



# Dancing Backwards in High Heels: Female Professors Experience More Work Demands and Special Favor Requests, Particularly from Academically Entitled Students

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## Abstract

Although the number of U.S. female professors has risen steadily in recent years, female professors are still subject to different student expectations and treatment. Students continue to perceive and expect female professors to be more nurturing than male professors are. We examined whether students may consequently request more special favors from female professors. In a survey of professors ( $n = 88$ ) across the United States, Study 1 found that female (versus male) professors reported getting more requests for standard work demands, special favors, and friendship behaviors, with the latter two mediating the professor gender effect on professors' self-reported emotional labor. Study 2 utilized an experimental design using a fictitious female or male professor, with college student participants ( $n = 121$ ) responding to a scenario in which a special favor request might be made of the professor. The results indicated that academically entitled students (i.e., those who feel deserving of success in college regardless of effort/performance) had stronger expectations that a female (versus male) professor would grant their special favor requests. Those expectations consequently increased students' likelihood of making the requests and of exhibiting negative emotional and behavioral reactions to having those requests denied. This work highlights the extra burdens felt by female professors. We discuss possible moderators of these effects as well as the importance of developing strategies for preventing them.

**Keywords** Academic entitlement · Sex discrimination · Gender equity · College teachers · Stereotypes · Teacher student interaction · Emotional labor · Workload

Dancer Ginger Rogers received far less recognition than her acclaimed partner, Fred Astaire, despite doing everything he did, but while dancing “backwards and in high heels” (New York Times 2006, para. 3). This theme of holding women to higher standards still affects women today (see Rudman and Glick 2001). In academia, female professors are hindered by stereotype-driven gender expectations held by students,

creating extra burdens beyond what their male peers must endure (Basow 1998; Sprague and Massoni 2005). One purpose of the present research is to examine whether female professors report getting more work demands and special favor requests from students compared to what male professors report and whether this causes female professors to perceive that they are overburdened practically and emotionally. We also investigated whether students have higher expectations of getting special favor requests granted by female professors, thus resulting in negative reactions when they do not get their way, as well as examining potential student characteristics that may moderate these effects. To the best of our knowledge, no prior empirical work has investigated these issues.

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## Effects of Gender Stereotypes

The Stereotype Content Model explains stereotypes of women and men via the bi-dimensional trait categories of warmth/nurturance and competence/agency (Cuddy et al. 2009; Fiske et al. 2007, 2002). Women tend to be perceived as

warmer and more nurturing (e.g., kind, helpful, sensitive, and sympathetic), whereas men tend to be perceived as more competent and agentic (e.g., confident, ambitious, independent, and assertive; Eckes 2002; Ridgeway 2001). These descriptive stereotypes also align with people's *prescriptive* stereotypes regarding how women and men *should* behave (Barreto et al. 2009), resulting in negative impressions being formed of those who violate gender expectations (Connell 1995; Sibley and Wilson 2004).

Female leaders face a particularly challenging dilemma in that stereotypes of leaders typically align with agentic trait expectations but clash with communal trait expectations (Koenig et al. 2011; Schein et al. 1996). According to role congruity theory (Eagly and Karau 2002; Eagly and Sczesny 2009), prejudice may result when stereotypes about certain groups (e.g., women as communal) are incongruent with stereotypes about social roles (e.g., leaders as agentic). Thus, simply assuming a leadership role results in women violating expectations that they are or should be lower in power, agency, or status than men (Carli 1999; Ridgeway 2001). When female leaders assert their authority, they further violate expectations of how women should generally behave. Women may even work extra hard to exert power in an effort to demonstrate that their gender does not disqualify them from being an effective leader (Koenig et al. 2011). Consequently, others may scrutinize their behavior more, sometimes resulting in penalties and censures against female leaders who seem “too assertive” or “not communal enough” (Heilman 2001; Phelan 2008; Phelan and Rudman 2010; Rudman et al. 2012). This may explain why advertisements depicting women as powerful (e.g., businesswomen) are less effective than those portraying woman in traditional nurturing roles (e.g., housewives; Zawisza and Cinnirella 2010). It also explains the backlash agentic women may receive when applying for jobs (Phelan 2008).

The present studies focus on the college setting, exploring the difficulties female professors may encounter as a result of gender stereotypes held by students. Although the number of U.S. female professors has been rising, college teaching is a historically male profession (National Science Foundation 2015). Although all professors are leaders in their field, their gender may remain salient in the classroom, such that “men are professors, [but] women are female professors” (Basow 1995, p. 663). As such, female professors may face expectations from students that go beyond typical work duties. Indeed, past research shows that students expect male professors to be competent but female professors to be nurturing. Burns-Glover and Veith (1995) found that students expected a hypothetical professor with a male name to assign a challenging workload and be an expert in his field, but expected the same professor with a female name to be available outside of class and care about students' personal lives. In another study, students described their “best-ever” female professors as

nurturing, and their “worst-ever” female professors as rigid, mean, and unfair (Sprague and Massoni 2005). Moreover, demonstrations of communal behavior (e.g., friendliness/smiling) influence student evaluations of female professors more so than evaluations of male professors, regardless of student gender (Kierstead et al. 1988).

## The Extra Burdens of Female Professors

Consequently, female professors may undergo extra burdens in their careers simply as a result of their gender. In order to please students, female professors must walk a line between warmth and agency, a fine balance not as strictly required of male professors (Basow 1998; Cuddy et al. 2004). They may need to display more communal behaviors to be viewed favorably. However, doing so by exhibiting behaviors such as dedicating more time to students is still not a guarantee of fair evaluation (Sprague and Massoni 2005). Bennett (1982) showed that despite students' reports of receiving more office hour time and personal attention from female professors than from male professors, students still rated their female professors as less available. These increased expectations of nurturance are likely to increase female professors' workload, with students expecting or demanding more help and favors from them.

Bernard's (1964, p. 131) term, “academic momism,” describes these gendered expectations aptly. In expecting and perceiving female professors to be more nurturing, students are essentially expecting them to function like academic mothers. Increased nurturance demands on women in academia may cause them to perform more emotional labor with their students. *Emotional labor* involves performing extra emotional work in the context of one's employment, which often goes unnoticed and uncounted in work evaluations (England et al. 1994). Female professors may find that they must take on extra burdens, such as helping students cope with stress or insecurities, having to set personal boundaries with them, or providing gentler feedback to them to avoid being perceived as excessively harsh.

This leaves women at a disadvantage in terms of having and exerting authority in the classroom. Much like female businesswomen, they must deal with the potentially negative consequences that result from exerting authority. For example, when female professors exercise power, including in standard educational ways such as managing the classroom, students seem to perceive them as pushy (Elias and Loomis 2004; Roach 1991). Female professors are also expected to assign a lower workload and give higher grades than their male counterparts do (Bennett 1982), and women are judged more negatively when they do not (Sinclair and Kunda 2000).

At the same time, women must also work harder to demonstrate competence in order to be seen as being on equal

footing with men (Biernat et al. 2008; Carli 1999; Foschi 1996, 2000). For students to consider female professors competent, they must exhibit greater evidence of expertise and skill than do male professors (Biernat and Kobrynowicz 1997; Foschi 1996). This may be because students sometimes perceive female professors as lower in effectiveness, expertise, and competence than their male counterparts (Caplan 1993; Moshavi et al. 2008; Sandler and Hall 1993). Female professors may strive to recover from this disadvantage by appearing more professional and demonstrating greater expended effort in class preparation (Bennett 1982).

