Male Allyship in the Future of Work
Advancing Inclusive Leadership
Male Allyship in the Future of Work

Case Studies from the University of Pennsylvania Law School

“Time present and time past
Are both perhaps present in time future,
And time future contained in time past.”

T.S. Eliot, Four Quartets

In the early months of 2014, Nitin Nohria, the dean of Harvard Business School, showcased moral courage. Speaking to an audience of 600 alumni in San Francisco, he apologized to the women at Harvard Business School. He publicly acknowledged that they were “disrespected, left out, and unloved by the school.” “I’m sorry on behalf of the business school,” he said. “The school owed you better, and I promise it will be better.” He was apologizing for offensive behavior toward female students and pledged to “work relentlessly to make the entire school more encouraging of women.” Soon after, Nohria was hailed as an ally for his fearless apology and for announcing plans to change the way leadership was taught and the way the pipeline for leadership could be made more inclusive. Nohria’s apology gave name to an unacknowledged crisis and placed the blame on those who needed to be held accountable.

According to data from Fortune, today, women hold 25.5 percent of board seats of Fortune 500 companies, up from 15.7 percent. Though considerable progress has been made, in 2019, women still made up just 6.6% of CEOs at Fortune 500 companies. Women of color make up an even smaller percentage of this group. Since Ursula Burns stepped down from her role at Xerox more than two years ago, only one black woman, Mary Winston, heads a Fortune 500 company.

In our class on Women, Law and Leadership in the Fall of 2019, we examined the changing landscape of women in leadership and the importance of powerful allies who could disrupt the status quo in favor of women. We also examined women’s leadership as both a fairness issue and a business imperative.

In our interviews with over 55 women leaders, we heard how male sponsors had changed their careers and their lives. Fatima AlQuabesi spoke of how her mentor locked her in her office until she applied for a graduate program in law in the United States. Sandie Okoro, the General Counsel of the World Bank, told us that her mentor and then boss kept telling her that her current job was too small for her. Amy Weaver, General Counsel of Sales Force, told us, “look at men as allies, and harness that in them.”

Evidence-based research notes the importance of seeking allies who go beyond interpersonal mentoring to create enduring structural change. Workplace gender initiatives focus primarily on
changing women — from the way they lean in, to the way they lead. Placing the onus on women to change masks systemic structural causes that disadvantage women.

Growing out of our research on women who lead, we partnered with Thomson Reuters to conduct research on the future of allyship through interviews with a diverse and global group of male leaders. These are men who will lead on the global stage and will define and shape new norms in the workplace. We also wanted to find out how they responded to the changing demographics in the workplace, how would they react to women leaders and bosses and work-family policies that engage women and men on an equal basis. Most of all, we wanted to deconstruct given assumptions about men and allyship and examine what allyship looked like to men from diverse backgrounds, races, ethnicities, and other differences.

A recent Harvard Business Review paper shows that when men are deliberately engaged in gender inclusion programs, 96 percent of organizations see progress — compared to only 30 percent of organizations where men are not included.

The concept of men as allies is not without criticism. My students are fiercely critical about the “pedestal” on which “feminist men” are placed. The women in my class question why most women leaders who came to our class or zoomed into it, greeted the class by congratulating the few good men in the class. My students remain unimpressed and underwhelmed when male leaders share trite aphorisms to showcase their feminist credentials. However well intentioned, when men are given special treatment for claiming to be feminists, thanking their mothers, wives and daughters to embellish their leadership records, it can seem ultimately meaningless and opportunistic.

In class, we watched the trailer of Honorable Helen Clark’s failed bid to become the first woman Secretary General of the United Nations. All the men running for the highest and hardest office in the world claim to be feminists, seizing a mantle of leadership, while Helen Clark, the first woman president of New Zealand, stands a silent witness.

Some women are also understandably skeptical, or at best agnostic, about offering men hard-won space in their feminist conversations and conferences. These gatherings have been historically safe spaces for women to create new strategies to overcome barriers posed by male hierarchies. The achievements of male feminists can also seem modest in comparison to the grand rhetoric offered at award ceremonies for male champions of change. The Harvard Business School’s creation of the role of man ambassadors did not go without criticism. Are we thanking men for acknowledging women?

At the same time, one of the reasons that women have not advanced in equal pay, parental leave, and equitable hiring and promotion is because women have lacked male allies in the workplace. Evidence reveals that gender-parity efforts are most effective when men believe they have a quiet and important role to play in leveling the playing field. Debra Meyerson of Stanford describes allies as “individuals who identify with and are committed to their organizations, and are also committed to a cause, community, or ideology that is fundamentally different from, and
possibly at odds with, the dominant culture of their organization[s].” These are men who stand up against gender stereotypes and gender bias, eliminate pay and promotion disparities, and advocate for policies. These allies are driven by a sense of virtue ethics. The motivation for this role is often tied to a belief in fairness and justice rather than some external reward or recognition.

Our survey dug deep into current and future workplace policies that can help level the playing field and balance the laws. Recent research reveals that men experience work-family conflict at similar rates as women. This rise in work-family conflict reported by men has grown alongside newly acknowledged parenting values that see the critical role of fathers in child nurturing. Despite the rise of a new consciousness on the role of men in caregiving, there is a gendered utilization of paid family leave, with more women than men utilizing family leave and flex time.

The MeToo movement has created new social norms and social change movements. In 2018, the New York Times reported that when MeToo brought down 201 powerful men, nearly half the replacements were women. On the other hand, the MeToo movement opened conversations among men and in workplaces on gender equality, bringing the issue of pay equity to the forefront. Companies have begun adopting salary transparency policies and maintaining wage gap data in an effort to even the playing field.

Still, women continue to face workplace inequality, being paid 80 cents on average for every dollar a man makes – a trend that's expected to endure through the 22nd and 23rd centuries.

The market does not adjust to gender inequality. Exactly a year ago, USA Today argued that based on today’s wage gap, women earn $406,760 less than men over the course of a four-decade career; Latinas earn $1,135,440 less than men; black women earn $946,120 less over the course of a same length career.

Although we have moved from blaming women for their perceived shortcomings to pointing to the need for structural change, these structures are manmade, literally and figuratively. Thus, changing structures call for changing men’s mindsets and the future of work depends on this.

When we started this work in January of 2020, the young leaders on the Penn Law research team looked toward a future of glaring inequality and were committed to balancing the scales. In the midst of this research, our world changed, but their equipoise, insights, and determination only grew stronger as their work on fairness, justice, and allyship became more urgent in a future of uncertainties.

Black swan events, such as pandemics, can radically alter the course of history and the future of work. The Black Death in the 1300s dismantled the feudal system in Europe and was the precursor to the modern employment contract. With Covid-19, we are already seeing signs of major disruption. Women have long been engaged in virtual work and now both men and women are being forced into remote work. Though gendered disparities may continue in different forms, men and women have to adapt to this new reality alike. Covid-19 has inexorably changed the workplace; allyship can help breakup hierarchical and gendered structures and build more sustainability and security in a post-Covid-19 world. In the words of Vas Narasimhan, who leads the consortium of life science companies across three continents committed to fighting COVID-19, there is now a deeper sense of “shared responsibility” to engage in solutions, that can bring together different genders and generations.
Rangita de Silva de Alwis, Associate Dean of International Affairs at the University of Pennsylvania Carey Law School leads the research on transformative leadership and allyship in collaboration with Penn Law students and Thomson Reuters.

This research on allyship is dedicated to David Wilkins, Lester Kissel Professor of Law at Harvard Law and one of the nation’s preeminent scholars on the legal profession. His seminal research on diversity in the legal profession inspired this study.

This project is developed under the sponsorship of Dean Theodore Ruger, Dean of the University of Pennsylvania Carey Law School.
Male Allyship in the Future of Work

Student Research Team

Zahra Keshwani L’21, Research Team Leader

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Lindsay Holcomb L’21
These leaders in male allyship in the law have advised the project. We celebrate them as leaders and allies in law, business, and public life.

