BEHIND EVERY GOOD LEADER: HOW HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS DISCLOSE INFORMATION ABOUT THE PRESIDENTIAL SPOUSE

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ABSTRACT

Aim/Purpose	Using the lens of critical theory, the authors of this study analyzed if institutions of varying institutional type acknowledged the role of the presidents' spouses in presidential biographies and press releases. The purpose of this investigation was to establish to what extent institutions are transparent about the involvement of the presidential spouse.
Background	Spouses of high profile leaders, including a university president's spouse, are often expected to fill time-consuming roles for their spouses' positions. Past research has found that spouses vary widely in their feelings towards this informal, yet oft-expected, role. While some thrive in the role, others feel taken for granted performing free work with little recognition or personal benefit.
Methodology	Using a random stratified sample of current presidents at four types of institutions, a content analysis was performed on 200 presidential biographies and corresponding press releases announcing new presidents. Nominal data was collected and compared to existing data to illustrate in what manner and in what frequency institutions disclosed information about presidents' spouses.
Contribution	While the aspects of the spouse's role at a university have been researched from the spouse's perspective and the president's perspective, the authors researched the role from an organizational perspective. Identifying how the spouse was discussed in organizational mediums and comparing to existing data established a baseline for understanding to what extent institutions are transparent about spousal contributions.

Findings	The results of the content analysis indicate that organizational mediums mention spouses and their work at a low rate. There was also a difference between institutional types in how spouses are discussed, with two-year institutions discussing spouses the least. Additionally, spouses' off-campus contributions were more likely to be mentioned than their on-campus contributions.
Recommendations for Practitioners	The findings give reason for practitioners to consider the institution's transparency of a spouse's work, and to begin considering this issue during the hiring stage. Hiring committees may need to investigate their institutional culture and what changes may be realistically implemented to create a more egalitarian atmosphere for the president's spouse.
Recommendations for Researchers	Realizing that there is a discrepancy between a spouse's involvement on campus and disclosure of that involvement to campus constituents, researchers may investigate best practices in how spouses are involved on campus and in the community and how they are recognized for that work. Researchers should also be considerate of how these results may differ by institutional type and gender of the spouse.
Impact on Society	Because high profile leaders and their spouses are perceived to lead a life of privilege, the possibility of negative power dynamics within the arrangement is often overlooked. However, highly visible couples should be empowered to set an equitable standard, and this research illuminates one area in which improvement may be considered.
Future Research	Future inquiry could seek a more intentional quantitative and qualitative understanding as to how the dynamics of a spouse's involvement, representation, expectations, and satisfaction differ by institutions type. Future inquiry could also analyze how spouses' experiences and expectations in their formal and informal roles differ by gender.
Keywords	college president, presidential spouse, content analysis, organizational communication, critical theory

INTRODUCTION

In 2013, the University of Alabama prematurely lost its president, who resigned due to the high demands of the position—not on him, however, but on his wife (Associated Press, 2013). The press released explained that the University of Alabama had "a mistaken expectation" of the duties his wife, who was chronically ill, would be able to perform (para. 2), and as such, the president was stepping away to protect her health. Public response to the resignation didn't find fault in the expectation placed on the president's wife. In fact, instead of questioning why the wife had been expected to fill a role for her husband's job in the first place, a prominent Alabama press site bemoaned that many at the university "seemed not to have fully understood the serious limitations on [her] in carrying out the social duties of being the spouse of the UA president" (Dean, 2013, para. 8). Thus, the role wasn't the problem; it was the lack of foresight in her ability to fill it.

While it may seem odd that the University of Alabama placed such expectations on the president's wife, it is actually common for universities to do so, with well over half of university presidents reporting that their spouses have a role on campus (Gagliardi, Espinosa, Turk, & Taylor, 2017). This expectation is not unique to university presidential spouses, as spouses of high profile leaders such as ministers (Benoit, 2010), politicians (Kaufman, 2008), and corporate executives (Kaufman, 2008) are put in much the same position. While these roles are often referred to as voluntary, the repercussions for not complying often send a stronger message of it being required (Reid, Cole, & Kern, 2011; Thompson, 2008; Vargas, 2014).

To formally recognize these burdens placed on the role of the spouse of the president, verbiage such as "presidential team" (Vaughan et al., 1987, p. 2), "co-career" (Watson & Eksterowicz, 2003, p. 9) or "tandem careers" (Caroli, 2003, p. 370) has been used to refer to the president and his/her spouse. This language has been championed despite the typical situation being that only one person is hired, only one person is paid, and only one person is able to list the position on their resume (Williams, 2013). As such, various influential voices in higher education have advocated that the role be progressed by giving the spouse a title, a contract, and/or compensation for the work they provide (Cotton, 2014; Horner & Horner, 2013; Thompson, 2008). On the other hand, others believe that true progress will only occur when institutions drop expectations on spouses completely (Williams, 2013), claiming that any role a spouse fills on campus, whether volunteered or paid, has unethical underpinnings, troublesome legal implications, and negative consequences for the both the institution and the presidential couple.

Unfortunately, these efforts for progressing the role of the spouse are not new. Forty years ago, Kemeny (1979) and Corbally (1977) took a similarly critical eye to the expectation of unpaid work from university presidents' spouses. They hypothesized that change was on the horizon that would result in either paying spouses for their work or with the disappearance of the role altogether. Looking at the scene today, however, it's clear that most spouses are still expected to fill some type of role (Reid et al., 2011, Thompson, 2008) with no pay (Gagliardi et al., 2017). It would seem 40 years has brought little progress.