To conclude, women must work harder to demonstrate both warmth and competence merely to be rated equally to their male peers, and they are more susceptible to negative reactions from others in both domains. They must live up to professional expectations in the formal aspects of teaching while simultaneously serving as “academic moms.” Although the literature has documented the unfair extra burdens on female professors beyond what is expected of male professors, research has not yet examined whether female professors report experiencing these extra burdens and whether they may perceive greater emotional labor from them. It has also not yet examined whether students’ high expectations of nurturing behavior from female professors may cause students to respond negatively when they do not get their way.

## The Current Research

Because of higher communal expectations, we expected that students request more help from female professors regarding both standard work demands (e.g., office hour time) and special favors (e.g., re-doing an assignment). In Study 1, we surveyed professors on how frequently they received both types of requests and investigated professors’ level of emotional labor. We predicted that female professors would report receiving more standard work demands (Hypothesis 1a) and special favor requests (Hypothesis 1b) and that the latter would be associated with greater self-reported emotional labor (Hypothesis 1c), given that special favor requests require going beyond typical job duties and perhaps even violating one’s own course guidelines or rules. Prior work has shown, in fact, that student behaviors involving entitlement or lack of civility contribute to both work strain and burnout in college instructors (Jiang et al. 2017).

Past research has pointed to the expectation that female professors are friendlier, but it has not identified how that manifests in students’ behaviors toward them. Thus, we examined whether female professors also report receiving more friendship-like behaviors from students, and whether such behaviors may contribute to their emotional labor, as indicated in a self-report assessment (Hypothesis 1d). If students treat a female professor as though she is close with them, then she

may feel obligated to provide social support and other nurturing behaviors toward them. This could take an emotional toll regardless of whether or not she responds with nurturance and/or enjoys doing so.

In Study 2, we recruited student participants to investigate whether students might be more reactive after receiving non-nurturing behaviors, specifically “no” responses, from a female professor than from a male professor. Students imagined making special favor requests of a fictitious professor. We focused on special favor requests because of their especially high likelihood of increasing work and emotional burdens (Jiang et al. 2017). We suspected that part of this potential undue encumbrance could be a result of students expecting their female professors to be more likely to approve favor requests. Such expectations could cause students to feel irritated or disappointed and to plead further with the professor upon request denial. This could be both time-consuming and emotionally draining for the professor (Jiang et al. 2017). Considering students’ greater expectations of friendliness from female professors, we also examined whether denial of special favor requests might cause students to infer that that the professor disliked them.

Using student participants also allowed us to examine student factors as potential moderators. Given our focus on special favor requests, we felt it important to assess students’ general level of *academic entitlement*, which is the tendency for students to believe that they deserve to succeed academically, independent of performance or effort (Chowning and Campbell 2009; Kopp et al. 2011). Academically entitled students expect more special treatment from professors (Kopp et al. 2011). For example, past research shows that such students are more likely to argue about grades, try to negotiate higher grades, become angry after negative feedback, and expect professors to bend the rules or make exceptions for them (Chowning and Campbell 2009; Ciani et al. 2008; see also Jiang et al. 2017), all of which are similar to the types of reactions we investigated in Study 2.

Thus, academic entitlement may be a prerequisite for students acting on gendered expectations of professors with respect to special favors. If students expect a female professor to approve their requests, then at least some academic entitlement may be necessary for them to make the requests and exhibit negative or reactive responses if requests are not granted. Students lower in academic entitlement should be much less likely to make special favor requests regardless of any professor characteristics, including gender, and consequently respond with less negative emotion and persistence upon request disapproval. As such, we predicted that, compared to a male professor, a female professor would elicit greater expectations of approval of special favor requests primarily (or perhaps solely) from academically entitled students (Hypothesis 2a), and that these higher expectations would result in a greater likelihood of making the requests

(Hypothesis 2b) and of exhibiting more negative reactions (e.g., irritation, disappointment, further pleading, and perceptions of being disliked) if the requests are denied (Hypothesis 2c).

We also assessed students' views of women as possibly influencing expectations of female professors and responses to request denial. Specifically, we assessed prejudice against female authority figures and sexism against women as possible moderators of gender effects on likelihood of making special favor requests and negative reactions to request denial. Students higher in prejudice against female authorities might disrespect female professors' high status role. This could cause students to disapprove of female professors exerting their authority, thus increasing both favor requests and negative reactions (Hypothesis 2d). Because general sexist attitudes tend to result in more discrimination and Study 2 primarily assesses discriminatory behavior, the same possible consequences could emerge for students higher in general sexism against women (Hypothesis 2e).

## Study 1

### Method

#### Participants

One female and one male professor were contacted from 300 randomly selected institutions in the United States classified as doctoral, master's, baccalaureate, and associate's in the Carnegie Classifications Data File (The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education 2011) and asked to participate in an online survey about student-professor interactions. A total of 100 professors volunteered, but only 88 answered enough questions for us to utilize their data. The final sample consisted of 47 (53%) female professors and 41 (47%) male professors. Job rank of instructor ( $n = 5$ , 6%), assistant professor ( $n = 30$ , 34%), associate professor ( $n = 26$ , 30%), or full professor ( $n = 27$ , 31%) did not differ by gender,  $\chi^2(3) = 2.21$ ,  $p = .531$ . Among those who responded to our inquiry, we found no significant age difference between the female ( $M = 46.48$ ,  $SD = 10.17$ , range = 29–65,  $n = 40$ ) and male professors ( $M = 48.13$ ,  $SD = 9.97$ , range = 28–70,  $n = 40$ ),  $t(78) = .73$ ,  $p = .466$ . The number of years they had been teaching in higher education also did not differ between female ( $M = 15.06$ ,  $SD = 9.32$ , range = 2–39 years,  $n = 47$ ) and male professors ( $M = 16.80$ ,  $SD = 9.03$ , range = 2–42 years,  $n = 40$ ),  $t(85) = -.88$ ,  $p = .382$ .

The sample represented a range of disciplinary homes, with 27 (31%) in humanities (e.g., English, Modern Languages), 27 (31%) in social sciences (e.g., Psychology, Political Science), 18 (20%) in natural sciences (e.g., Biology, Physics), 13 (15%) in professional programs (e.g., Art,

Communications), and 3 (3%) not reporting their discipline. The vast majority ( $n = 79$ ; 90%) of the participants were full-time tenured or tenure-track faculty. Most ( $n = 75$ , 85%) of the sample reported their race/ethnicity as White/Caucasian, whereas 5% ( $n = 4$ ) were Hispanic/Latino, 3% ( $n = 3$ ) were Asian or Asian American, 2% ( $n = 2$ ) were African American; the rest chose not to report this demographic.

### Procedure and Measures

Participants completed our study online and anonymously during their own time. After giving their informed consent, they provided information regarding their current position and their demographics, followed by questions regarding their courses, students, and office hours. Participants indicated the course they teach most frequently, which was used as the basis for answering the questions pertaining to the dependent measures regarding students' requests and behaviors.