Mitch Zuklie, *CEO, Orrick*; Yale Law Women named Orrick a Top Ten Family Friendly Firm in 2019

Yale Law Women named Orrick a Top Ten Family Friendly Firm in 2019. Financial Times has chosen Orrick as the Most Innovative Law Firm in North America in 2016, 2017 and 2018. And Fortune has selected the firm among the 100 Best Companies to Work For three years in a row

David Hornik, *Principal, August Capital*; First “Giver” Featured in Adam Grant’s “Givers and Takers”

August Capital is one of Silicon Valley’s most prestigious venture firms and Hornik has been featured in the Forbes “Midas List” as Tech’s Top Investors.

Steve Crown, *Deputy General Counsel, Human Rights, Microsoft*; The World Economic Forum’s Global Futures Council on Human Rights and Technology and the first IT executive to address the UN Security Council

Vas Narasimhan, *CEO Novartis*;

Vas Narasimhan is the co-chair of a new partnership with the Gates Foundation and life sciences companies committed to accelerating the development, manufacture and delivery of vaccines, therapies, and treatments to treat COVID-19.
Mats Granryd, *Director General, GSMA*

GSMA represents the interests of over 750 mobile operators worldwide in the broader mobile ecosystem. Granryd is leading efforts to close the mobile gender gap and advance women and diversity in technology.

Tony West, *Senior Vice President, Chief Legal Officer, and Corporate Secretary, Uber*

From 2012-2014, Tony was Associate Attorney General of the US, where he supervised many of the department’s divisions, including the Civil Rights, and the Office of Violence against Women.

Craig Newmark, *Founder, Craig's List*
US charity Reclaim Childhood's Clayton Keir (now at Penn Law), center, poses with Syrian refugee girls and their parents during a squash training session in the Jordanian capital Amman, November 18, 2017.
The Next Generation of Leaders Shaping the Philosophy, Policies, and Principles on Allyship Penn Law Policy Ideas Lab Research Project

BROADER VISION:

Our research on Diversity, Leadership and Allyship will focus on how traditional notions of leadership are undergoing radical change. Our research will achieve this mainly by tracing the philosophies and lived experiences of young male allies from different backgrounds who will join the legal and business profession. Through these capsule interviews with future male influencers of our time, we examine a new understanding of leadership that is defined by differences in gender, race, demographics, male allyship, and changes in the political economy, including changing social mores as a cause- and- effect consequence of new social movements.

The Goal:

The aim of this research project is to understand the philosophy, policies and principles that the next generation of allies would like to see and shape in the legal profession and in business. Our partnership with Thomson Reuters and their capacity to amplify our research will help to shape new policies, principals and programs in the world of work. Two major questions will animate our research: How can we drive global and domestic policies that alter the workplace? How can these policies based on allyship alter the shape of the human condition?

First, what is allyship?

Merriam Webster defines allyship as, “The state or condition of being an ally, the supportive association with another person or group.”

Who is an ally?

An ally is someone who is a member of a different group but who holds positions of privilege and power, and who can advocate and take action to support less represented groups.

Why is allyship necessary?

The most dominant and powerful group in the workplace and the world are men. In order to solve the complex problems of the world, we require men to be allies. This means male leaders will need to use their power and influence to rally, sponsor, and become allies with and for women, people of color, LGBTQ groups, and other intersectional groups.
Allyship is profoundly important so that everyone is not only invited to the table at work but also heard and acknowledged.

**Questionnaire**

**Introduction:**

- □ How do you define allyship? Ally?
- □ Do you consider yourself to be an ally for women? How so?

**Allyship in General:**

- □ How do you speak up for women when they are overlooked?
- □ How do you help amplify women’s voices, not competing with them for influence or for the sake of showcasing what an admirable feminist you are?
- □ How do you bolster and draw attention to women’s voices, and the voices of women of color?
- □ How do you help them to gain as large of an audience as possible?
- □ What is proactive allyship? How do you behave when women or other members of minority groups are not in the room?
- □ Do you notice exclusion every day? Do you notice who are not there? Are you proactive? Marc Benioff, ED of Salesforce noticed exclusion and corrected it.

**A Nuanced understanding of allyship and Intersectionality:**

To be an ally is to bring intersectionality to the forefront. Gender is only one axis of difference.

- □ How do you or will you open the doors to more participation from women and women of color?
- □ How do you make sure women, especially women of color literally take seats at the table, rather than standing on the sidelines?
- □ Data has shown that when women do speak out, they can be ignored, or have their ideas taken. As an ally, how will you address this?
- □ Do you attribute an idea to a woman who offered it, and you endorse worthy ideas and ensure the appropriate person is remembered for them?
- □ How have you put a women/ women on center stage? How would you do it?
- □ Are there times when you have or will privilege some women over others?
- □ If no formal format exists, how do you (or will) offer peer to peer mentoring? Schedule phone appointments? find a coffee shop or office with other people around? How do you keep it professional?
THE ROLE OF ALLYSHIP IN DEBIASING THE WORKPLACE

The literature and practice on debiasing the workplace is shaped by insights from behavioral economics: focus on de-biasing systems and workplaces (e.g., how we evaluate performance, hire, promote, structure tests, form groups, committees etc.)

What are your ideas on the world of work/ law firm? Would you help set up or engage in the following? Would you challenge give assumptions about gender, race and sexual identity? ask these questions?

☐ How would you help the company start a program to attract a diverse talent pool?
☐ What are your ideas on hiring practices that are clear and transparent? blind résumé evaluation. evaluate résumés without names attached in order to reduce potential gender bias.
☐ How would you structure the design and layout of the workplace to advance diversity (portraits, art, architecture, iconography etc.).
☐ How would you create a policy on equal wages for equal work?
☐ How would you boost gender diversity within their own operations improving retention, and lowering the considerable cost of staff turnover?
☐ What rules and criteria will you create for promotions?
☐ How will you eliminate gender bias eliminated in performance reviews?
☐ What are the sexual harassment policies and interactive training you will put in place in the workplace? How will you deal with arbitration clauses in sexual harassment policies? New York and California have done away with this).
☐ How will you ensure no penalty for flexibility?
☐ What do you think of options for telecommuting?
☐ What clear and transparent rules will you put in place for appointment to committees, leadership opportunities?
☐ What are the networking and mentorship/sponsorship?
☐ What is the corporate culture that elevates both male and female employees through appropriate symbols and non- stereotypical leadership roles?
☐ Will you put in place a program on male allies and sponsors?
☐ What about a program to counter stereotypes?

Women’s Leadership as a CEO Priority

☐ How will you structure a company’s core mission on diversity?
☐ How will you structure the diversity committee and its reporting structure?
☐ What are the programs and plans for structured career planning, mentorship, role models and networking that you would recommend?
☐ What work/life balance policies through flexible work policies, support systems are available?
☐ Does the CEO and company take on the role of advocate of female employment within the wider community through raising awareness, launching initiatives and, in general, acting as ambassadors of gender empowerment?
Does the company create partnerships with external partners and the broader community on gender empowerment?

Is the diversity strategy focused on a relatively well-defined groups such as first-generation college graduates, female owners of small businesses, or mothers returning to work?

What are the partnerships with women-led businesses? Are there ventures to ensure they have access to capital?

Is women’s empowerment part of the empowerment of women and part of corporate social responsibility efforts?

What gender equality programs or conferences is the firm engaged in?

How will your allyship help in “Moving the Needle”: Collaborating with Industry Partners Locally and Globally

How would you collaborate with organizations across industries on research and data backed initiatives that could help generate new ideas and strategies?

How would the Firm/company promote work outside of their organizations to advance gender justice and diversity?

How would you create processes and incentives for those in the firm/company to serve as a mentor for women in the community, particularly those seeking to engage in industries that have historically been difficult for women to penetrate?

How would you create provisions for annual bonuses, as a way to incentivize focus on and improve diversity?