Due to this slow progress in the role of university spouses—whether it is through greater recognition or total detachment—it is important to establish if and in what ways the spouse is already recognized or discussed as a partner to the president. Advocates of progressing the role of spouse have argued for universities to increase transparency about the spouse's role on campus (Horner & Horner, 2013), and Cotton (2014) cited Purdue University as such an example for dedicating space on their website to list the biography and current duties of the president's spouse. To establish the commonness of such transparency, this study analyzed how the spouse is presented publically to a university community through university mediums. This was accomplished by analyzing press releases and president's biographies from a stratified random sample of 200 higher education institutions, which were coded for how often and in what ways the spouses were referenced. These results were then compared to existing data on spousal contributions. We concluded by drawing on these descriptive statistics to illustrate how the spouse was—or was not—presented and how the type of institution and gender of the spouse should be a consideration in future research.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

While the research on spouses of university presidents has spanned the course of decades, it still remains relatively scant. Memoirs and thought pieces have informed our understanding of the experience as much, if not more, than academic pieces. However, this section will review the history of research we do have by giving an overview of the studies that have detailed the roles and duties of the spouses and the discontent spouses often times feel, and will conclude with how this study will contribute to the body of that research.

ROLES AND DUTIES OF THE SPOUSE

Many of the statistics we have today on presidential spouses comes from The American Council on Education (ACE), which surveys university presidents every 3-5 years. On the most recent iteration of the report (Gagliardi et al., 2017), 85.2% of presidents indicated they are married/have a domestic partner and 62% of presidents report that their spouses/partners have roles on their respective campuses. The survey further indicated that 50% of presidents have a spouse/partner doing their role voluntarily, with only 12% listing their spouse as a paid employee.

The time-consuming nature of this paid or volunteered work is evident. Horner & Horner (2013) reported that 67% of presidential spouses spend more than 25% of their time on university affairs, while Reid et al. (2011) had some spouses reporting up to 70% of their time. These duties include hosting, fundraising, representing the president in meetings, maintaining the presidential residence, serving on community boards, and many other roles varying by institution (Thompson, 2008). In cases where a spouse is not readily available to volunteer time to campus needs, paid staff can serve in these functions (Thompson, 2008), though this option is typically more readily available for male spouses (Vargas, 2014).

Research has found that in addition to the tangible duties of a spouse, there is also the symbolic duty of serving as an ambassador and representative of the university, or what some researchers have referred to as becoming a *living logo* of one's institution (Kemeny, 1979; Thompson, 2008). Spouses duties of being a living logo include limiting expression of personal opinions that could reflect poorly on their spouse or institution (Benoit, 2010; Berry 1985), being cautious in forming close relationships to safeguard sensitive information or protect themselves from exploitation (Benoit, 2010; Reid et al., 2011), adjusting their mannerisms in every day routines in order to best represent the university (Oden, 2004), and maintaining their home in such a way that it can adequately serve as a symbol of the presidency and a venue for frequent university events and functions (Thompson, 2008). Essentially, the duties of the spouse have the potential to become all-encompassing—permeating nearly every aspect of one's life.

SPOUSAL DISCONTENT

The reality that spouses were unsatisfied in these all-encompassing roles was made readily known in the 70's, with the research of Margaret Corbally (1977)—herself a presidential spouse. Corbally took a qualitative approach to record the experiences of spouses and the dissatisfaction they often felt in their demanding and underappreciated roles. Roberta Ostar (1983, 1991) continued the research, finding quantitative survey data to support many of the issues Corbally's research outlined. Meanwhile, Clodius & Magrath (1984) asserted that the landscape of presidential spouses was beginning to change--much due to the growing number of female presidents and of spouses, male and female, who had careers of their own and could not be solely committed to the university—and likewise concluded that expectations for spouses would also change.

Research that has followed, however, has not found that to be the case. Smith (1994, 2001) researched male spouses at community colleges using the same survey questions Vaughan (1986) used in his research on female spouses, intending to discover if the "new" male spouse differed from the female spouse. Smith found, however, that while male spouses were better able to keep their own career, they experienced many of the dynamics female spouses reported in Vaughan's study— especially of unpaid or confusing expectations put on them by the board. Additionally, Thompson (2008) and Reid et al. (2011) both took a mixed-methods approach to understand the nuances of the role for the modern spouse. While Thompson focused on duties of the role—which still existed in abundance—in addition to pros and cons the spouses (both male and female) experienced, Reid et al. (2011) researched from a feminist perspective, observing that feminist research "has virtually ignored women who are viewed as privileged or powerful" (p. 548). Reid et al. sought to rectify this by surveying and interviewing wives of 4-year university presidents on their perspectives of the requirements placed on modern female spouses. Both Thompson (2008) and Reid et al. (2011) found that spouses varied widely in their feelings towards their role—with Reid et al. especially detailing how some thrived and enjoyed their sphere of influence while others outright resented it. Likewise, Vargas (2014) found that male and female spouses were both frustrated with unclear or unwarranted expectations from the board. Some spouses even recommended not trying to balance a career with the role of presidential spouse since it caused so much stress and a full time commitment to the university ended up happening anyway. One of Vargas's conclusions was that while modern spouses may resist

the role that is pushed upon them, they are likely to conform to it as time passes. Thus, the supposedly changing landscape of the role has in reality stayed relatively the same.

Researchers have tried to address what could solve this contentious dynamic between the spouse and the institution. The solutions of paying the spouse or releasing them from all expectations have already been discussed in this paper, but there are a multitude of other solutions that have been proposed. In the past, many spouses reported that simply being recognized and appreciated for their work would be payment enough (Corbally, 1977; Ostar, 1991). In Thompson's more recent 2008 survey, however, only 3% indicated they were seeking greater recognition and appreciation, while higher percentages reported wanting remuneration, retirement benefits, or paid staff to help them in their duties. As mentioned previously, advocates of progressing the role of spouse have also argued for universities to increase transparency about the spouse's role on campus (Horner & Horner, 2013), citing attribution of the spouse on the university website alongside the presidential biography as a way to accomplish this (Cotton, 2014). Williams encouraged the board to be more transparent and proactive in establishing the role during the interview process (2013), where spouses are often participants and have the greatest opportunity to meet the board and establish expectations.