Specifically, participants estimated how often students from their most frequently taught course (during a typical academic term) exhibited various behaviors. Depending on the specific item, participants reported how often an event occurred during any given academic term by using increments on an 8-point scale ranging from 1 (*Never*) to 8 (*19+ times*), or how many students exhibited behaviors outside the classroom during a typical academic term by using a scale ranging from 1 (*0 students*) to 8 (*19+ students*). There were three categories of behaviors; for each category, the items were averaged to create a composite. These included (a) solicitation of standard work demands ( $M = 5.10$ ,  $SD = 1.42$ ,  $\alpha = .74$ ; 5 items: e.g., "Students come to my regular office hours to discuss issues specifically related to the course" and "Students send email asking questions about class material"); (b) solicitation of special favors ( $M = 3.38$ ,  $SD = 1.15$ ,  $\alpha = .79$ ; 10 items: e.g., "Students drop by my office without an appointment and expect to discuss an issue right away" and "Students ask to redo an assignment to earn a better grade"); and (c) friendship behaviors ( $M = 2.58$ ,  $SD = .92$ ,  $\alpha = .79$ ; 8 items: e.g., "Students discuss their personal problems with me," "Students bring gifts for me," and "Students invite me to student activities"). (All items are available in an [online supplement](#).)

Participants also completed two assessments of emotional labor. Our items were adapted from a measure developed by Pugliesi (1999), which was designed for the business setting. Our modifications included referencing students instead of coworkers and removing an item that would not be applicable in a college setting. We assessed two forms of emotional labor: (a) self-directed emotional labor, which measured the extent to which professors believe that they have to control the way they express themselves to students (four items: e.g., "I am unable to express my true feelings to my students" and "I feel that I have to be nice to students no matter how they treat me")



and (b) other-directed emotional labor, which measured the extent to which professors believe they have to help students manage students' emotional experiences (two items: "I spend a lot of time helping students feel better about themselves" and "I spend a lot of time helping students deal with stresses and difficulties"). Participants responded on a scale from 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 4 (*Strongly Agree*). Items were averaged to create composite scores of self-directed emotional labor ( $M = 2.17$ ,  $SD = .67$ ,  $\alpha = .80$ ) and other-directed emotional labor ( $M = 2.75$ ,  $SD = .74$ ,  $\alpha = .85$ ), such that higher scores indicated greater emotional labor.

## Results

First, we conducted a MANOVA on the three categories of student behaviors (standard work demand requests, special favor requests, and friendship behaviors). Using Pillai's trace, we found a significant effect of professor gender on student behaviors,  $V = .12$ ,  $F(3, 84) = 3.80$ ,  $p = .013$ ,  $\eta p^2 = .12$ . Supporting Hypothesis 1a, we found that female professors reported significantly more standard work demands ( $M = 5.50$ ,  $SD = 1.31$ ) than did male professors ( $M = 4.63$ ,  $SD = 1.44$ ),  $t(86) = 2.98$ ,  $p = .004$ ,  $d = .63$ . As predicted in Hypothesis 1b, female professors also reported receiving more special favor requests ( $M = 3.63$ ,  $SD = 1.15$ ) than did male professors ( $M = 3.05$ ,  $SD = 1.05$ ),  $t(86) = 2.46$ ,  $p = .016$ ,  $d = .53$ . Reports of the frequency of friendship behaviors by students were also significantly greater for female professors ( $M = 2.82$ ,  $SD = .96$ ) than for male professors ( $M = 2.32$ ,  $SD = .81$ ),  $t(86) = 2.60$ ,  $p = .011$ ,  $d = .56$ , as we predicted.

Next, we conducted a MANOVA on the two estimates of emotional labor (self-directed and other-directed). Using Pillai's trace, we observed that professor gender had a significant effect on emotional labor,  $V = .08$ ,  $F(2, 85) = 3.88$ ,  $p = .024$ ,  $\eta p^2 = .08$ , as we expected. Although there was no significant effect of professor gender on self-directed emotional labor,  $t(86) = .70$ ,  $p = .484$ ,  $d = .15$ , there was a significant effect on other-directed emotional labor, such that female professors reported significantly more other-directed emotional labor ( $M = 2.95$ ,  $SD = .62$ ) than did male professors ( $M = 2.52$ ,  $SD = .81$ ),  $t(74.58) = 2.73$ ,  $p = .008$ ,  $d = .60$  (equal variances not assumed due to significant heterogeneity of variance, Levene's  $F = 6.87$ ,  $p = .010$ ).

As tests of Hypotheses 1c and 1d, we examined whether special favor requests and friendship behaviors (both of which involve going above-and-beyond standard work duties) could be responsible for the effect of professor gender on emotional labor. Because self-directed emotional labor did not differ by professor gender, we excluded that form of emotional labor from these analyses. We used the PROCESS statistical program (Hayes 2012) and bootstrapping methods with 5000 resamples (Preacher and Hayes 2008) to test for mediation effects on other-directed emotional labor.

The results of the first analysis revealed that the frequency of special favor requests indeed mediated the relationship between professor gender and other-directed emotional labor. Professor gender (coded as 0 for male and 1 for female) significantly predicted special favor requests ( $b = .58$ ,  $p = .016$ ), which significantly predicted other-directed emotional labor ( $b = .19$ ,  $p = .005$ ). The direct effect of professor gender on other-directed emotional labor was also statistically significant ( $b = .31$ ,  $p = .043$ , Total  $b = .42$ ,  $p = .007$ ). Mediation was confirmed by the fact that the value of zero was outside the confidence interval for the indirect effect (indirect effect:  $b = .11$ ,  $SE = .06$ , 95% CI [.03, .27]).

Friendship behaviors also emerged as a potential mediator. Professor gender significantly predicted friendship behaviors ( $b = .50$ ,  $p = .011$ ), although friendship behaviors was not a significant predictor of other-directed emotional labor ( $b = .35$ ,  $p = .078$ ). Importantly, the indirect effect was statistically significant, providing some evidence of possible mediation ( $b = .17$ ,  $SE = .07$ , 95% CI [.05, .34]). The direct effect of professor gender on other-directed emotional labor was not significant ( $b = .25$ ,  $p = .085$ ; Total  $b = .42$ ,  $p = .007$ ). Supporting Hypotheses 1c and 1d, the pattern of results is consistent with the notion that female professors may experience greater other-directed emotional labor than male professors as a result of both getting more special favor requests and receiving more friendship-like behaviors from students.

Although there is less reason to suspect a similar mediational role of standard work demands, we examined that possibility statistically in order to have a comprehensive set of analyses. The indirect effect for standard work demands was  $.09$  ( $SE = .06$ ), and the confidence interval, 95% CI [−.00, .24], contained the value of 0, thus yielding a nonsignificant result.

## Discussion

The results from Study 1 suggest that the same academic job may require more time, personal, and emotional demands from female faculty than from male faculty. Specifically, we supported Hypotheses 1a and 1b by finding that female professors reported that students make more standard work demands and special favor requests than did male professors. Female professors also reported that students initiated more friendship behaviors with them than did male professors. One notable limitation of these data is that they reflect professors' reports about students' behaviors rather than students' actual behaviors.