How will you create external pressures from clients to improve together? “When companies like Microsoft make it clear that they factor diversity and inclusion in their hiring efforts, and will reward performance, it changes the way firms approach the work and the issue. It reinforces and accelerates our own work and makes it clear that there’s a business case for diversity and inclusion.”

How will you develop Certification programs like the Mansfield Principle which calls for 30 percent women in leadership?

How will you encourage Male Champions of Change?

What kind of global and local outreach program would you design? Examples might be supporting global symposia, leadership excellence for women awards and symposiums?

ALLYSHIP AND THE METOO MOVEMENT

How is the MeToo movement shaping norms of masculinity?

Men mentoring women can make a large impact. Do you fear a backlash?

ALLYSHIP and WORK/FAMILY POLICIES

Work-family laws have the potential to advance a radical substantive equality approach which seeks to protect the rights of both men and women. Such reconciliation policies and laws are key to combating negative stereotypes that exclusively confine women to caregiving and assume that men cannot provide
caregiving. While the gendered nature of family leave policies results in subordinating the woman both in the family and in the workplace, allyship can show how gender egalitarian parental leave policies can dismantle the many historically embedded gender stereotypes.

Questions:

As an ally, how can you transform the social value attached to child-care including the role of both parents in caregiving equally?

- How do you understand that there are times when certain gender specific policies can serve a legitimate purpose, however, that these must be determined on a case by case basis?

- As an ally, how can you play an integral role in constructing these equalizing policies and constructing care as a policy issue?

- As an ally who will be in a decisionmaking role, how will you help prevent retaliation and unequal treatment upon parental leave?

- How will you advocate for Fair Workplace Policies?

- How will you send out the message that work family policies are important to men and women aren’t the only ones caring for family members? Advocating for flexible hours, working from home, on-site child-care helps men and women. Observing how and when colleagues are evaluated and promoted can also be an important area where policies can be adjusted.

- How will you develop caregiving policies for both sexes and offer suggestions on how to design leave so that the outcomes are more egalitarian?

- How will you address challenges that care givers (both female and male) face upon returning to the office?

- What are your thoughts on onramping (flexible hours at full pay) and guardrails (predictable hours) to help those returning?

- What are your thoughts on Onramp Fellowships?

- How do you feel about Flexhours or Agile Working Options, ranging from flexible hours to work from home to remote working?

- What are your perceptions on non-linear leadership tracks that take into consideration women with families?

- Supportive work-family policies have become increasingly more common. However, research shows that men’s responses to these policies are shaped less by their own personal beliefs, and by their perceptions of what is accepted and expected by their male peers.
  - What are your views on work-family policies, such as parent leave, flex time, and part-time work?

On a scale of 1 to 5 (1-not likely at all, 5-very likely), how likely would it be for you to request & participate in work-family policies (i.e. Parental Leave or Flexible Work Arrangement) if your family situation made that need applicable?
On a scale of 1 to 5 (1-not likely at all, 5-very likely), how likely do you think your male peers would request & participate in one of the company’s work-family policies (i.e. Parental Leave or Flexible Work Arrangement) if their family situation made that need applicable?

On a scale of 1 to 5 (1-not influenced, 5-very likely to influence), how much of your decision to participate in the work-family policies influenced by your perception of what is accepted and expected by leadership/management and your male peers?

ALLYSHIP AND MASCULINE GENDER NORMS:

☐ On a scale of 1 to 5 (1-not comfortable, 5-very comfortable) how comfortable do you feel in your ability to fully be yourself at work?

The “man box” refers to a set of beliefs, communicated by parents, families, the media, peers, and other members of society, that place pressure on men to act a certain way. These pressures tell men to be self-sufficient, to act tough, to be physically attractive in a certain way, to stick to rigid gender roles, to be heterosexual, to not cry or show emotion, and to use aggression to resolve conflicts.

☐ How much do these descriptions relate to something that you have experienced?

☐ What role does cultural differences (regional, ethnic, religious, class) if any, play in your attitudes to masculinity and allyship?

GENDER NORMS AND MEDIA PORTRAYAL

☐ When you see men and women paired together on television, in movies, or other media platforms, what tends to be their relationship?

☐ How often do you see women in leadership roles on television? Women of color?

☐ Does the way you see women in positions of power influence your view of women leaders?

☐ Has the way you have seen women in positions of power on television influenced your actions or decisions to be an ally for women in your professional life?

☐ Do you fear ally-ship or resulting backlash based on how the media portrayal of women?

Implicit Bias Questionnaire

☐ Upon completion of the questionnaire, please ask interviewees if they would be willing to take an anonymous online survey measuring implicit biases. Wait 3-4 days before distributing the online survey to interviewees after the date of their interview.

Link: https://upenn.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_dd3nUdbF78U7xsh
Dear Participants, The following survey is loosely based off of the Harvard Implicit Association Test. Here, we focus specifically on gender. As this survey is completely ANONYMOUS, we ask that you please answer each question with the answer that first pops in your mind, regardless of whether you believe that answer is socially appropriate or acceptable. The data compiled and reported from this survey will at no point reveal any personal information about any of the participants or their views. Do you wish to continue?

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Q2 - What is your age?

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Showing rows 1 - 8 of 8
Q3 - How comfortable would you feel with a woman in the following positions:

- Doctor
- Editor
- Firefighter
- Judge
- Nurse
- Pilot
- Police Officer
- President
- Secretary
- Senator
- Soldier

Options:
- Extremely comfortable
- Somewhat comfortable
- Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable
- Somewhat uncomfortable
- Somewhat uncomfortable
## Field Comfortability Survey

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<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>Field</td>
<td>Extremely comfortable</td>
<td>Somewhat comfortable</td>
<td>Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable</td>
<td>Somewhat uncomfortable</td>
<td>Extremely uncomfortable</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>--------------</td>
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<td>----------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------</td>
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<td>------------------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Judge</td>
<td>88.89%</td>
<td>5.56%</td>
<td>5.56%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Nurse</td>
<td>83.33%</td>
<td>11.11%</td>
<td>5.56%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pilot</td>
<td>88.89%</td>
<td>5.56%</td>
<td>5.56%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Police Officer</td>
<td>55.56%</td>
<td>38.89%</td>
<td>5.56%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>President</td>
<td>94.44%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>5.56%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>83.33%</td>
<td>11.11%</td>
<td>5.56%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Senator</td>
<td>83.33%</td>
<td>11.11%</td>
<td>5.56%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Soldier</td>
<td>53.33%</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td>6.67%</td>
<td>6.67%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Showing rows 1 - 11 of 11
Q4 - Agree/disagree or provide your best guess regarding percentages for the following statements:(0 = disagree; 100 = agree)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std Deviation</th>
<th>Variance</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>What percentage of leadership roles do you think are held by women?</td>
<td>8.00</td>
<td>40.00</td>
<td>22.26</td>
<td>9.08</td>
<td>82.51</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Women in leadership positions create more conflict than men in leadership roles.</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>50.00</td>
<td>5.74</td>
<td>14.15</td>
<td>200.09</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Women in leadership positions are more emotional than men at work.</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>42.00</td>
<td>8.21</td>
<td>12.83</td>
<td>164.59</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q5 - Of the following choices, which do you associate more with a specific gender?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std Deviation</th>
<th>Variance</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Career Life</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Financial Independence</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Single Parent</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>0.98</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Family Life</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>0.94</td>
<td>0.88</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Somewhat male</th>
<th>Neither male or female dominated</th>
<th>Somewhat female</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Career Life</td>
<td>26.32%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>47.37%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Financial Independence</td>
<td>21.05%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>47.37%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Single Parent</td>
<td>5.26%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>26.32%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>47.37%</td>
<td>15.79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Family Life</td>
<td>5.26%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>42.11%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>36.84%</td>
<td>10.53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q6 - Imagine the following positions are held by all women. In what job do you feel most comfortable with a woman in that position? Rank the following from most to least comfortable.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std Deviation</th>
<th>Variance</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Doctor</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>2.11</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Editor</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>11.00</td>
<td>4.83</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>7.69</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Firefighter</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>11.00</td>
<td>7.28</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>10.42</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Judge</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Nurse</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>8.00</td>
<td>5.39</td>
<td>1.89</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Pilot</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>6.61</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Police Officer</td>
<td>7.00</td>
<td>11.00</td>
<td>8.78</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>1.06</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>Field</td>
<td>Minimum</td>
<td>Maximum</td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Std Deviation</td>
<td>Variance</td>
<td>Count</td>
</tr>
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<td>----</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>7.47</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>7.39</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Senator</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>10.00</td>
<td>5.33</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>8.56</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Soldier</td>
<td>9.00</td>
<td>11.00</td>
<td>10.50</td>
<td>0.73</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>14</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Field</th>
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<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>i</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Doctor</td>
<td>55.56%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Firefighter</td>
<td>5.56%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Judge</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11.11%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>27.78%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>55.56%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Nurse</td>
<td>5.56%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.11%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Editor</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11.11%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Police Officer</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>President</td>
<td>27.78%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11.11%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11.11%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11.11%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Senator</td>
<td>5.56%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.11%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11.11%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>27.78%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Soldier</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Pilot</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5.56%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.56%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Showing rows 1 - 11 of 11
Q7 - Assuming the following individual is qualified, on a scale from 0-10, how likely are you to recommend a man with the following traits for a promotion?
- Great at his job
- Aggressive
- Has started arguments with several coworkers
- Been on the job for 5 years
- Has 3 kids at home (ages: 6, 4, and 2)