With these two recommendations in mind, this paper seeks to understand to what extent that transparency has been met. While the spouses' perspectives of their dissatisfaction have been researched (Reid et al., 2011; Thompson, 2008), presidents' perspectives of how their spouses/partners contribute have been surveyed (Gagliardi et al., 2017), and expert opinions have weighed in for increased transparency (Cotton, 2014; Horner & Horner, 2013; Williams, 2013), the organizational perspective has not been established. Specifically, are organizations heeding the call to increase transparency of the role of the spouse? Do presidential biographies disclose the role of the spouse, and do press releases announcing a new president reveal that the role of the spouse was established prior to hiring? Additionally, since previous work has focused either on two-year colleges (Smith 1994, 2001; Vaughan, 1986), four-year colleges (Reid et al., 2011; Vargas, 2014) or an unspecified institution type (Thompson, 2008), this paper will include samples from four institutional types (two-year, four-year, masters, and doctoral) to establish a more broad context.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research is informed by critical theory in organizational communication, which "focuses attention on studies of power and abuses of power through communication and organization" (Shockley-Zalabak, 2006, p. 54). Deetz (2001) stated, "The central goal of critical theory in organizational communication studies has been to create a society and workplaces…where all members can contribute equally to produce systems that meet human needs and lead to progressive development of all" (p. 26). Because research has shown that spousal roles are largely determined by organizational factors (i.e., pressure from the board, tradition, the precedent of previous spouses) rather than spouses themselves (Thompson, 2008), and that those organizational factors are very difficult to circumvent (Vargas, 2014), there is an imbalance of power while establishing the spouse's role that must be addressed. The aim of this research is to illuminate how the spouse's role is recognized, which may lead to progression within the organizations shaping that role.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To analyze if and how universities of four institutional types (two-year, four-year, masters, and doctoral) discuss the president's spouse, we performed a content analysis of presidential biographies posted on university websites and press releases announcing a new president. The purpose of this analysis was to assess if and how key university outlets, categorized by type, discussed the spouses of university presidents. Specifically, this study was guided by the following three research questions:

1. What information is provided from each institutional type about presidential spouses in presidential biographies posted on institutional websites?

2. What information is provided from each institutional type about presidential spouses in press releases announcing a new president?
3. How does the information provided about spouses in biographies and press releases for each intuitional types compare to the information provided in the American Council on Education's (ACE) 2017 iteration of the American College President survey?

DATA AND METHODS

This section will outline how the variables in each question were chosen, how data was deemed appropriate to analyze those variables, how the data was collected and the method through which data was then analyzed, and how intercoder reliability was established.

DATA

In order to represent the four aforementioned institutional types in the sample for this study, intuitions were chosen through a random stratified sample. Utilizing the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS), we divided all institutions into four categories by Carnegie classification (2-year, 4-year, master's, and doctoral) and randomly selected 50 institutions from each of the four types, totaling 200 intuitions. The random sample from each type was achieved using a random number generator, which gave each institution on the respective lists an equal chance of being selected (Riff, Lacy, & Fico, 2014). For-profit institutions were removed from the sampling frame before drawing a sample. Following the pilot test, it became clear that for-profit institutions do not typically follow traditional patterns of higher education intuitions (i.e., do not introduce their leadership to students or community through a biography/welcome message or a press release), and we came across no research to suggest that spouses fill roles at these institutions. Thus they were removed from the final sampling frame. The resulting sample of 200 served as the sample for which presidential biographies and press releases would be sought out.

To address RQ1, biographies were chosen for analysis because it is the main medium for introducing the president to his/her inquiring constituents. Additionally, universities have been specifically encouraged to use the presidential biography as a way to formally recognize the contributions and role of the spouse (Cotton, 2014). After selecting the sample, each president's biography was collected from the Office of the President Webpage on each institution's website. In cases where a biography was not found, the president's welcome message to the students was used. The welcome message was deemed an adequate replacement as it became the only published message on the website introducing the president to the campus. All 200 biographies/welcome messages were found.

To address RQ 2, press releases announcing the appointment of the same 200 presidents outlined in RQ1 were searched out. Press releases were chosen for analysis because this is the first opportunity a university has to introduce the president to his/her constituents, and would be the first opportunity to disclose what role, if any, had been established for the spouse in the hiring process, as has been encouraged by Williams (2013). Press releases were found by using the Google search engine. Finding an institution's own press release was preferable for this study, but in cases where it could not be found a release found in a local, state, or online news outlet (in that preferred order) was used with the assumption that they built off the information originally provided by the university press release. If a press release could not be found, it was noted in the coding of the institution (see the Appendix, variable H). In total, 165 press releases were found. The 35 not found were largely due to the president being in office for over 10 years, with some spanning over 20 years in office, making the press release not readily available online.

To address RQ 3, the American Council on Education (ACE) 2017 iteration of the American College Presidents' Survey (Gagliardi et al., 2017) was utilized as a measure of comparison. The survey is "the most comprehensive examination of presidents from across the spectrum of American Higher Education" (Gagliardi et al., 2017, p. viii), and includes questions about the involvement of their

spouses on their respective campuses. Because there was no convenient way to limit our sample to institutions that have married presidents or to limit the sample to institutions where spouses are involved, the ACE survey acts as a guide for what percentage of presidents would be expected to be married and have involved spouses in a random sample, which this study had. Thus the ACE survey was used in RQ 3 as a means to establish how the disclosures of spouses and their work in this analysis compared to what we know from the survey.