## Study 2

Given that Study 1 drew on professors' reports, not actual student behaviors, it is possible that female professors only

*perceive* greater work demands, special favor requests, and friendship behaviors than male professors do, when in reality they encounter the same frequency of those behaviors. Another possibility is that female professors behave differently, perhaps unintentionally, to elicit more of those behaviors from students. If the female professors we surveyed are more accommodating with their students or assume more of a nurturing role with them, then students may be inclined to respond accordingly. If so, it would not be gender stereotyping by students causing those differences in the day-to-day experiences of female and male professors. To address these limitations, in Study 2 we had students respond to a fictitious female or male professor with an identical profile. Thus, any differences in reactions to our scenarios involving interactions with the professor could be attributed to the professor's gender alone, not any specific characteristics or behaviors regarding the professor. As mentioned previously, we focused on special favor requests in Study 2, and we also examined students' potentially reactive responses to having those requests denied, while also examining potential moderating effects of student characteristics.

## Method

### Participants

Participants were undergraduate students at a U.S. northwestern public university completing the study for credit in a psychology course. Although 162 participated, 10 (6%) did not finish the surveys, an additional 8 (5%) failed at least two of the three data checking items, and 23 (14%) could not identify/recall the gender of the professor in the scenario (13 from the female and 10 from the male professor condition), thus failing the manipulation check. This left us with 121 participants ( $M_{\text{age}} = 22.10$ ,  $SD = 6.56$ , range = 17–53), consisting of 58 (48%) women and 61 (50%) men, and two participants (2%) who chose not to report their gender. Among these 121 participants, 38 (31%) were first year students, 20 (17%) were sophomores, 34 (28%) were juniors, 25 (21%) were seniors, and 4 (3%) were some other level. On average, students had been enrolled in college for 7.60 academic quarters ( $SD = 5.15$ ), and reported having had roughly 18 professors, estimating that 37.59% ( $SD = 18.90$ , range = 0–80%) of their professors were female and 61.76% ( $SD = 19.17$ , range = 0–100%) were male. Most participants (92; 76%) were White/Caucasian, 10 (8%) were multi-racial, 6 (5%) were Hispanic/Latino, 6 (5%) were Asian or Pacific Islander, 2 (2%) were Native American, one (1%) was Middle Eastern, and 4 (3%) chose not to respond.

The data were gathered in two phases. In the second phase, we gathered data from only male participants in order to achieve a gender-balanced sample. To ensure that the newer (male) participants did not differ from the original male

participants, we compared the two groups of men on each of the dependent measures and the potential moderating variables. None of the analyses resulted in significant differences between the two data collections.

### Procedure and Measures

Interested participants signed up for a study on “School and Life Experiences” and completed it online, anonymously, and during their own time via Qualtrics survey software. They were asked to imagine that they were taking a sociology class from a specific (fictitious) professor whose profile was provided to them. They read an introductory statement supposedly made by the professor on the first day of class. In that statement, the professor introduced himself/herself as “Dr. Eric/Erica Campbell” and provided some background information about himself/herself (e.g., that s/he has been working at the university for 10 years). The name of the professor, as well as the use of gendered pronouns in some of the subsequent survey questions, served as our professor gender manipulation, and participants were randomly assigned to one of the two experimental conditions. Participants were asked to form an impression of the professor based on the professor's class introduction, as well as a listing of the professor's characteristics, which they had supposedly learned from experience by taking the professor's class. The characteristics were rather generic in nature (e.g., nice, organized, clear speaker, gives moderately difficult exams, gives lots of examples, seems to have a busy schedule, teaches during late morning).

After reviewing the profile, participants were given seven scenarios that involved imagining special favor requests that could be asked of the professor. Most of these involved asking for something (such as extra credit, study guides, notes/slides, make-up tests) despite the professor having a stated policy against such requests (e.g., “If I missed an exam because I overslept, I would ask this professor to let me make up the test even if the professor had a policy that did not allow make-up tests” and “If I missed class, and had a good reason for missing it, I would ask this professor for the class notes/slides even if the syllabus says that notes/slides would not be provided in the case of an absence”). An additional few scenarios involved asking for above-and-beyond favors such as requests to boost test grades, retake a test, or have the professor go over all missed class material personally with the student (e.g., “If I had a particularly difficult week and failed an exam, I would ask this professor to let me retake the test” and “If the professor gave a particularly difficult exam, I would ask the professor if there could be a grade adjustment to increase everyone's score”). (A full list of these scenarios is available in an [online supplement](#).)

For each scenario, participants were first asked to indicate how likely they would be to ask for the special favor on a scale from 1 (*Not at all likely*) to 6 (*Extremely likely*). Using the

same response scale, participants were then asked the likelihood that they would expect the professor to say “yes,” be irritated if the professor said “no,” be disappointed if the professor said “no,” and “ask the professor again or plead more” if the initial request was denied. We then averaged responses across the seven scenarios for each dependent measure: likelihood of making the request ( $M = 2.60$ ,  $SD = .94$ ,  $\alpha = .71$ ), expectation of request approval ( $M = 2.08$ ,  $SD = .73$ ,  $\alpha = .72$ ), irritation ( $M = 1.97$ ,  $SD = .95$ ,  $\alpha = .82$ ), disappointment ( $M = 2.68$ ,  $SD = 1.10$ ,  $\alpha = .81$ ), and pleading/persistence ( $M = 1.58$ ,  $SD = .84$ ,  $\alpha = .86$ ). Because the irritation and disappointment measures correlated strongly,  $r(119) = .64$ ,  $p < .001$ , and produced identical results in our analyses, we averaged them to create a composite measure of negative emotional reactions ( $M = 2.33$ ,  $SD = .93$ ,  $\alpha = .78$ ).

After responding to all of these scenarios, participants were asked (in two single items) the extent to which they would conclude that the professor disliked them if (a) the professor denied one of their requests from the scenarios or (b) the professor denied all of their requests from the scenarios. Because these two items correlated strongly,  $r(119) = .61$ ,  $p < .001$ , and produced identical results in the analyses, we averaged them to create a composite measure of perceptions of disliking ( $M = 2.13$ ,  $SD = 1.14$ ,  $\alpha = .73$ ).

Next, participants completed the Academic Entitlement Scale (Kopp et al. 2011), which is an eight-item assessment with such items as, “Because I pay tuition, I deserve passing grades” and “It is the professor’s responsibility to make it easy for me to succeed.” Participants responded on a scale ranging from 1 (*Strongly Disagree*) to 7 (*Strongly Agree*). The eight items were averaged to create overall scores ( $M = 2.27$ ,  $SD = .93$ ,  $\alpha = .76$ ), such that higher scores indicated more entitlement. Before completing the measures which assess attitudes toward women, we had participants describe what they believed to be the purpose of the study in order to determine possible suspicion. Only one participant mentioned the professor’s gender, and none of the participants’ responses indicated awareness of our hypotheses.

Participants then completed the Gender and Authority measure (GAM; French and Raven 1959; see also Rudman and Kilianski 2000, for evidence supporting the measure’s validity and reliability), which assesses negative views of women in positions of authority (e.g., “In general, I would rather work for a man than a woman” and “If I were having a serious operation, I would have more confidence in a male surgeon”). There were 15 items, with a response scale ranging from 0 (*Disagree Strongly*) to 5 (*Agree Strongly*). All items were averaged (after recoding reverse-scored items) to create overall GAM scores ( $M = 1.90$ ,  $SD = .65$ ,  $\alpha = .71$ ), such that higher scores indicated greater aversion toward women in authority positions.