65% Detractor

35% Passive

-64.71
Q8 - Place the items from the list on the left into one of the categories on the right.

Place the items from the list on the left into one of the categories on the right.

- Multiple Children
- 12 hours or more at a job, 5-6 days/week
- Single Parent
- Pregnancy
- Multiple jobs

Categories:
- Career Oriented
- Family Oriented
- Both
- Neither

Place the items from the list on the left into one of the categories on the right.
Multiple Children - Rank
12 hours or more at a job 5-6 days/week - Rank
Single Parent - Rank
Pregnancy - Rank
Multiple jobs - Rank

Place the items from the list on the left into one of the categories on the...
Place the items from the list on the left into one of the categories on the...
Place the items from the list on the left into one of the categories on the...
Multiple Children - Rank
12 hours or more at a job 5-6 days/week - Rank
Single Parent - Rank
Pregnancy - Rank
Multiple jobs - Rank
Q10 - Agree or disagree with the following statements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std Deviation</th>
<th>Variance</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Women hold fewer leadership/authority positions than men.</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>1.29</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Women who are deserving of promotions/leadership positions are often passed up for a less deserving male counterpart.</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>A man who is aggressive/pushy at work is seen as passionate whereas a woman as too emotional.</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>1.65</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Adding more seats for women in leadership roles would help alleviate negative stereotypes about women.</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>1.71</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>If more women held leadership positions across different professions, there would be more opportunities for other women to advance their careers than if the number of women in leadership positions stays stagnant.</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>#</td>
<td>Field</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>Somewhat agree</td>
<td>Neither agree or disagree</td>
<td>Somewhat disagree</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Women hold fewer leadership/authority positions than men.</td>
<td>88.24%</td>
<td>5.88%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>5.88%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Women who are deserving of promotions/leadership positions are often passed up for a less deserving male counterpart.</td>
<td>64.71%</td>
<td>23.53%</td>
<td>5.88%</td>
<td>5.88%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>A man who is aggressive/pushy at work is seen as passionate whereas a woman as too emotional.</td>
<td>52.94%</td>
<td>17.65%</td>
<td>11.76%</td>
<td>11.76%</td>
<td>5.88%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Adding more seats for women in leadership roles would help alleviate negative stereotypes about women.</td>
<td>70.59%</td>
<td>5.88%</td>
<td>11.76%</td>
<td>5.88%</td>
<td>5.88%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>If more women held leadership positions across different professions, there would be more opportunities for other women to advance their careers than if the number of women in leadership positions stays stagnant.</td>
<td>76.47%</td>
<td>11.76%</td>
<td>11.76%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Showing rows 1 - 5 of 5
Q11 - Agree or disagree with the following statements about ally-ship.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Ally-ship is a useful tool for changing policy.</td>
<td>82.35%</td>
<td>11.76%</td>
<td>5.88%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Ally-ship should be used to help underrepresented groups advance in their academic and professional lives.</td>
<td>88.24%</td>
<td>11.76%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# Data Summary

- **Ally-ship is a useful tool for changing policy.**
  - Agree: 82.35%
  - Somewhat Agree: 11.76%
  - Neither Agree or Disagree: 5.88%
- **Ally-ship should be used to help underrepresented groups advance in their academic and professional lives.**
  - Agree: 88.24%
  - Somewhat Agree: 11.76%
  - Neither Agree or Disagree: 0.00%
  - Somewhat Disagree: 0.00%
  - Disagree: 0.00%

**Counts:**

- **Ally-ship is a useful tool for changing policy.** Total: 17
- **Ally-ship should be used to help underrepresented groups advance in their academic and professional lives.** Total: 17
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat Agree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Men should serve as allies for women.</td>
<td>88.24%</td>
<td>5.88%</td>
<td>5.88%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Men do serve as allies for women.</td>
<td>35.29%</td>
<td>29.41%</td>
<td>11.76%</td>
<td>17.65%</td>
<td>5.88%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Showing rows 1 - 4 of 4

End of Report
Participant Demographics

This project currently has 34 participants. The 12 participants whose interviews have been completed and all demographical information has been collected will be discussed in this post. The data below is of the 12 completed participants.

AGE DISTRIBUTION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>&lt;20</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>21-25</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>26-30</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>31-35</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>36+</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NATIONALITY DISTRIBUTION

- American: 59%
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**Michael Machado**

L’20

*Interview by Fumnanya Ekhator*

**How do you speak up for women when they are overlooked?**

If I perceive what I believe is an effort to suppress or otherwise overlook a woman’s voice, I try to step back and assess that perception first. The goal here is to prevent inhabiting a “savior” role and, by extension, reinforcing the equally as pernicious “damsel in distress” stereotype. Is it really my place to speak for a woman ever? If the answer is an unqualified “yes”, then I’ll have acquiesced in denying her agency, at least in those instances where she might have wanted to defend herself. But if the answer is only “maybe”, and I perform the assessment above (an exercise in self-reflection), then I might better avoid perpetuating prejudice and depriving a woman of her agency. That’s why I think it imperative for me, at least, to listen before reacting.

I’m a law student with a great deal of passion for various women’s causes, especially with respect to equal pay, reproductive justice and reproductive rights. It is easy and perhaps even innocuous (on paper) for that passion to manifest as protectionism. But I resist this impulse for all of the reasons I just mentioned. It’s a simple fact that my place is to listen first and reflect second.

It’s likely, though, that my reflection won’t be perfect. I might misjudge a situation as one that calls for my voice when in reality the woman in question might have preferred either to share her thoughts in a separate conversation or to raise her own voice. Acknowledging this, I try, when I do speak up, to issue certain “disclaimers” – that’s not the best word for it, I know. But what I mean is that I repeatedly emphasize something like, “So-and-so is more than capable of speaking for herself and I do not at all intend to speak for her but only as her ally. In light of the fact that we share similar concerns and I feel you all in the room are not listening, I want to make clear that I stand behind her.” All of this is in furtherance of redefining the privilege that being a cisgender man confers. I take that privilege and turn it into an obligation to respect even an overlooked woman’s agency to speak for herself.