METHOD

A descriptive analysis utilizing a quantitative content analysis approach was conducted in order to methodically answer RQ 1 and 2. Riff et al. (2014) deemed content analysis appropriate when there will be a "systematic assignment of communication content to categories according to rules," (p. 3) which was the case as we analyzed the biographies and press releases. After collecting the biographies and press releases, references to presidents' spouses were coded into categories by two coders. These categories included No Reference (e.g., the spouse was mentioned in no way), Indirect Reference (e.g., referencing "marriage" or "spouse" without giving the spouse's name), or Direct Reference (e.g., providing the name of his or her spouse). When a spouse was indirectly or directly mentioned, additional information given about spouses was then coded (see the Appendix). This included whether a picture of the spouse was present (either with or without the president), if the spouse had a job on or off campus (i.e., job outside of the role of spouse, previous or current), and/or a role on campus (i.e., duties the spouse fills on campus, committees he/she serves on, issues he/she is highlighting, etc.), and whether it disclosed the spouse's educational background (i.e., references made to educational history, including if alma mater is mentioned with or without specifying degree, or if spouse is referred to as "Dr.") and educational level (i.e., specific degrees earned listed, title of "Dr.," or attribution such as Ph.D., Ed.D., J.D., D.D.S, M.D., etc. listed after name). Press releases and biographies were coded on separate coding sheets; however, they used the same codebook and codes, with the exception that biographies were additionally coded for whether the spouse was given their own biographical page on the university website. Descriptive statistics were then calculated to indicate what percentage of biographies and press releases referenced the spouse, and what percentages disclosed extended information about the spouse.

As mentioned previously, the ACE survey was used for RQ 3 as a means to establish how the disclosures of spouses and their work in this analysis compared to what we know from the survey. Comparable questions from the ACE survey (which distinguishes between institution types) were identified, and the applicable percentages were charted alongside the percentages that were found in RQ 1 and 2. These comparisons then gave insight into what information was disclosed about spouses in press releases and biographies versus what should have been expected to be found in a random sample—as informed by the ACE survey—if transparency had been 100%.

INTERCODER RELIABILITY

Prior to analyzing the 200 biographies and 200 press releases, a pilot test was conducted on a small sample of 11 institutions within one state (which included all 4 types of institutions) to refine the codebook and test preliminary intercoder reliability. Biographies and associated press releases for all 11 presidents were collected and then coded separately by the authors according to the codebook (see the Appendix). Both coders had quantitative experience in researching leadership in higher education, and worked together prior to the pilot test to developed operational definitions for each variable. After refining the codebook and training on coding procedures, the pilot study resulted in relatively high agreement on all variables, and the codebook and procedures were deemed sufficient for use in the study. Once coding in the study began, 10% of each institutional category (two-year, four-year, masters, and doctorate) was randomly selected from the sample for a second reliability test. This resulted in 20 institutions (5 from each category) being coded for both their press releases and presidents' biographies, for a total of 40 items. Both coders again worked separately to analyze all 40 piec-

es of data according the codebook and then tested their separate coding sheets for intercoder relia-bility. Using Krippendorff's alpha to calculate reliability coefficients (Hayes, & Krippendorff, 2007), the testing again rendered relatively high agreement on all variables (see Table 1), and the coding of material continued.

Table 1. Reliability Test Coefficients

	Percent Agreement	**Krippendorff's Alpha**
References to Spouse	97.5	0.943
Picture of Spouse	97.5	0.944
Biographical Information	95	0.893
Role Disclosed	100	1
Job Disclosed	95	0.896
Education	97.5	0.947
Education Level	97.5	0.899

RESULTS

The research questions guide the reporting of the results in this section. First, the information dis-closed about spouses in president's biographies posted on institution websites will be outlined. Sec-ond, the information disclosed in press releases announcing a new president will be detailed. And third, the results of the ACE study will be compared with the findings in this study.

RQ 1: What information is provided from each institutional type about presidential spouses in presidential biographies posted on institutional websites?

The frequency of spousal references in presidential biographies was coded for the 50 institutions in each of the 4 institution types (See Table 2.) The biography was coded as either having an indirect reference (e.g., mention "marriage" or "spouse" without giving the partner/spouse's name), a direct reference (i.e., name of spouse is given), or no reference at all. Table 2 reports these results.

For two-year colleges, no reference to a spouse was by far the majority (84%). Four-year institutions were equally matched in direct references and no references. Masters and Doctoral institutions had slightly higher percentages of direct references (56% for each) than of no reference (44% and 42% respectively). For all institutions types, having only an indirect reference was very uncommon.

Table 2. Frequency of Spousal References in Biographies

Reference to Spouse:	Two-year (n=50)	Four-year (n=50)	Masters (n=50)	Doctoral (n=50)
Indirect Reference (e.g., mention "spouse" or "marriage" without name)	4%	4%	0%	2%
Direct Reference (i.e., name listed)	12%	48%	56%	56%
No Reference	84%	48%	44%	42%

When a biography did reference a spouse, either directly or indirectly, it was further coded for infor-mation provided about the spouse (i.e., spouse's job on/off campus, role on campus, education background/level, picture of spouse, link to spouse's own biography) (see Table 3). Community col-leges provided no further detail about the spouse after a direct or indirect reference. Four-year, mas-ters, and doctoral institutions each provided additional information in various variables, with the most frequent for each institution being what the spouses job was off-campus.