Using the same 0–5 response scale, general sexism against women was assessed with the Modern and Old-Fashioned

Sexism Scales (Swim et al. 1995). Modern sexism can be considered a subtler form of sexism observed in current times, which largely assesses the denial of the existence of sexism against women. It was measured using eight items (e.g., “It is rare to see women treated in a sexist manner on television”). Old-fashioned sexism involves the belief in traditional gender roles, along with blatant anti-woman sentiments less commonly observed today than in the past. It was assessed using five items (e.g., “Women are generally not as smart as men”). Items for each scale were averaged (after recoding reverse-scored items) to create overall scores for Modern Sexism ( $M = 1.58$ ,  $SD = .95$ ,  $\alpha = .85$ ) and Old-Fashioned Sexism ( $M = .65$ ,  $SD = .77$ ,  $\alpha = .69$ ). Note that one of the five old-fashioned sexism items (“I would be equally comfortable having a woman as a boss as a man”—reversed item) was removed because its inclusion lowered alpha to .66.

As a manipulation check, participants were then asked to recall the professor’s gender from the fictitious profile as part of a “memory test.” We then asked for some general and academic demographic information. Upon completion, participants were given debriefing information and credit for participation.

## Results

### Professor Gender and Academic Entitlement

Our primary model was that student entitlement would interact with professor gender to influence expectations of approval, which would thus affect students’ likelihood of asking for the favor, experiencing negative emotions (irritation/disappointment) after denial of a favor, and persisting/pleading for a “yes” after getting a “no” response. Because there were no significant main effects or interactions involving students’ gender when examined in a student gender  $\times$  professor gender  $\times$  academic entitlement (as a continuous variable) General Linear Model, we excluded students’ gender from these analyses.

We expected entitlement to play a moderating role in our effects of professor gender on the dependent measures. Looking at the bivariate correlations in Table 1, students’ academic entitlement was significantly correlated with all study variables in the Female Professor condition but not in the Male Professor condition. Thus, entitlement was only associated with stronger expectations of favor-granting and more negative student reactions when the professor was female. Formal tests of moderation were conducted to investigate these patterns further.

Hypothesis 2a was that students would have greater expectations of favor approval by a female than by a male professor, particularly when the students had high academic entitlement. Using Model 1 in PROCESS (Hayes 2012), which conducts basic moderation analyses, we tested for a possible interaction

**Table 1** Descriptive statistics and correlations by experimental condition, Study 2

Variables	Professor gender		Correlations					
	Female <i>M (SD)</i>	Male <i>M (SD)</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Requesting favor	2.64 (.99) <sub>a</sub>	2.56 (.89) <sub>b</sub>	--	.72**	.60**	.63**	.34**	-.03
2. Expecting “Yes”	2.12 (.80) <sub>a</sub>	2.05 (.66) <sub>b</sub>	.70**	--	.64**	.62**	.40**	-.04
3. Negative emotions	2.38 (.93) <sub>a</sub>	2.28 (.93) <sub>b</sub>	.52**	.72**	--	.57**	.50**	.02
4. Pleading	1.66 (.89) <sub>a</sub>	1.50 (.78) <sub>b</sub>	.62**	.70**	.76**	--	.22	.01
5. Perceived dislike	2.24 (1.15) <sub>a</sub>	2.02 (1.13) <sub>a</sub>	.39**	.39**	.32*	.32**	--	.16
6. Academic entitlement	2.27 (1.00) <sub>a</sub>	2.27 (.87) <sub>a</sub>	.40**	.44**	.50**	.51**	.46**	--

Means with different subscripts across a row indicate a significant main effect ( $p < .05$ ) of professor gender in our analytic models. Correlations below the diagonal are for the Female Professor condition; above the diagonal, the Male Professor condition

\* $p < .05$ . \*\* $p < .01$

between professor gender (coded as 0 for male professor and 1 for female professor) and academic entitlement (treated as a continuous variable) on expectations of approval of the hypothetical special favor requests. There was a statistically significant main effect of professor gender on expectations,  $F(1, 117) = 5.68$ ,  $p = .019$  ( $b = -.80$ ,  $SE = .34$ ), such that participants were more likely to expect a “yes” response to the special favor requests when the professor had a woman’s name than when the professor had a man’s name. (Refer to Table 1 for condition means for all dependent measures.)

There was no main effect of academic entitlement,  $F(1, 117) = .10$ ,  $p = .757$  ( $b = -.03$ ,  $SE = .10$ ), but, as predicted by Hypothesis 2a, the professor gender  $\times$  academic entitlement interaction was statistically significant,  $F(1, 117) = 7.80$ ,  $p = .006$  ( $b = .38$ ,  $SE = .14$ ,  $\Delta R^2 = .06$ ). PROCESS analyses provided predicted scores on the dependent measure for participants who were one standard deviation below the mean, those at the mean, and those one standard deviation above the mean on the continuous moderating variable. Students had a stronger expectation of request approval from the female professor than from the male professor when they had a high level (+1 *SD*) of academic entitlement,  $t = 2.37$ ,  $p = .020$  ( $b = .42$ ,  $SE = .18$ , 95% CI [.07, .78]), but not when they had average,  $t = .54$ ,  $p = .590$  ( $b = .07$ ,  $SE = .13$ , 95% CI [-.18, .32]) or low (-1 *SD*) levels of entitlement,  $t = -1.61$ ,  $p = .111$  ( $b = -.29$ ,  $SE = .18$ , 95% CI [-.64, .07]). This pattern supported the notion (in Hypothesis 2a) that high academic entitlement may be a prerequisite for the professor gender effect on expectations of getting a special favor request granted.

We obtained the same professor gender main effect on likelihood of requesting favors,  $F(1, 117) = 4.29$ ,  $p = .041$  ( $b = -.90$ ,  $SE = .44$ ), on negative emotional reactions to favor denial,  $F(1, 117) = 4.56$ ,  $p = .035$  ( $b = -.91$ ,  $SE = .43$ ), and on further pleading upon request denial,  $F(1, 117) = 5.04$ ,  $p = .027$  ( $b = -.85$ ,  $SE = .38$ ), but not on perceptions of being disliked by the professor,  $F(1, 117) = .85$ ,  $p = .359$  ( $b = -.48$ ,

$SE = .52$ ). The condition means for each dependent measure were in the predicted directions for the significant professor gender main effects (see Table 1). Specifically, students reported a greater likelihood of requesting the favors, reacting negatively to request denial, and pleading further upon request denial when the professor was female than when the professor was male.

The professor gender  $\times$  academic entitlement interaction was also significant for likelihood of requesting the favors,  $F(1, 117) = 5.88$ ,  $p = .041$  ( $b = .43$ ,  $SE = .18$ ,  $\Delta R^2 = .05$ ), negative emotional reactions to request denial,  $F(1, 117) = 6.57$ ,  $p = .012$  ( $b = .45$ ,  $SE = .17$ ,  $\Delta R^2 = .05$ ), and further pleading,  $F(1, 117) = 8.28$ ,  $p = .005$  ( $b = .44$ ,  $SE = .15$ ,  $\Delta R^2 = .06$ ), but not for perceptions of being disliked by the professor,  $F(1, 117) = 2.05$ ,  $p = .155$  ( $b = .31$ ,  $SE = .21$ ,  $\Delta R^2 = .02$ ). As with expectations of approval, when the interactions were significant in these analyses, it was because only participants high in academic entitlement were significantly more reactive to the female than to the male professor ( $ps = .006-.043$ ). Thus, entitled students reported a greater likelihood of expecting favor approval, requesting special favors, feeling negative emotions upon being denied favors, and pleading further after favor denial if the professor had a woman’s name than if the professor had a man’s name, despite otherwise identical professor profiles.