**How do you help amplify women’s voices, not competing with them for influence or for the sake of showcasing what an admirable feminist you are?**

I think that my answer to Question 1 may serve as a response to this question, too. On a more personal level, though, I respectfully encourage women with whom I am friendly (as in, I don’t just shout at random women in the street) to speak up. I try (and may not always succeed) in presenting my encouragement as a suggestion and not as pressure. Women – and Black women, women of color and Trans women in particular – have always had to carry the burden of “speaking up” (educating; defending; fighting; protecting; loving), in some cases for hundreds of years and in the face of mounting discrimination and blatant misogyny/misogynoir. To say that I’d be unduly contributing to or increasing that burden by pressuring women is an understatement. But I think what has worked for me is highlighting some of the benefits that may come from speaking out and listening when a woman says she’d really rather not make her voice heard in the moment.
Outside of the context in which I’ve thus far enmeshed my answers – as in, those cases where women have something to say period – I think it best for me to shut my mouth. Seriously, I think an action that simple has the potential to transform the way that we all relate to one another in society. Try shutting up! It’s fantastic. Men have done enough of the talking and even talking to say “I would like to amplify x woman’s voice now, and I am a big strong man and yet here I am being a Feminist” is… too much talking. I apologize for the flippancy but really, a good way to create space for women to amplify their own voices is to let those women exist without explicitly taking any credit for it.

What this question doesn’t get at, though, are instances where men may have additional privileges conferred upon them, say, by inhabiting a particular role in an employment context where they have considerable influence relative to female colleagues who might appreciate explicit amplification. I’m sure that other questions in the survey reach this subject and I plan to elaborate there.

**What is proactive allyship? How do you behave when women or other members of minority groups are not in the room?**

That’s a good question – it gets to the notion of character, or who you are when no one else is watching. I try to educate those men in my life who say, for lack of a better descriptor, stupid things about women or women’s roles. I’m an open advocate for more women’s voices and more women leadership in all fora. I'll put myself on the line with a male of considerable influence and power over me if I feel that that male is perpetuating grave injustice against women. Is all of this enough, though? I don’t know. I think self-reflection as I’ve previously suggested can be a powerful tool, but only if you’ve accepted as a baseline that women are equal in all respects to men. That seems so fundamental to me but there are plenty of men who do not believe that or who say that they do but otherwise act in a manner inconsistent with that premise. I will say that allyship need not and really shouldn’t be predicated on your familial relationships with women, and too many men are proactive in that regard only: “I have a sister and I would never want for her to be degraded or mistreated, and I believe she can and should be a leader”. That’s really great for your sister and for you, but if men are encouraged to respect women only if they have personal relationships with women or worse, that they need only respect those particular women and no other. Sincere, proactive allyship can take several forms but I think that those of us genuine in our effort to be good allies should keep these things in mind.

**How do you or will you open the doors to more participation from women and women of color?**

As a law student, I do my best to give Black women and women of color who are my colleagues the respect that they deserve. I have had the great pleasure of knowing and learning from these brilliant women, whose experiences and words foster a more enriching law school experience. I’m grateful to them for their candor, resilience and grace. Perhaps the best way of paying it forward, apart from the respect described above, is to carry these sentiments with me into the Big Law world, where I hope to find myself once the dust settles in the wake of COVID-19. I don’t know that this would mean me opening the doors. My hope is actually that they’d be the ones
opening the doors for me. But if we find ourselves in opposite roles, I’d make it my mission in life to bring them into leadership and other comparable positions of influence. I’d amplify their voices in lieu of mine and yield power to them for the sake of shifting the paradigm for the better. In the legal profession, especially, we need more women leaders and women’s voices to dominate the conversations and trajectory of our work.

**Do you attribute an idea to a woman who offered it, and you endorse worthy ideas and ensure the appropriate person is remembered for them?**

Yes, and yes. I need not elaborate here. Men: if you aren’t doing this, start doing it. Give credit to your colleagues where credit is due, especially if they’re Black women or women of color whom you needn’t forget are often relegated to the sidelines in spite of having what are likely better ideas than you have.

**Are there times when you have or will privilege some women over others?**

I don’t know that I would characterize it as “one over the other”, but I’m particularly mindful of the consequences brought to bear when fights for suffrage and broader civil rights coalesced in the earlier part of the 20th century. Prominent activists, suffragettes and reformists who also were Black women, like Ida B. Wells and Mary Terrell, did not gain full acceptance from their white, female counterparts, many of whom had been opposed to Wells’ and Terrell’s support for the 15th Amendment’s promise of enfranchisement for Black men. There is no fight for equality of women that does not begin with an acknowledgment of this historical exclusion, which traces the intersectionality of race, sex, gender and politics. In this regard I think there needs to be an emphasis on Black women’s voices in movements for change, inclusion and equality. To the extent I hold this view, you might argue I am privileging those Black women or other women of color who historically have been deprived of certain rights. But I stand behind my decision to do that because it’s about time we amplify the voice of the voiceless. There is nothing wrong with bringing these women to the forefront of conversations where their input has historically been devalued or ignored. It is what we ought to be doing day in and day out.

**On a scale of 1 to 5 (1-not comfortable, 5-very comfortable) how comfortable do you feel in your ability to fully be yourself at work/school?**

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The “man box” refers to a set of beliefs, communicated by parents, families, the media, peers, and other members of society, that place pressure on men to act a certain way. These pressures tell men to be self-sufficient, to act tough, to be physically attractive in a certain way, to stick to rigid gender roles, to be heterosexual, to not cry or show emotion, and to use aggression to resolve conflicts. How much do these descriptions relate to something that you have experienced?

I don’t intend to paint men as victims but there is a great deal of truth to the concept of toxic masculinity, which controlled me for a greater part of my life until I reached college-age. I don’t know who or what I did this for; why I worried so much about how I spoke or sounded to others, or why I tempered or hid what I was passionate about or interested in. I guess I did it for myself,
mostly – as a defense mechanism, in light of the fears I had of being judged for all of the above. Crying is a big one, too. Crying is apparently not masculine at all; only women can cry! It’s completely bogus, not to mention scientifically inaccurate. But it was a very real thing that I dealt with, this sort of rejection of all that had been deemed “feminine” by the powers that be, whether they be my culture, parents or the media. Today I’m far more outspoken about the need for us all to dispel those myths about gender which for so long told men that they could not or shouldn’t wear certain colors or articles of clothing/accessories. We’re at a point where we’ve acquiesced in the gendering of (or overt association with a particular sexual orientation) fragrances, interior and exterior car colors, hair styles, sports interest, and dance or acting ability, to name just a few. This is a status quo worthy of prompt disruption. We’re hurting one another and ourselves when we agree to play by rules, we did not ourselves write.

**When you see men and women paired together on television, in movies, or other media platforms, what tends to be their relationship? How often do you see women in leadership roles on television? Women of color?**

Television and film generally adhere to rigid conceptions of gender, sex and sexual orientation. For the showrunners, producers and directors who haven’t yet adapted or refuse to adapt to emerging trends – respect for Trans rights; respect for Black women and women of color; recognition of the fact that gender is a fiction and the stereotypes around such social constructs, pernicious and misguided, at best; acknowledgement of the fact that gender and sex and sexual orientation are not at all the same thing (the list goes on) – I think they’ll eventually find themselves in the minority. Thankfully we have women like Shonda Rhimes, Ava DuVernay, Lulu Wang, Kasi Lemmons, Brosh McKenna, Jenji Kohan and Snyder Urman at the helm of paradigm-shifting art disruptive of the status quo. Still, I think the issue is that there aren’t enough women in these writer’s rooms. Until then, we’ll see very little cultural change in our shows and movies. Cold and calculated female antiheroes; Black women, Latina women and other women of color not being defined in a one-dimensional way that is relentlessly emphatic about their Blackness or Latina-ness or mere ethnicity, if you will; flawed men; the depth and complexity of different female friendships; and non-male centric families all tend to defy narrative norms. I’d like to see more of that, and the onus is on men in the industry not only to bring women into the fold but to yield power to them. The time for change is now, when the greater part of the world is demanding it.

