

For someone who loves to talk and present, it was really difficult to write this speech. I must have re-written it a dozen times—I care so deeply about the topic of women. Feeling humbled by this award, I brought my feelings to a small network of women to which I belong. They advised me to “be grateful” and to “accept the award like a man!” I’ll attempt to do at least the first half of that advice.

I realize what an incredible honor it is to be recognized. One of the things that we know related to gendered cumulative advantage is that women are not as often recognized as men in their various endeavors, so this recognition is VERY significant, and I am thankful.

As a scholar, doctoral student, research assistant, wife, and mother of two boys, I was considering all of the things that it took to get me to this podium today. Any of you who are parents, know what it takes to get from place to place. I suppose it took a minivan (never thought I would own one of those, but I do!).... it also took four incredible nominators who advocated on my behalf. It took a committee who cared to recognize women and a university who cared enough about women to create the committee. It took a wonderful nanny to be with my youngest son sick with a fever today while I am here accepting the award. It took a husband whose favorite job is taking loving care of our two boys, making presenting at conferences and working late evenings on my dissertation feel more manageable. It took a special relationship with an advisor who ever advocates on my behalf and spends countless hours helping me be strategic about my career. It took other faculty who worked with me individually through every step of the research and publication process. It took a boss and an office who supported me during two parental leaves even when, at the time, there was no policy in place. It took a strategic network of women who provided reflective solace over the past four years. It took everyday examples of women helping women, like the countless women who have offered their offices for me to pump in during the first year of my two kids’ lives—even before the laws required a space to do so. It took a set of parents who are examples of fighting on behalf of other women and who instilled in me a fight for my own dreams. It took two boys, Brycen and Owen, who showed me the depth of my love and also made me more efficient in my work.

As you can see...it takes a village to raise a woman scholar. I believe in the power of women to succeed in our dreams. Women are inspiring! I also believe that colleges and universities have the potential to be excellent examples of “villages” for women. The University of Maryland has been that place for me, but I worry that not all have had the village that I have experienced.

We are changing as an institution to become that village: tenure delay, new part-time policies, new policies for graduate student parents, the child care referral service, the NSF Advance grant to support women faculty—these are all evidence of a culture that is changing into a village. I also want to encourage women to find a village! You have the agency to create the village you crave. You might ask, what kinds of environments would be good “genuine incubators” of agency for women? Well, there are some good hunches based on the literature—transparency, consistency, fair policies, interdisciplinary collaborations, professional networks, recognition of the work of women....and if you are really interested, ask me again next spring FINGERS CROSSED when my dissertation is done!

Thank you again for this great honor.