### Mediation by Approval Expectation

Our next step was to examine whether the interactive effects of professor gender and academic entitlement on expectation of approval were responsible for the increased likelihood of requesting the favors and of having more reactive responses when the requests were denied. We used Model 7 (Conditional Process Analysis) in PROCESS to test for this moderated mediation (Hayes 2012). Our analytic model is



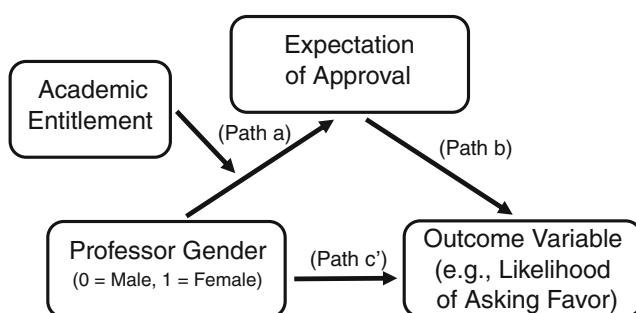
presented in Fig. 1. Bootstrapping methods with 10,000 resamples (Preacher and Hayes 2008) were used.

Our first analysis tested Hypothesis 2b by examining whether the interactive effect of gender and entitlement would influence participants' likelihood of asking for special favors via expectation of request approval. Specifically, Hypothesis 2b predicted that primarily among highly entitled students would we find that professor gender influenced the likelihood of asking for special favors and that it would occur as a result of higher expectations of request approval from a female versus male professor. The analysis supported this prediction. Table 2 presents the relevant statistics for the moderated mediational analyses for all dependent measures. As shown, expectation of approval was a significant mediator of the effect of professor gender on asking for the favor, and this mediational path was moderated by academic entitlement, such that the mediation held true when students had high entitlement scores, but not when they had low or average entitlement scores.

Supporting Hypothesis 2c, the same results were obtained for each of the other dependent variables, which included negative emotional reactions to the professor denying the request, pleading further upon request denial, and the perception of being disliked as a result of request denial (despite the lack of significant effects on disliking in the simpler professor gender  $\times$  entitlement model discussed previously). In every case, the indirect effect of expectation of approval in the relationship between professor gender and the dependent measure was significant only if participants were high (i.e., +1 SD) in academic entitlement (see Table 2).

### Moderating Effects of Students' Gender Attitudes

One purpose of Study 2 was to investigate whether students' attitudes toward women moderate the effects of professor gender on our dependent measures. We used Model 1 in PROCESS (Hayes 2012) to examine potential interactions between professor gender and each measure of attitudes toward women on each dependent measure. Hypothesis 2d was



**Fig. 1** The moderating role of academic entitlement in the mediation of expectation of approval in the effect of professor gender on the likelihood of making special favor requests in Study 2. “Path a” represents the professor gender  $\times$  academic entitlement interaction

that aversion to women in authority would moderate the effects of professor gender on the dependent measures, and Hypothesis 2e was that sexism would play a moderating role. We applied a Bonferroni correction to these statistical tests, given that these analyses involved running 12 models, thus setting the alpha value to .004. None of the measures assessing gender attitudes significantly moderated the effect of professor gender on any of the dependent measures at this cut-off value for statistical significance.

### Potential Involvement of Students' Gender

The role of students' gender in perceptions of and reactions toward female versus male professors has been inconsistent in past research, often with no effect of students' gender on biases (e.g., Sinclair and Kunda 2000). Thus, we did not specifically expect students' gender to play a role in our findings. However, for the sake of being thorough, we performed student gender  $\times$  professor gender condition ANOVAs on each of our dependent measures. We applied a Bonferroni correction, setting the alpha value to .010, given that we ran five models to conduct these statistical tests. There were no main effects or interactions involving gender on the likelihood of making the requests, the likelihood of continuing to plead/persist after request denial, nor the likelihood of feeling disliked by the professor upon request denial.

The only significant finding in these analyses was a student gender  $\times$  professor gender condition interaction on expectation of request approval,  $F(1, 115) = 8.66, p = .004, \eta^2 = .07$ . We used simple effects tests to follow up on the interaction, which appeared to emerge because only female participants had a stronger expectation of request approval when the professor was female ( $M = 2.33, SE = .14$ ) versus male ( $M = 1.88, SE = .13$ ),  $F(1, 115) = 5.76, p = .018$ , Cohen's  $d = .57$ . Male participants exhibited no such significant difference ( $M_{\text{female}} = 1.96, SE = .13$  vs.  $M_{\text{male}} = 2.27, SE = .13$ ),  $F(1, 115) = 3.07, p = .083$ .

### Discussion

The results of Study 2 supported the notion (from Hypothesis 2a) that students with high academic entitlement have a higher expectation of female professors granting their special favor requests. This increased expectancy consequently resulted in a greater inclination, in our hypothetical scenarios, for students to ask for these (sometimes outrageous) favors (supporting Hypothesis 2b), as well as an increased likelihood of becoming irritated or disappointed if the professor rejected the favors, and less willingness to take “no” for an answer (supporting Hypothesis 2c). We believe these effects are the result of women being perceived as more communal (Eckes 2002; Ridgeway 2001), and female professors thus being set to a higher standard regarding nurturing behavior (Burns-

**Table 2** The mediating role of approval expectation in the effect of the professor gender  $\times$  student entitlement interaction on each dependent measure, Study 2

Dependent variable	<i>b</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI
Likelihood of asking for favor:				
Path a	.38	.14	.006	[.11, .65]*
Path b	.91	.08	.000	[.74, 1.07]*
Path c'	.01	.12	.907	[-.23, .25]
Indirect effect at low entitlement	-.26	.16	-----	[-.59, .05]
Indirect effect at average entitlement	.06	.11	-----	[-.16, .29]
Indirect effect at high entitlement	.39	.17	-----	[.05, .70]*
Negative emotional reactions to denial:				
Path a	.38	.14	.006	[.11, .65]*
Path b	.86	.09	.000	[.69, 1.04]*
Path c'	.04	.13	.735	[-.21, .29]
Indirect effect at low entitlement	-.25	.16	-----	[-.58, .05]
Indirect effect at average entitlement	.06	.11	-----	[-.16, .27]
Indirect effect at high entitlement	.37	.17	-----	[.05, .70]*
Pleading after denial:				
Path a	.38	.14	.006	[.11, .65]*
Path b	.76	.08	.000	[.60, .91]*
Path c'	.11	.11	.353	[-.12, .33]
Indirect effect at low entitlement	-.22	.14	-----	[-.51, .03]
Indirect effect at average entitlement	.05	.10	-----	[-.13, .25]
Indirect effect at high entitlement	.32	.15	-----	[.05, .64]*
Perceptions of being disliked after denial:				
Path a	.38	.14	.006	[.11, .65]*
Path b	.61	.13	.000	[.35, .87]*
Path c'	.17	.19	.376	[-.21, .55]
Indirect effect at low entitlement	-.18	.13	-----	[-.50, .02]
Indirect effect at average entitlement	.04	.08	-----	[-.11, .21]
Indirect effect at high entitlement	.26	.13	-----	[.06, .58]*

These indirect effects represent the indirect effect of expectation of approval involved in the relationship between professor gender and each outcome variable at different levels of academic entitlement. Path a: Professor Gender  $\times$  Entitlement interaction on Expectation of Approval. Path b: Expectation of Approval effect on dependent measure. Path c': Professor Gender Effect on dependent measure (after accounting for mediator of Expectation of Approval). "Negative Reactions to Request Denial" refers to a composite measure of irritation, disappointment, and pleading/persistence after request denial. Low Entitlement = -1 SD; High Entitlement = + 1SD

\* $p < .05$

Glover and Veith 1995; Sprague and Massoni 2005). Interestingly, students' general attitudes regarding women or female authority figures played no role in these results.