**Do you fear allyship or resulting backlash based on how the media portrays women?**

There’s backlash all the time, but I don’t know that it has to do with media portrayal so much as how society generally views women and their roles as compared to men. This goes hand-in-hand with the gender norms question you asked me earlier. Look the fact is that most of the men I know privately scoff at the idea of being a male advocate for women. That might be a product of immaturity (not at all a good excuse for a 27-year-old), but whatever the case may be, I just laugh it off. I’m on the right side of history and I’m on the right side with respect to my moral compass. Male allyship feels right to me, yes – but it also just makes complete sense? I don’t know that I’m explaining myself properly but for me it is an absolute given that women are equal
to men and their contributions are as valuable if not more valuable given the historical struggle behind women’s equality. There will be backlash for so long as ignorant, stubborn men (and even anti-choice conservative women, for example) insist somehow that men are superior and that traditional gender roles ought to be maintained.
What does allyship mean to you? What is an ally and how do you define that?

I guess in the context of this survey, it would be someone who, I don't know, someone who does not belong to a certain class of people or doesn't share the same background. Someone who does not share the same background as someone, but still tries to support them in their expression of their own experiences and their own success. And also specifically in the context of America where we do have a stratified society where certain people, because of certain experiences and classes and appearances, have different challenges, if you are part of a class that does not face those challenges, then allyship is kind of using your privilege help people overcome those challenges and lifting up the voices and experiences of people who do not share your privilege.

Do you consider yourself to be an ally for women?

I hope to be. I’m sure I make mistakes, but I hope to be.

Do you consider yourself to be an ally now, or is this something that you’re aiming to do in the future?

I like to think that it’s now and in the future.

Since you’re saying now, what do you think you have done to show support or serve as an ally for women?

I think some of it is just being mindful, when you’re speaking, interacting with people, etc.

Mindful of what?

I guess how much space you take up, just various things. So I guess in the classroom, making sure that you’re not monopolizing conversations, you’re not minimizing other people’s experiences, or just taking your own experience for granted as something that, I don’t know – just being overconfident? In other situations, it also means not to play into implicit bias and stereotypes and making judgements about people because of things like their, well I guess are we only talking in the context of gender?

Yea, for now. But you can talk about other things.

Yea, so I guess in this context, not playing into implicit bias. And, to some extent, going in the opposite direction because I believe in affirmative action and things like that. So just, I, many times, if there are many women in the room and I’m the only male there, I won’t say anything and will cede space. Also,
especially in the context of the Mexico trip which is very focused on reproductive rights and justice which is very uniquely – all of the burdens that we are trying to challenge do disproportionately challenge women. So, realizing my space on that trip as an ally and not as someone experiencing this means that my role will be using my privilege to lift other people up and not speaking from a place of authority and experience.

So, a couple things. First, you mentioned that where women’s voices are suppressed, you try and draw attention to that and not take over for them. How do you bolster and draw attention to women’s voices?

Limit your own – that’s my main one. And then in places where I have been given power, so I guess in leadership positions on campus, just making sure to use that power to distribute as evenly as possible or as unevenly as possible towards fixing it as possible, i.e. giving positions of power to diverse women and ceding or deferring to their ideas and giving them more, I don’t know, just deference.

Second, you mentioned a Mexico trip. What made you decide to go on this Mexico trip, what is it, and how does this help in your decision to be an ally?

So the Mexico trip is with IHRA, the International Human Rights Advocates. We will basically be partnering with two organizations, non-profits, in Mexico, that are working to promote reproductive rights mainly for women in Mexico. I’m specifically on a project that is going to analyze cases in which reproductive rights, such as access to abortion, have been limited for women and in which they have been incarcerated and trying to look for ways in which we can use international law (specifically the Inter-American Court) to challenge the infringements on their rights and maybe change laws and provide them with greater access to these really important health services. So, that will be mainly in a research capacity, helping these organizations that are in Mexico. I decided to go on the trip because of various reasons. I’ve never been to Latin America before, but I work with lots of Latin American people through my work in immigration. I think it would be a great to interact more with hugely diverse group of people. Secondly, the mission of the trip is really important, especially after taking Dorothy Roberts’ class, I learned a lot about that area of the law. Again, I think it’s going to be a really interesting exercise navigating that space as someone who, depending on what aspect of reproductive rights and justice (because obviously some parts of it does affect men, but the majority does not), navigating that space where I cannot speak from experience and to a large extent, I will never understand what these clients are going through, in a very fundamental sense. Like, I can use empathy and sympathy to understand it, but I will never experience it. So, navigating that space is going to be the core of allyship because I can speak from whatever my observational opinions are, but, again, I will always defer to the people around me because the rest of the trip are women and they will have a greater understanding of that, I think.

To be an ally, is to bring intersectionality to the forefront. Gender is only one axis of difference and you’ve talked a little bit about that. So, how do you or will you open the doors to more participation from women, and specifically, women of color? And then, giving you a compound question, but to that end, how do you make sure women, and especially women of color, literally take seats at the table, rather than standing on the sidelines?
So, I guess, just addressing intersectionality, I guess that’s just, um, just adding intersectionality in how you approach the world is really important. You’re not just going to think in terms of pure identities, secretarian politics. So, it’s not enough to say, “oh look, we have/our board is composed of 50% women, yay we’ve achieved equality.” There’s a lot more nuances that go into that. Just, looking at statistics of race as well, but not just individuals. You can’t just say, “we have 50% women, we have whatever percent, or greater than 50% minorities,” you have to actually look at them together. So, I guess, just having a more nuanced view of things so you’re not constantly isolating different statistics, and you’re not purely statistically driven. And I think that does lead into your next question, because even if you do have wonderful statistics of people of various intersectional identities that are very diverse and providing all of these different perspective on things. If they are on the sidelines and not actually in leadership positions, then you probably haven’t achieved an idea of equality. I know there are many different theories of equality, but we’ll table that. So then how I will go about trying to make sure that takes place…I guess, this is a question based on what I can do, so I guess first that means I have to have a certain amount…like exercising the power that I do have. So in ways such as voting, in ways such as – well how I go about interacting with people, that’s where I have power. So, educating myself on issues that don’t necessarily touch me by associating with a wide group of people that can provide the perspective that I need to make those decisions – that’s important. I think, also, I guess, in just my interactions with other people, it’s just trying to maintain or be up to date on issues or stereotypes on how people interact. So even in things that I can’t fully understand myself because of my experience, if I’m interacting with a diverse group of people, if I’m constantly reading, and learning more about these theories and major biases that are coming out, then I correct my own biases in my interactions with people. And then to the extent that I have other power from leadership positions or whatever, it’s about being very conscious about how you wield it and going out of your way – not even out of your way, it should be part of your values to just make sure that you’re incorporating intersectional identities and improving diversity. I remember for the PLIRP board, that was a very big thing for me because I knew that me and Adam were both males and I am half white and he’s white and most of our board was white so it was very very important to me that when we were picking 1L reps, that I was gunning for all of our, or adding diversity to our board to make sure that we weren’t trying to represent such a diverse group while being a very un-diverse group because that would make very little sense, and I’m sure we would overlook many things.

Data has shown that when women do speak out, they can be ignored or have their ideas taken. Have you seen this happen and as an ally, how have you or how will you address this?

I’ve definitely seen it happen.

And what have you done?

So I definitely haven’t spoken out in class when I’ve seen it happen. I don’t know whether that would be super productive…maybe it would be? I don’t know, I think it’s an interesting conversation to have.

Why do you think it wouldn’t be productive?
Because, I feel like just getting very combative in class…I think that I’ve seen it a lot. If the woman is someone that I know, I definitely talk to them about it afterwards because I know it can be really frustrating when no one acknowledges it and everyone just nods along and says, “ah what a great thing,” to the person who is echoing what they said. So just reassuring them that that’s not the case and that I saw how the other person totally took your point and tried to make it theirs. Other than that, I have not spoken up in class because I don’t really like cutting people off in class regardless of what they’re doing. But I think that this would actually be an interesting conversation because maybe it is good to cut it off right when you see it. I don’t know.

You mentioned that it wouldn’t be productive to raise your voice. Why do you think that?