Table 3. Frequencies of Additional Information Provided about Spouses in Biographies

Information Provided about Spouse:	Two-year *(n=8)*	Four-year *(n=26)*	Masters *(n=28)*	Doctoral *(n=29)*
Job on campus:	0%	11.54%	3.57%	17.24%
Job off campus:	0%	34.62%	25%	27.59%
Role on campus:	0%	11.54%	0%	13.79%
Education:	0%	3.85%	21.43%	20.69%
Picture:	0%	11.54%	7.14%	10.35%
Link to spouse's own biography	0%	3.85%	7.14%	17.24%

It should be noted that while 17% of doctoral institutions that referenced the spouse went on to provide a link to the spouse's own biography on the institution's website, there were two additional doctoral institutions which had links to the spouse's own biography on the menu of the office of the president, but the spouse was not mentioned in the president's biography. Thus out of the 50 doctoral universities analyzed, there were 14% that included links to the spouse's own webpage. In other words, of the 21 that didn't mention the spouse, almost 10% included a link for the spouse. Links for spouses not mentioned in the president's biography only occurred in the sample of doctoral institutions. None of the personal biographies were coded for information about the spouse, but they likely provided most, if not all, of the information that was being coded in the president's biography.

While disclosing a spouse's education was not present except one instance for the two and four-year institution sample, masters and doctoral institutions reported the level of education about 1/5 (20%) of the time the spouse was mentioned. In every instance the education level was mentioned (including the one time for 4 year institutions), the spouse had a doctoral level education (See Table 4.) This was typically disclosed by referring to the spouse as "Dr." preceding his or her name. This is an interesting finding, as one would assume most of these spouses have some level of education, yet it was only referenced when it was doctoral level. This could be seen as an indicator of educational elitism—where other levels of education are not worth mentioning. Another explanation, however, is that there is not a convenient prefix such as "Dr." that indicates a bachelor or master's level education.

Table 4. Frequency of Education Level Disclosed in Biographies

Education Level:	Two-year *(n=0)*	Four-year *(n=1)*	Masters *(n=6)*	Doctoral *(n=6)*
Unclear/not disclosed:	--	0%	0%	0%
High School or less:	--	0%	0%	0%
Associates/Vocational:	--	0%	0%	0%
Bachelors:	--	0%	0%	0%
Masters:	--	0%	0%	0%
Doctorate:	--	100%	100%	100%

Thus to answer RQ 1, while biographies were most likely to directly reference a spouse (with the exception of those from two-year institutions, and four year institutions being equally likely to directly reference a spouse or make no reference), very little additional information was disclosed, especially about the role a spouse would play on campus, unless a spouse was provided with his/her own biography, which was most common for doctoral institutions (14% overall). While four year and doctoral institutions were most likely to refer to the role of the spouse on campus, it was much more common for all four institution types to disclose a spouse's role off campus. This detail will be highlighted further in the discussion section.

RQ 2: What information is provided from each institutional type about presidential spouses in press releases announcing a new president?

The frequencies and types of spousal references in press release announcing the institution's current president were coded (See Table 5). For two-year colleges, similar to the biographies, it was by far most common to have no reference to a spouse (81.08%). Four-year institutions were again equally likely to directly mention the spouse or have no reference to the spouse, both at 48.78%. And unlike in the biographies for masters and doctoral institutions, where a direct reference was most frequent, the highest frequency for both was the same as two-year institutions, to have no reference to a spouse at all (53.55% for masters, 60.87% for doctoral institutions). Again, as was seen in biographies, it was uncommon for all four institution types to only indirectly reference the spouse.

For the press releases that did directly or indirectly reference a spouse, additional information provided about the spouse was coded (See Table 6). Similar to the biographies, reporting the spouse's job off-campus was the variable most likely to be disclosed. Additionally, disclosing the spouse's role on campus was nearly non-existent, with only one master's institution doing so (4.76% of the master's sample). This indicates a possible lack of transparency and will be revisited in the discussion.

Table 5. Frequency of Spousal References in Press Releases

Reference to spouse:	Two-year *(n=37)*	Four-year *(n=41)*	Masters *(n=41)*	Doctoral *(n=46)*
Indirect Reference (e.g., mention "family" or "marriage" without name)	1.49%	4.88%	2.44%	4.35%
Direct Reference (i.e., name listed)	23.43%	48.78%	43.9%	34.78%
No Reference	81.08%	48.78%	53.66%	60.87%

Table 6: Additional information provided about spouses in press releases

Information Provided about Spouse:	Two-year *(n=7)*	Four-year *(n=21)*	Masters *(n=19)*	Doctoral *(n=18)*
Job on campus:	0%	4.76%	10.53%	11.11%
Job off Campus:	42.86%	38.10%	15.79%	27.78%
Role:	0%	4.76%	0%	0%
Education:	14.29%	4.76%	10.53%	22.22%
Picture:	14.29%	9.52%	5.26%	16.67%

While the education of spouses was not commonly disclosed in the press releases (8 in total), when it was it was disclosed with greater variety than it was in the biographies (See Table 7.) Five of the eight were graduate level degrees, while the other three were "unclear/not disclosed" (i.e., mentioning the spouse attended a certain institution without disclosing whether he or she had graduated or at what level).

In conclusion, press releases were most likely to make no reference at all to a spouse, in contrast to biographies. In line with the biographies, however, is that those referencing a spouse were very unlikely to disclose the role the spouse played on campus, and were more likely to report whether the spouse had a job off campus.

Table 7. Education level disclosed in press releases

Education Level:	Two-year *(n=1)*	Four-year *(n=1)*	Masters *(n=2)*	Doctoral *(n=4)*
Unclear/not disclosed:	0%	0%	50%	75%
High School or less:	0%	0%	0%	0%
Associates/Vocational:	0%	0%	0%	0%
Bachelors:	0%	0%	0%	0%
Masters:	100%	100%	0%	0%
Doctorate:	0%	0%	50%	25%

RQ 3: *How does the information provided about spouses in biographies and press releases for each institution type compare to the information provided in the American Council on Education's (ACE) 2017 iteration of the American College President Survey?*

While not all variables coded in this study could be directly related to variables surveyed in the ACE survey, there are some key variables that give appropriate comparisons and lend insight for RQ 3. First, a note is needed about the how percentages are reported differently in relation to this question than the previous two questions. The ACE study reports the percentages of presidents who disclose information about their spouse/partner in terms of all surveyed presidents, married and unmarried, unlike the above statistics in RQ 1 and 2, which reported percentages in proportion to only those who had already mentioned they were married. In order to appropriately compare our results to the ACE data, the percentages for these tables were adapted to include all institutions in the sample, not just the ones who mentioned they had a spouse.