## General Discussion

The current research examined the extra burdens experienced by female professors in academia in the form of receiving more work demands from their students. We found that female professors (compared to male professors) reported receiving more standard work demands and being asked for more special favors from students. Furthermore, the current work demonstrates that students with higher levels of academic

entitlement are particularly likely to expect and ask for special favors from female professors (compared to male professors) and are more likely to be upset and persistent if their favor requests are not granted. Thus, our research adds to the body of empirical work regarding the experiences of female professors, and expands it by providing more information about how students treat female professors, how they react to them when the professors stand their ground, and what kinds of students are particularly likely to treat female professors differently from male professors.

In Study 1, we examined whether female professors report greater solicitation of standard work demands, special favor requests, and friendship behaviors than do male professors. We found that female professors reported all of these with

greater frequency and that the latter two were associated with higher scores on the other-directed emotional labor measure among female professors. Certainly, if students are requesting more of their professors, particularly requests that go beyond standard work duties, professors are likely to spend more time dealing with those non-standard activities and the students' emotions that may accompany them. This is consistent with prior work illustrating that college instructors tend to report greater work strain and exhaustion to the extent that students behave in a more entitled and uncooperative manner toward them (Jiang et al. 2017). Although friendship behaviors can be viewed as pleasant and favorable, they, even more so than special favor requests, seemed to cause female professors in Study 1 to perceive greater other-directed emotional labor.

However, there were no effects involving self-directed emotional labor, which essentially assessed professors' felt pressure to put on a façade to appear pleasant for their students. Female professors do not seem to succumb to special requests or friendship behaviors by feeling more pressure than male professors to respond with artificial kindness, at least based on their self-reported experiences. Or, if they do sometimes feel that way, perhaps at other times they feel even more motivated to stand their ground, causing these opposing behaviors to cancel each other out.

In Study 2, we used an experimental paradigm to examine whether students would be more likely to ask favors of a (fictitious) female professor, and whether student characteristics (academic entitlement, views of authority based on gender, and modern and old-fashioned sexism) moderated the effect. Results indicated that students, specifically those with high levels of academic entitlement, expected female professors to grant their special favor requests and were more inclined to make the requests, be irritated/disappointed if the professor denied the requests, and persist in asking for favors after being denied, if the professor was female versus male. They were also more likely to conclude, if the professor was female, that a request denial meant that the professor disliked them.

It is interesting to note that although academic entitlement was correlated with all of the dependent measures in the female professor condition, none of these correlations were significant in the male professor condition, suggesting that male professors may be more immune to potential entitlement effects. Perhaps because of gendered expectations of men as more agentic and authoritative (Eckes 2002; Ridgeway 2001), students, even entitled ones, may choose not to oppose their male professors' decisions. This could be out of respect for male professors, feeling intimidated by male professors (if they are seen as more powerful), or believing that opposing the male professors' decisions would be unproductive because their agentic qualities would cause them to remain firm on those decisions. The last possibility seems to fit the data well, considering that entitlement was unrelated to expectations of

favor approval when the professor was male. Not surprisingly, students low in academic entitlement did not exhibit professor gender effects, probably because such students would be less inclined to make special favor requests of any professor.

Interestingly, Study 2 found no evidence of students' attitudes toward women playing a role when it came to making special favor requests. There was no impact of students' views of women in authority positions, modern sexism, or old-fashioned sexism on the likelihood of asking for special favors or on anticipated negative reactions to favor refusals. Although surprising, the lack of any moderating effect of aversion to women in authority positions is consistent with Rudman and Kilianski's (2000) research, which yielded no clear connection between such aversion and beliefs regarding agentic and communal qualities of men and women. If students are simply behaving in an opportunistic manner, then their reactions to female professors regarding special favor scenarios may be driven solely by their communal expectations of them, regardless of their opinions about the legitimacy of their status.

Although students' sexist views did not influence how students projected treating the female professor in Study 2, implicit measures of sexism sometimes yield clearer results (e.g., de Oliveira Laux et al. 2015) than explicit ones like those used in our research. Despite perceiving them differently, students may not intend to treat female professors differently than male professors. Thus, future research might benefit from including an assessment of implicit gender stereotypes as a potential moderator. It is also possible that the lack of sexism effects resulted from floor effects (especially for the measure of old-fashioned sexism) rather than reflecting true null effects of sexism on students' treatment of female professors. Nevertheless, the moderating role of academic entitlement in Study 2 was so strong and consistent that it may be much more involved in this gender bias than any gender attitudes are.

Regardless of the root cause of differential expectations of female versus male professors, our work demonstrates that these expectations influence how some students likely treat female professors. Such treatment may greatly impact female professors, from greater time demands and emotional labor (Study 1) to more negative emotional reactions and pleading from students (Study 2). It is also important to consider that faculty work life constitutes more than just interactions with students. If female faculty members face similar differential treatment by colleagues and staff members (e.g., greater pressure to conduct tedious committee work), then that could exacerbate their emotional and work burden even further. A recent study found, in fact, that female professors engage in more university/department service activities than do male professors (Guarino and Borden 2017). This could be problematic for female professors given that a greater workload may contribute to burnout, and that emotional labor may

contribute to greater work stress, lower satisfaction, and greater distress (Pugliesi 1999).

### Limitations and Future Research Directions

One potential limitation of the present studies is that student population characteristics may impact both average levels of academic entitlement and how likely students are to make special favor requests of professors in general. The data for Study 2 were gathered from a public university, but it is possible that findings gathered at different types of institutions may be stronger (e.g., at private liberal arts colleges) or weaker (e.g., at community colleges).

Another limitation to the conclusions that we can draw from our research is the possibility that female professors may in reality be, or at least appear to be, more open to special favor requests than male professors in similar positions, thus eliciting more of these requests from students. If so, this especially may be the case for female professors who are early in their careers and/or are in non-tenure-track positions, where continued employment is dependent on student evaluations. Furthermore, if students have had different experiences with male and female professors, that could cause them to develop the differential expectations we observed in Study 2.

Relatedly, it would be interesting to examine actual student behaviors toward male and female professors rather than professors' perceptions (Study 1) or students' ratings in hypothetical scenarios (Study 2). Regarding Study 2, there could be differences between students' self-reports and their actual behavior. Perhaps students would feel bolder when responding to hypothetical scenarios, or perhaps they would assume that they would respond in a more respectful manner than they actually would. However, the fictitious professor methodology we used was advantageous in allowing us to hold characteristics about the professors constant while manipulating only professor gender, whereas other methodologies would incur potential confounds.

