNE COX: And the remaining panelist do not have imposter syndrome.

[LAUGHTER]

DR. MONICA JOHNSON: I would say that the act of preparing usually gives me more confidence. If I'm ever feeling under confident about something, as I start to sort of think, what is it I need, what don't I know yet, I actually-- it's a self-helping process.

DR. ZOE HIGHEAGLE STRONG: And I think for me, it's making sure I align my work to where I feel like my strengths are and where I can really contribute. Because it's true, when I was first hired here, I'm like, I'm in a discipline that my field of research and what I do is very different from the rest of my discipline. And so-- and they're all quantitative. I was the only qualitative researcher and indigenous researcher. So I'm just drastically different.

So I've really had to one, align my work goals and my work and my connections and relationships more along the lines of my field of research in my areas of expertise. And that's helped a lot. I'm a part of an indigenous center research network. And then you I go in and I do things a little bit more similar. So it's not about a comparison, but it's I belong there. You know, AERA is our educational research. It's 15,000, 16,000 people. Will I go to the pre-conference if it's with indigenous peoples?

So those different things helped me connect over time. I worked for Native American programs. There's hardly any native faculty or staff. But just that little bit of connection allows me to feel like OK, I do belong here. And that's something I'm committed to as we diversify our faculty is that, especially with native faculty, that we-- any native faculty comes in that we try to provide a support network, because you do need those connections. Whatever field or person-- wherever you come, if you don't belong-- the reality is sometimes we don't belong in a certain area. But there's places that we do belong. And so those help strengthen us, so that then when we venture out, we feel like we have a connection.

DR. NOEL SCHULZ: Yeah, and I'll add-- so you brought it up is like, AFW is a great example of finding a place to belong. And organizations like that over my career have helped with my imposter syndrome, because I feel I belong.

ANNE COX: Are there any other audience questions? Just waiting for dinner, dinner conversation. OK, great.

KATHLEEN RODGERS: So my question has to do with really what, Melanie, you had sort of alluded to. This idea that one of the ways to move up here and maybe at other universities is that people get-- women get tapped before they become full. So what advice-- now that you're here, what advice would you give to faculty and women here who may be tapped? Because there are a lot of leaders here that are right for that.

DR. MONICA JOHNSON: I would say one really critical thing is ask for what you need. There are times when it-- after talking with everybody, getting the ideas, and weighing it, the answer might be no, I'm not going to do this. But when it is I need to do this, or I want to do this, I would think very carefully about what it is I need to make that work, including protected time or resources or a number of things that could happen or political cover or whatever it is that you will then have to navigate because you're at a certain career stage in the promotion rank. I'd give some thought to that and ask for it. I think oftentimes in the process of thinking that through, we strategize. But also we might be better equipped on the other side to be successful, while trying to do more than one thing.

DR. NOEL SCHULZ: I think it was great advice to what resources do you need. One of the things I talk about with when someone of power comes to you and asks you to do something, like your department head or you're an tenured faculty member, is saying, OK, this is what I have on my plate, which thing do you think is less important that I should do this activity instead of that activity? And have them help you make that decision, but help make sure they're giving-- taking something off your plate if they're going to put something on your plate I think is a very important thing. And when it's your department head asking you to be on a committee, well, if this is so important to you, then what are you going to take away from me?

And I think it kind of puts it back in that you're not making that decision, that that person that's in power has to make that decision. And they may say, well, I really need you on that other committee. And you're just like, well, I just don't think I can do that right now given that. I was an associate professor and doing some administrative activities. And actually, in my case, I got kicked out of the dean's office, because my husband became dean and the provost wouldn't let me work in the dean's office. Which I was really mad at the time, because I was the first Schulz in the dean's office, but anyway.

[LAUGHTER]

But when I went back, I ended up getting my research to a point and getting full professor, which has given me some other opportunities. So in my case, I got kicked out of it, so I can't say that I was prepared and made the decision myself. I do think it's very important for women to get-go towards a full professor. Some of our new advance activities will be now-- first, it was getting women into the profession and getting us tenure. But now we do have that women get asked to be in that position.

The one thing I would suggest is possibly looking at a finite time and agreeing with the leader that I will do this for three years, but really I'm committed to get full professor. And it's in my

best interest and it's in your best interest for that. That's hard, because I tend to like the administrative activities more than I did the research activities. But in the long run, I'm glad I did that. I'm not saying I was always happy about it, but I do think that's something-- and it's a very good point as we see that in making sure you have the resources, you have the opportunity.

And making sure, whether it's maybe a postdoc or a graduate student or helping pay an assistant, what are those resources that you need to get that step? And even if you've already committed, if you're going to stay in that position, I think you can talk to your boss and say, hey, I really need this for me. I need this for the other women in our department and college, when you're in college and university positions, and how are you going to help me do this. And I think that's what you've got to do is ask for those resources.

ANNE COX: I think that's a perfect place to bring this part of the program to a conclusion. And I just I learned so much from all of you, so this is part of answering the questions as our panel has been wonderfully informative. We're looking forward to segueing into dinner. But before we do that, I just want to say a few words about AFW, because almost everything they said are things that you really can get from AFW.

And it's been so invaluable to me, too. A, we're forming relationships. We're forming community, which Zoe talked so much about. You're finding mentors. You're finding mentees. You're getting connections to places all over campus and learning how the university works. I feel like there was one other I was going to say. But all of it and just meeting people period and hearing from wonderful leaders at our university like we had here today. So I encourage you to keep doing that. And thank you for being here.

So if you RSVP'd for dinner, I hope many of you are staying to interact more with our panelists over dinner. The dinner is ready. And you can transition through that doorway to get something to eat. We'll maybe form some little seating areas with these chairs, as well as use those tables. And there's a bathroom across the breezeway here. So just right across and turn left, there is a bathroom there, if you need that. Is that everything?

ANA MARÍA RODRÍGUEZ-VIVALDI: Yes, I think so.

ANNE COX: Are we good to global? Thank you everybody else who tuned in on global and for your question. And, yeah, we'll sign off.