Table 8 shows the comparison of how many surveyed presidents for the ACE survey indicated they were married versus how many biographies and press releases indicated that a president was married. As can be seen, for each institutional type the number of those who indicate they are married on the survey far exceeds the percentage of biographies and press releases that disclosed that the president was married. Within all four institution types, more than 80% of presidents indicate they are married on the ACE survey, while biographies disclosed that 52-58% are married (with the exception of two-year institutions where the disclosure was much lower at 16%). Press releases were overall lower in disclosure of spouses, reporting anywhere from 24% (two-year institutions) to 53% (four-year colleges).

Table 8. Frequency of Marriage Indicated in ACE Survey, Biography, and Press Release

Married/Domestic Partner:	Two-years	Four-years	Masters	Doctoral
ACE Survey	85.5%	88.8%	86.6%	87.5%
Biography	16%	52%	56%	58%
Press Release	24.9%	53.7%	46.3%	34.8%

Table 9 shows how many presidents indicated on the ACE survey that their spouse was employed on campus in comparison to those who indicated employment in the press releases and biographies. The ACE data reported higher frequencies of institutions having a spouse employed on the campus than the biography and press releases disclosed, again pointing to an issue of transparency, which will be explored in the discussion section. It's also important to point out that two-year colleges were unique in reporting 0% in both biographies and press releases despite the ACE data suggesting 5.4% are employed on campus.

Table 9. Frequency of Indicating Spouse Employed on Campus in ACE Survey, Biography, and Press Release

Employed on Campus:	Two-years	Four-years	Masters	Doctoral
ACE Survey	5.4%	16.8%	11.4%	14.2%
Biography	0%	6%	2%	10%
Press Release	0%	2.44%	4.88%	4.35%

Table 10 shows the comparison of the percentage of presidents who indicated their spouse was employed off campus on the ACE survey in comparison to press releases and biographies that indicated the same. While the ACE survey still had a higher frequency of indicating off-campus employment, the biographies and press releases had higher frequencies of reporting it as well (with the exception of two-year's biographies, again at 0%).

Table 10. Job off Campus

Employed Off Campus:	Two-years	Four-years	Masters	Doctoral
ACE Survey	48.6%	28.1%	24.5%	15.4%
Biography	0%	18%	14%	16%
Press Release	8.11%	19.51%	7.32%	10.87%

Table 11 shows the percentage of presidents who indicated their spouse/partner was an "unpaid participant on campus" (Gagliardi et al., 2017, p. 85). This was compared to how many biographies and press releases indicated that the spouse had any role on campus—which included listing specific duties (i.e., choir director) or vague duties (i.e., "First Lady" or "partner to the president.") There was a big discrepancy in these numbers, with the majority, or near majority, of presidents indicating that their spouse participated on campus in the ACE survey (ranging from 40.3%-66.3%). However there was little to no mention of such participation in the biographies and press releases, with two-year and masters institutions reporting it 0% of the time in both biographies and press releases, and doctoral institutions mentioning it 0% of the time in press releases. This wide discrepancy in reporting again points to issues of transparency and recognition of the spouse, which will be discussed further in the next section. It's also interesting to point out that doctoral institutions were most likely to recognize the spouses with their own biographical page on the website (see Table 3), the role was not mentioned at all in press releases. This could indicate transparency issues, or that the strong involvement of the spouse was not established until after the president was hired.

Table 11. Volunteer/Have a Role on Campus

Volunteer/Have a Role on Campus:	Two-years	Four-years	Masters	Doctoral
ACE Survey	40.3%	52.5%	61.4%	66.3%
Biography	0%	6%	0%	8%
Press Release	0%	2.44%	0%	0%

The lack of reporting about a spouse's role in press releases is especially interesting when compared with Table 12, which shows the percentage of presidents who indicated that their spouses' roles were discussed in the interview process. The majority of presidents (53.6%-57.6%), or near majority in the case of two-year institutions (42.6%), indicated that the spouse's role was disclosed during the interview process. When compared with the press release numbers in Table 11, which show little to no

disclosure of a spouse's role, one could conclude that the role was known at the time of the press release but was not made public knowledge.

Table 12. Frequency of Spousal Role Disclosed in Interview Process in ACE Survey

	Two-years	Four-years	Masters	Doctoral
Spouse Role Disclosed In Search Process, ACE Survey	42.6%	53.6%	54.3%	57.6%

To summarize the findings of RQ 3, the ACE data gives illuminating insights when compared to the content analysis results, illustrating that biographies and press releases do not serve as accurate ways to judge whether or to what extent a president's spouse is involved on campus. The biographies and press releases that do recognize the role of the spouse are the exception.

DISCUSSION

Due to the nature of the spousal role, and what we know about it from past research, there are four discussion points that may be helpful to draw out from this research: 1) How the results inform differing positions for progressing the role of a president's spouses, 2) the issue of transparency concerning how spouses are involved on campus, 3) the possible implications for varying frequencies by institution type, and 4) the possible implications for the inclusion of separate biographies and webpages for spouses.

PROGRESSING THE ROLE OF PRESIDENT'S SPOUSE

This study was framed through the lens of critical theory by focusing on the "progressive development" of the role of presidential spouse (Deetz, 2001, p. 26) and the power of the institutions to communicate about presidential spouses and whether they use their power to do so (Shockley-Zalabak, 2006). In advocating for the progression of the role of spouse, some propose for spouses to be *more* utilized and recognized as a member of the presidential team (Cotton, 2003, 2014; Horner & Horner, 2013), while others advocates for removing the spouse and associated expectations from university affairs altogether (Williams, 2013). The results of this paper suggest that neither side is truly winning in this issue.