So, I think that obviously it would be productive in the sense that the person that is doing it, that is taking someone else’s idea, like is immediately kind of called out for it. But I don’t know whether that’s going to…like if that person is receptive to it, then it’s productive. If the person just feels like I’m kind of silencing them or whatever stupid defenses people come up with, then I feel like it can actually hurt the cause because then people will say, “oh we live in this culture where I can’t speak because I’m a male,” and that’s just not true. Whereas, maybe, approaching it a different way where you more empower women rather than cutting down men (even though I’m totally willing to cut down men), that might be more effective.

When you talked about productivity, you only talked about it in the context of how it affects the man. Why is that?

Um, no. I think that was because, again, my original answer was focusing on supporting women. Like going and actually talking to her about it and that’s how I would do that. My main concerns with whether or not it’s productive were only speaking to the man. As in like, if I call them out in class, my worries about productivity is only because there is detriment to, whatever, like the person in power here actually ceding light to women. Whereas I think that my general approach has been, in the past, to try and go lift up people that are behind.

What are your ideas on the world of work and the law firm when it comes to assumptions about gender, race, and sexuality?

My general opinions?

Your ideas – the general assumptions that you think exist about gender, race, and sexuality in the legal world and law firms in particular.

I don’t know. To be fair, it’s a broad question and I haven’t worked in a law firm so I can’t really speak to that a lot. Yea, I don’t feel comfortable speaking to the law firm environment even though, I could go based on speculation and what I’ve heard, but I don’t think that’s really productive. I could talk about my summer internship after 1L which was at a government agency and it was in a legal capacity so maybe that will be helpful in some way?
Yes, please.

Yea, so, I thought that, for the first thing, it was a work environment that I thought was not generally toxic or sexist because they head of my group and the second in charge of my group were both women which was pretty amazing. But, even in that capacity, I felt that…

Where did you work?

In the SEC, in the Enforcement Division, in Washington, DC. And so, both of the women were, I mean both of them were incredible attorneys, they had a ton of experience, they were great mentors as well, I really appreciated them. I did remember one instance, in particular. I’m sure there were many and you could probably talk to them for more, but one instance in particular, people were talking about, of course the three white men in the group were talking about microaggressions and how that was such a stupid concept and how they had to attend a – I don’t think, it was an HR training or something where they had to learn about implicit bias and they had to learn about microaggressions and how you without realizing could make a statement that is kind of offensive, or at least make someone feel a little bit bad about themselves, or something like that. The basic concept of microaggression they did not buy it and were like this is totally ridiculous. And it was really funny that –

Was it only the men?

Oh that was the most striking part of it. So it started off with the three men and then my supervisor who was the second in command, who was a woman, she actually came in and said something that was also kind of a microaggression. Oh, no, no, no. I totally remember what happened now. She said the first time she walked into her law firm, she was speaking to one other woman and she automatically assumed that it was going to be her secretary, when actually it was another first year associate and she realized that she had made an implicit bias assumption based on the person’s gender and the way they looked and something. So she was kind of trying to say, trying to challenge what they [the men] were saying that we don’t really make implicit assumptions anymore and that this isn’t really a problem and that we don’t really need to attend these trainings by problematizing it by saying that people can discriminate against their own class, I guess? I’m oversimplifying it, but she was saying, as a woman, against a woman, based on stereotypes. I thought that was an interesting experience. I stayed completely quiet because it was not my place to speak. But just the whole concept of them talking about microaggressions when I was literally the only person of color was a microaggression. But that’s fine. Oh and they made all sorts of comments about sexual orientation which was kind of annoying. It’s part of life.

What were the comments about sexual orientation and what was annoying about it?

Uh, it was during pride month, in June or something so there was a pride parade happening in DC and it’s actually really huge. And, um, it was weird in that you could tell that they were uncomfortable with it, but that they felt an obligation to go, which was kind of weird. And so they were asking each other, when I knew all of them were straight, what their plans for the pride parade were. And that just struck me as really interesting, because I guess DC is very much known as a very big, gay city. But, it’s gotten to a point where it’s almost appropriated. Like, I think most of the people that I saw going to the – no, I
cannot say that. But I do know that the people at work that I had experience with were all straight or at least married to people of the opposite sex – can never assume anything. But they were all attending the pride parade and that blew my mind because I didn’t feel comfortable at the pride parade as a bisexual man.

**Do you think that was appropriation or do you think that was them showing their support?**

So that’s a big question with allyship, right, because it’s one thing being an ally and one thing being appropriating. And I think what made it uncomfortable for me was that, like you could tell from other comments that they made that they weren’t comfortable with some of the more traditional aspects of pride. So like the pride parade, I don’t feel comfortable in, honestly, because there’s a lot of, well traditionally, for people to go and perform and just be whoever they wanted to be, even more outrageous than normal, because that’s where it was accepted. So people show up naked, people show up in all – dressed up in all sorts of genders, wearing whatever they want, and that’s great and that’s the purpose of pride. But that was uncomfortable for the straight people that said they were going to pride and it’s like sure, they were going to show their support, but they were uncomfortable with the very premise of pride. And it’s like, I don’t know, that made me uncomfortable. I couldn’t really express it. It was also just that DC, as a city, I felt that during pride month, rolled out flags on every single business, and it was actually, clearly the commercialization of it. So they were clearly just trying to monetize their support for gay rights during pride month when I didn’t think they really, that there was really any support there. Of course, maybe they are donating to really good charities and impact litigation, who knows? Maybe.

**How would you help a company start a program to attract a diverse talent pool that wasn’t about numbers, that’s not about what you were talking about – just to show statistics?**

I think, a lot of it, and I hate that this doesn’t play into the allyship card, but a lot of it is just talking to people who have your experience. I mean to some degree it was great when I was talking to partners who are straight, white, cis men and they cared about allyship and diversity and everything –

**Did they know you were a bisexual man?**

Oh I wasn’t even talking about supervisors or anything. And also, I meant like recruiting for law firms. And yes, they most likely knew because I submitted that I was part of SALSA and LAMBDA. But yea, it was great. And I would ask about diversity and stuff. So they would talk about how they valued it, but what really made the difference for me, was when I was able to talk to South Asian associates and when I was actually able to learn about their experience. And I asked them, like one question about like what are diversity initiatives, but what really mattered was that I was asking also about their own experience. So I was like, “what is a day to day work environment, for you? Do you feel left out? Do you feel singled out? Do you feel called out in any way because of xyz identity that you have?” And hearing people’s stories was the most important. And it was never perfect anywhere I went, but I think just showing that there are already people that are there that are navigating the space and can help you navigate the space was really important. So I guess that’s not answer because it’s circular because I’m saying the way to attract more diverse people is to have diverse people there, but maybe, what they can do is make more of an effort to
make those people more available, to lift up those people’s voices, and to have opportunities to have diverse people communicate to diverse people at the firm.

**What are your ideas on hiring practices that are clear and transparent, like blind resume evaluations, evaluating resumes without names attached in order to reduce potential gender bias, etc.?**

Really interesting. I’m not qualified to speak about it at all.

**Well what are your opinions and ideas about that?**

It’s interesting. I think this goes a lot towards the affirmative action debate because on one hand, you can say that being color blind is what we want to do. But, that’s what we want to do if you already reach perfect equality throughout the society. But, if you do want to have programs that are attracting diverse talent, it’s recognizing that just because someone’s numbers or statistics or experience aren’t what another person’s is, it doesn’t mean they’re not qualified or that they’re different in some way. You kind of need that data. So, it’s like, you could say, we’ll do blind college admissions and just accept the people with the best test scores and the best GPA and then you’d end up with a very white, upper class class. So I think there are certain benefits. Like I’ve definitely read a few studies where there are, like you would submit the same resume to the job and one would have a stereotypical white name and one would have a female name or one would have a, like a stereotypically black name or something of that nature. And then there would be clear differences in the hiring results. So I think those studies are really important and maybe doing some form of blind resumes, you’d have some benefits in eliminating those types of biases. I think what it comes down to is if you have a hiring office that actually cares about promoting diversity, then it’s good to have everything out in the open so people can make an informed decision and say, okay this person’s LSAT score…or we’re talking about hiring so, okay this person’s GPA isn’t as high as another person, but they probably had to work just as hard as the other person to get the GPA that they have because they were constantly encountering whatever – all sorts of stereotypes and they didn’t have the same resources growing up and all sorts of things like that. But, on the other hand if you have a hiring office that doesn’t care about diversity and only wants to hire people that are looking like them, then blind resume grading could be great in that context.