Future research directions might include examining additional professor traits beyond gender that might affect students' expectations, such as the professor's age, race, degree, occupational status, discipline, and confidence. Although participants in Study 2 were told the male or female professor had been working at the university for 10 years, it is still possible that students may have inferred different ages of the male versus female professor, which could result in a potential confound. It could be that seasoned female professors are challenged less frequently than are those more recently out of graduate school. However, Study 1 found different amounts of special favor requests for male and female professors even though the two groups of participants were of the same age, on average, and had about the same amount of college teaching experience.

Another consideration is that professor gender effects may vary across academic disciplines. Specifically, gender effects may be stronger or weaker depending on whether female professors teach courses on social issues like sociology (as in Study 2), which may be perceived as a discipline with a more liberal stance on issues, as opposed to courses on "hard sciences" or STEM fields, like chemistry and engineering, which could be viewed as more traditional. Thus, further work using multiple populations, methodologies, and assessments are needed before we can determine the generalizability of our findings.

### Practice Implications

One practical implication of this work involves tenure and hiring decisions made by administrators. Aside from contributing to burnout and taking time away from career-enhancing activities (see Jiang et al. 2017), greater demands and special requests from students may affect female professors' career advancement by causing them to get less favorable course evaluations and/or more complaints filed against them. Students may perceive female professors as less fair than their male counterparts if female professors are expected to expend exceptional effort to help out their students in unrealistic ways, thus resulting in worse evaluations. The literature on gender effects on student evaluations of teaching is somewhat conflicted, with some findings demonstrating gender bias and others not (e.g., Bachen et al. 1999; Basow 2000; Young et al. 2009). Importantly, these inconsistencies in findings cannot be explained simply by the years in which studies were conducted given the broad span of years represented; thus, it is not simply the case that gender bias has decreased over time.

Although gender effects tend to be small when they do emerge (Feldman 1993; Marsh and Dunkin 1992), it is noteworthy that even small aggregated influences on student evaluations can have large impacts on female professors' teaching reviews and progression through tenure (Basow and Silberg 1987). Thus, students' expectations of their female versus male professors may have lasting consequences even beyond the day-to-day extra burdens experienced by female professors. One consideration then is whether university administrators might keep this research in mind when evaluating tenure portfolios of female professors and using student evaluations of teaching to make decisions about hiring and promotion.

Another clear practical implication of our work involves determining how to best curb the extra burdens experienced by female professors. Because our research found that academic entitlement played a bigger role than gender attitudes in the differential treatment of female professors, the best way to reduce job strain for female professors may be to lower overall academic entitlement across all students. Not only might it be more effective in reducing the gender biases we observed, but it could also lead to more global benefits for



both students and professors if it causes students to be more self-driven, appreciative, and hard-working. We also suspect that it would be easier to reduce academic entitlement than to take all of the steps necessary for teaching students not to have and act on gender stereotypes, particularly those held at an unconscious level. Doing the latter would entail teaching the content of the stereotypes, convincing students that they possess the stereotypes, and motivating them to not use the stereotypes. Even still, students may not be able to control the effects of any implicit gender stereotypes that they hold. Although reducing sexism in academia is an important undertaking, it may not be the most direct path toward reducing extra burdens for female professors.

Even though academic entitlement beliefs may be more malleable than gender beliefs, some researchers suggest that academic entitlement is less malleable than the uncivil student behaviors that may follow, such as disrespecting or challenging an instructor, or responding with hostility or complaints (Jiang et al. 2017). Moreover, Jiang et al. (2017) have found that the reason that academic entitlement results in more instructor work strain and exhaustion is because of the uncivil student behaviors that stem from such entitlement. The authors suggest, then, that perhaps these uncivil behaviors could be reduced via formal rules of conduct (e.g., specified on syllabus) or discussions with students regarding the negative effects of uncivil behaviors.

Perhaps efforts could be geared at reducing both entitlement beliefs and their negative behavioral outcomes simultaneously. No known intervention for reducing academic entitlement has yet been tested empirically, although some researchers do make some suggestions, such as implementing clearer standards and assessment practices, explicit requirements for professor-student interactions, and efforts to re-socialize students and faculty (Lippmann et al. 2009). Regarding female professors, specifically, it is possible that student entitlement may be headed off by simply holding fast to rigorous academic standards, in line with Lippman and colleagues' (2009) first suggestion; however, doing so may have negative consequences for female professors (compared to male professors) because it would likely violate students' expectations about women in authority and subsequently lead to lower evaluations from students.

One entitlement-reduction strategy that may not have this potential drawback could involve students diverting attention and perception away from themselves and what they want (e.g., special favors) and directing it onto others. For example, some past research has shown that increasing communal focus can decrease narcissism at the state level (Giacomin and Jordan 2014). Because one key component of narcissism is entitlement (Wink 1991), this kind of strategy might work to reduce domain-specific academic entitlement. Along these lines, something as simple as highlighting the fact that granting special treatment to one student and not others would

be unfair may be sufficient to activate communal concerns. If so, female professors may be able to either head off special favor requests from entitled students by discussing ideas like this with the whole class, or more easily respond to requests and more effectively placate entitled students. Empirical efforts to test such interventions are extremely worthwhile to pursue because such interventions would likely reduce burdens felt by all professors and perhaps make the work and emotional demands of female professors more on par with those of male professors.

## Conclusions

The three authors of this paper are all women who teach at the college level. It is easy for each of us to recall a recent outrageous special request made by a student. One of us recalls a student who requested that a final grade of D be changed to a B so that the student could maintain an athletic scholarship. Another of us recalls a student submitting two late papers, without permission and after the final exam, with a note thanking the professor for her flexibility in accepting them. Another of us recalls a student who missed four of eight exams and then, during the last week of the term, requested not only permission to make up all of the missed exams, but also permission to use class notes while taking them. To provide an example regarding expectations of communal behavior, one of us recently received a visit from a student wanting help on a paper that was due the next day. The professor said, "It is 5pm and I haven't even had lunch yet," at which point the student responded with, "Can't you multi-task?" We do not doubt that male professors also receive these types of requests, but our research suggests that they may receive them with less frequency. Although some female professors may enjoy taking on these extra helpful duties in serving their students, others surely become frustrated with the extra demands and expectations. In either case, demands on the professors' time increase with each extra request.

Taken together, the results of our studies provide evidence that female faculty may have different, and more time consuming, interactions with students than their male counterparts. Although the numbers of U.S. female professors are rising and approaching equality with male professors, our findings suggest that there is still a long way to go in achieving equality in expectations and treatment from students. Our work adds to an already large body of literature examining the deleterious effects of gender stereotypes on women in academia, and it contributes additional knowledge by illustrating how female professors may be overly burdened by special favor requests from students and by demonstrating the role of student characteristics like academic entitlement in producing these effects. Moreover, our work brings to light the differential experiences of female professors that may extend to those of other female leaders. We hope that continued research

aimed at evening the playing field will start to make the workplace a more pleasant and less demanding setting for women where they will no longer have to “dance backwards and in high heels.”

**Compliance with Ethical Standards** The research presented within this manuscript was conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines set by the American Psychological Association and the Institutional Review Boards of the relevant authors’ institutions. This manuscript is not currently under review at any other journal, nor has any portion of it been published previously.

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