For advocates of removing the spouse altogether from university affairs, the low disclosures about spouses in biographies and press releases could be taken as a good sign that the spouse is indeed not being involved in campus. The ACE data, however, tells a different story, indicating that over half of the spouses at 4-year, masters, and doctoral institutions are involved on campus, while *nearly* half of 2-year institutions report the same thing.

Advocates for involving the spouse more fully on campus and treating them as a partner to the president may see the high numbers in the ACE survey as a good sign that the position is indeed progressing. There are two problems, however, in fully embracing the optimism. First, the ACE survey, reports that only 12% of those spouses are compensated/employed for the work they do (Gagliardi et al, 2017, p 6), which goes against the positions of advocates, who champion compensating spouses for work they may provide (see Cotton, 2003, 2014; Horner & Horner, 2013). The second is that spouses' contributions are not being reported in two likely media sources (the biography and the press release) where one would expect to find such an acknowledgement.

Thus, neither side will be able to feel satisfied that the role of spouse is progressing in their ideal way when the numbers of what is actually being performed by spouses versus what is being disclosed publically about contributions of spouses are mismatched.

TRANSPARENCY OF SPOUSAL INVOLVEMENT

Transparency about what the spousal contributions have been encouraged by advocates for progressing the role of spouse. Horner & Horner (2013) advised, "Be transparent. It is in everyone's interest for as much clarity as possible to exist with respect to the spouse/partner role" (Horner & Horner, 2013, para 13). The results of this study, however, would indicate that such transparency has not been reached when introducing the president and his or her spouse to the public via press releases and biographies.

When providing additional information about a presidential spouse, the most frequent detail provided for all institution types in both the press release and biography was the spouse's off-campus job (see Tables 3 and 6). The frequencies for reporting whether a spouse had a role on campus, however, were negligible (see Tables 3 and 6), even though the ACE survey indicates that being an unpaid volunteer on campus was the most common employment status of a spouse, with over half of the presidents responding such in each institution type (Gagliardi et al, 2017, p 85; see also Table 11). By disclosing more about a spouse working off-campus than one volunteering on campus, it would seem institutions are being the most transparent about a spouse's role when it is least influential to the institution.

This lack of transparency may be due to what Raymond Cotton (2003), a lawyer who frequently negotiates university presidents' contracts, has observed:

> I have found, in discussions with dozens of trustees around the country, that by and large, they are not opposed to compensating the president's spouse. However, many board members, especially at public universities, are not willing to risk public criticism for doing so. What they often say is that while they would approve a stipend for the president's spouse, they do not want to do so if it would "harm the university." (para. 11)

Perhaps the same concern that exists with paying a spouse also exists for acknowledging a spouse's on campus contributions: it can't cause controversy if nobody knows about it.

Thus there are two competing needs when discussing transparency about a spouse's role: the needs of institutions to be ever aware of how something may be perceived by constituents, and the need to not understate someone's contributions. These competing needs must be resolved if the spouse's role is to progress in the way Cotton (2014) and Horner and Horner (2013) propose. Recognizing this conflict and establishing guidelines for how to approach the role of spouse in a more egalitarian manner may benefit hiring committees and university boards. Boards could also proactively investigate whether harming the university is a likely outcome of implementing changes and what agreeable alternatives could be established. Boards may also benefit from investigating ways in which universities have successfully implemented such changes.

VARYING FREQUENCIES BY INSTITUTION TYPE

While this paper didn't seek to compare institutions, it did code them separately since institutional types vary in culture, size, and mission, and should therefore not be treated as one entity. One immediate observation from the data is that two-year colleges were highly unlikely to discuss the role of the spouse (see Tables 2 and 5), with "no reference" being its highest frequency (80%) even though the ACE data shows two-year presidents are married at comparable rates to the other institution types (see Table 8). Additionally, community colleges were unique in that 0% in the biographies went on to provide any further detail on spouses even though ACE data suggests that over 40% of two year college presidents have spouses involved on campus (see Table 11). Thus the extremely low frequencies of disclosing information about spouses at two-year colleges are worth noting. Additionally, doctoral institutions had the highest likelihood of publically recognizing a spouse via personal biographies, where details of the spouses' roles were given to constituents. This possibly suggests that spouses at doctoral institutions are more likely to have robust roles, and possibly more likely to be recognized for them.

These two findings indicate that there may be differences in the culture and public recognition surrounding presidential spouses at each institution type. Previous works have typically focused on one type of institution per study, such as two-year colleges (Smith 1994, 2001; Vaughan, 1986), four-year colleges (Reid et al., 2011; Vargas, 2014), or unspecified institutional type (Thompson, 2008). While these studies had important findings, our findings indicate that future research focusing on experiences between institutional types may find meaningful differences.

PERSONAL BIOGRAPHIES FOR "FIRST LADIES"

Cotton (2014) held Purdue University up as an example for giving the president's spouse appropriate amounts of recognition by including a link on the Office of the President's webpage to her own biography. Due to his recognition of such, this study specifically coded whether an institution did this. It was not very common. No two-year institution in the sample included a personal link to the president's spouse, and only one 4-year institution and two master's institutions included one. While doctoral institutions had the highest frequency of having a link for the spouse, 2 of these institutions did not reference the spouse in the president's biography. In other words, of the 21 that didn't mention the spouse, 9.52% still included a link for the spouse, and out of the 50 total doctoral universities analyzed, 14% included links to the spouses own webpage, resulting in about a 1 in 7 chance that a doctoral institution gave the amount of attention to the spouse that Cotton (2014) held up as ideal.

This may indicate that the ideal for progressing the role of spouse as proposed by Horner and Horner (2013) and Cotton (2014) is being most adopted at doctoral institutions. This may also indicate that doctoral institutions are the prime candidates for studying the organizational experience of fully incorporating a spouse into an institution, being fully transparent about it, and how an institution's constituents perceive it.

Another aspect worth noting about spouses' personal biographies is that across institutions, whenever a link dedicated to the spouse was included, the spouse was female. This may have interesting implication on what type of spouse is likely to be fully included in the university.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

As with all research, this study was not without its limitations. First, the study sample was not limited to institutions with married presidents or institutions with involved spouses on campus, as this information is not always publically available. For this reason, the IPEDS list of institutions was used for a random sample, and the ACE survey was used to indicate what should be expected in a random sample, which this study had. Future research could benefit from limiting the sample to married presidents or presidents with spouses involved on campus and getting a more in-depth accounting about how the spouses are represented to the universities. Another limitation was that press releases were obtained from a broad sampling pool, possibly making the press-release data inconsistent. Future research analyzing press releases would ideally be able to limit the data to the institution's original press release.

Other future research could focus on comparing spousal experience by institution type. The finding of this study showed low frequencies of spousal mentions at 2-year institutions and the higher frequencies of spousal links at doctoral institutions. Thus future research could work to give a quantitative and qualitative understanding as to how the dynamics of spousal involvement and satisfaction differ by institutions type, as past research has investigated spouses of only certain institution types (see Reid et al., 2011; Thompson, 2008)

Finally, how gender influences a spouses experience could be investigated further. While gender was not taken into account for this study, it was easily noted that all personal biographies for spouses were for female spouses, suggesting that there may be a connection between gender and spousal involvement/experience.

CONCLUSION

The role of the university presidents' spouses, and the work they are often informally expected to fill for their institutions, has been under scrutiny for decades with very little change. While some spouses thrive in this sphere, others show a great deal of resentment for being expected to work, oft time for free, due to a position their spouse obtained (Reid et al., 2011; Thompson, 2008). Even those spouses who resist the role initially report eventually giving in to pressures to volunteer their time on campus (Vargas, 2014). Using critical theory as a guide, this study sought to research how institutions formally recognized the work of spouses through a content analysis of presidents' biographies and press releases. These results were then compared with what we know about spouses from the from the American Council on Education's (ACE) 2017 iteration of the American College President Survey (Gagliardi et al, 217), which surveys university presidents every 3-5 years on several aspects of their jobs, including the contributions their spouses make. We sought to understand to what extent higher education institutions of differing types disclosed information about the spouse and the contributions he/she makes on campus.

The findings of the study indicated that institutions disclosed the role of spouse at a much lower rate than presidents disclosed on the ACE survey. This discrepancy suggests that there is still much to be done in progressing the role of presidential spouse, which advocates suggest could come by more fully recognizing the contributions spouses make (Cotton, 2003, 2014; Horner & Horner, 2013) or removing the role altogether (William, 2013). The findings also indicate that institutional type may be an important factor in researching the role of spouse in the future, and that gender may also be a meaningful variable to consider. Thus further research is needed to build our understanding and inform our progress in the realm of university presidential spouses.

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APPENDIX - CODEBOOK

A. Coder ID: If using multiple coders, assign each a unique number to indicate who is coding.
B. ID: Give each school a unique id number.
C. School: Enter the name of the school.
D. State: Enter the name of the state the school is in.
E. School Type:
    1. 2-year institution
    2. 4-Year institutions
    3. Masters Institution
    4. Doctoral Institution
F. Gender: What is the gender of the president?
    1. Female
    2. Male
G. Content Type:
    1. Presidential Bio/President's Welcome Message from institution website
    2. Press Release Announcing New President
H. Spousal References:
    0. Not Mentioned
    1. Indirectly mentioned (i.e. mentions "marriage," or unnamed "spouse")
    2. Directly Mentioned (i.e. name given)
    99. Not applicable: bio/press release not found.
I. Picture of the spouse included:
    0. No
    1. Yes
    99. Spouse not mentioned
J. Role of spouse disclosed: (i.e. duties the spouse fills on campus, committees he/she serves on, etc.)
    0. No
    1. Yes
    99. Spouse not mentioned
K. Job of spouse listed: (i.e. job outside of the role of spouse, previous or current)
    0. No
    1. Internal job: Spouse works on campus, a job unattached from spouse role (i.e. professor, finance, etc.)
    2. External job: Spouse works at place other than university.
    99. Spouse not mentioned
L. Job title: If L is coded 1 or 2, list the current/most recent job title of the spouse, if given:
M. Education of Spouse mentioned:
    0. No
    1. Yes (if alma mater is mentioned without specifying degree, or if spouse is referred to as "Dr.," this is coded as yes)
    99. Spouse not mentioned
N. If N is coded Yes, list education level of spouse:
    0. Unclear/not disclosed
    1. High School or less
    2. Associates/Vocational
    3. Bachelors
    4. Masters
    5. Doctorate (i.e. Ph.D., Ed.D., J.D., D.D.S, M.D., etc.)
    99. Spouse education not mentioned

For Bio's only:

O. Link to spouse's own webpage provided: (i.e. the Office of the President has a page dedicated to introducing the spouse)
   0. No
   1. Yes
P. If P is coded Yes, provide link:

BIOGRAPHIES

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Jon McNaughtan is an assistant professor at Texas Tech University where his research focuses on leadership in higher education. Specifically, he studies presidential communication and how presidents interact with the many stakeholders of higher education. He uses both qualitative and quantitative approaches in his research. He completed a PhD at the University of Michigan, a Masters at Stanford University and a BS from Southern Utah University, where he served as the President's Fellow working with the executive leadership team to transform the university from a regional comprehensive institution to the state designated liberal arts and sciences college.