So consistent with that then, what rules and criteria, if you had the option to do this and the opportunity to do this, what rules and criteria would you create for promotions and how would you eliminate gender bias in performance reviews since performance reviews typically tend to relate to promotions?

I am in no position to talk about this. I’m sorry, I really…

**This is just in the future. If you had the opportunity to do this, how would you do it?**

Oh my god. I just need to think about this – this is a big question. Okay, first thing because I know absolutely nothing is I would create a committee to study. So then there would be a lot of reading that was done on relevant studies that would help us shape a good hiring practice. The committee would also have
to be staffed with diverse people, hear as many perspectives as possible, and then the hiring practice
wouldn’t be set in stone. There would be a trial period and a feedback period because I would want to
hear anyone that has any complaints or even the best laid out plans, because of implicit bias may still end
up perpetuating implicit bias, so, you know, still having an open conversation so we get to hear all of
those perspectives and try to adjust accordingly. So, just like making sure that it’s open and, I guess, yea,
I really can’t speak to actual policies that I would put in place.

You talked a little bit about how the training that HR made you go through or made full-time
employees go through at the SEC created some tension.

Mhmm. I think trainings are bs, but that’s fine.

Well, this will be fun for this question then. What are some sexual harassment policies and
interactive trainings you would put forth in the workplace?

I don’t think trainings can convert a person’s ideas – fundamental ideas. I think trainings can maybe make
people aware of interesting facts, but I don’t think it’s going to fundamentally change someone’s
experience, but that’s obviously based on my own experience. Would be totally open to statistics that
point the other direction. Would be very happy because training programs are such an easy fix. I feel like
corporations, schools, whatever, constantly turn to training programs as if it were a band-aid that heals all
of the race issues. And so if it actually does end up changing people’s perspectives, I would be really
happy because it’s so easy to implement, but I really don’t think it works.

Okay then going back to how you talked about having a committee to study, what would be the
rules that you would put in place for appointments to such committees? Like how would you pick
who goes on that committee?

So, first I would identify a goal of the committee and then I would choose people according to the goal.
For example, if it’s meant to be about diversity and inclusion and making sure that people aren’t
systematically held back because of certain character traits that they can’t help, then it honestly doesn’t
make sense to use a metric like “oh we want to have the people on the committee represent the national
population” or something like that. No we would probably be better staffed with all minorities of some
type rather than people in positions of power. I think key people to include on that committee would be
people that are already in positions of power that are already women leaders, that are of diverse sexual
orientation, race…And of course, even the word diversity is stupid to include at this point, but when I say
diverse, obviously, in the American context means a very specific thing.

I want to talk a little bit about the MeToo movement. How has the MeToo movement shaped norms
of masculinity?

Norms of masculinity…

Do you want me to ask the follow-up to it too while you think?
Sure.

**Obviously men mentoring women can make a large impact, but there has been tension about that since the Me Too movement. Do you fear backlash in such a setting? Or do you think that fear is valid for other men?**

Um, okay, so, I’m going to try to address piece by piece but I’m probably going to go in a hundred different directions. First thing, the idea of men mentoring women could be helpful…I don’t know about that based on my own personal experience and my own personal experience alone. I can’t speak for everyone. I haven’t found, like, the types of, or the most important mentorship opportunities for me are the ones where I can talk people about certain experiences. So, like, I really valued, um, when I decided on my law firm, I spoke almost exclusively to Indian associates. And so hearing their experiences was much more valuable to me than hearing the hiring partner of the best law firm in New York talking to me about diversity as a white man. And so it’s like you can say that was an amazing opportunity for me to talk to this really insanely high up lawyer and how he cares about diversity, and I’m sure there’s a lot of…

Not in the sense of diversity. In the sense of, consistent with the work that you’re trying to do. If the person, say there is, or the head of the firm is doing the work that you inevitably want to do, and your best chance of succeeding at that is getting mentorship with that person, that relationship would inevitably help you achieve your goal. So in that sense, if the genders in that situation were a man at the top and a woman subordinate, a lot of men now fear backlash because of the MeToo movement. So in that setting, do you think that fear is valid and would you also fear backlash?

I mean, I think the fear is overblown. I mean, just don’t rape people or sexually harass people. Okay, I’m trying to put myself in other shoes at this point. So I know that my father who is a male surgeon who takes care of primarily breast cancer care. So he has to do breast exams all the time – it’s a very standard procedure and he always calls a female nurse in at the same time to supervise because he doesn’t want to get accused of anything. Um, I would potentially argue that he has somewhat of a point because he is literally, physically touching another woman’s breast and people, depending on how much medical care they’ve had, don’t know what is an appropriate breast exam and what is not. So I totally understand that mentality. But I think in the context of just, in the legal field where mentorship just looks like, I don’t know, maybe just like talking, career advice, coffee, things like that, it’s probably unfounded fear. I mean, just don’t sexually harass people. And also, be open because I feel like a lot of people, because of their own ignorance, believe that certain behavior is acceptable when it’s not. So if you do do something, and the woman reacts negatively, then you have to be open and apologize. Of course I totally understand that that puts a lot of onus on the woman to protest behavior that is not okay. I don’t know. I don’t have that fear. I don’t know whether I can judge other people for having that fear. I think the MeToo movement has been generally positive in that it’s brought so much attention to the issue so hopefully men are educating themselves on what is appropriate workplace behavior so they don’t have to go through these lawsuits because they are sexually harassing people. Who knows.

I’m going to shift gears a little bit towards work-family policies. And I’m going to give a little bit of background before I ask the questions.
Okay.

Work-family laws have the potential to advance a radical substantive equality approach which seeks to protect the rights of both men and women. Such reconciliation policies and laws are key to combating negative stereotypes that exclusively confine women to caregiving and assume that men cannot provide caregiving. While the gendered nature of family leave policies results in subordinating the woman, both in the family and in the workplace, allyship can show how gender egalitarian parental leave policies can dismantle the many historically embedded gender stereotypes. So, as an ally, how can you transform the social value attached to child-care, including the role of both parents in caregiving equally?

That is interesting. We talked about this in con law a lot. Um, yea, no I think on the most basic level of analysis, as long as you’re only extending child care leave to women, you’re enforcing the stereotype that their role is child care. That men have to be working to support and women should not be doing that. Totally get that. So in a sense, extending it to both parents allows the family to make whatever decision makes is best for them regarding parental care and child care regardless of gender. At the same time, I think a lot of what we talked about in con law was if you do extend equal family leave regardless of gender, a lot of times because of the types of structural biases we have, women will still end up taking the leave and men will not. And then, and particularly conservative members of our class brought up that he felt that even if he had child leave, he would feel that he could not take it because of the bias in the workplace that he was expected to work through his wife’s pregnancy, delivery, and early child care because that was the standards.

So then there are two parts to this. One is the social value attached to it and the other is equalizing policies. So how would you play a role in constructing the equalizing policies and constructing care as a policy issue?

We toyed around with mandatory leave for both men and women which was kind of interesting.

What are your thoughts on that?

I think it goes a long way to showing that the workplace does not espouse this view that men should be working and it eliminates some of the uncertainty, but it takes away the autonomy of the family to make that decision because if the family does decide that the women is the best-suited to take care of the child in their particular situation, then it takes away – well if they’re both paid, then I think that’s also very important. If people are also making a financial decision on whether they can take care of their child or make money, that obviously shifts a lot. If both are paid, then I think that takes care of one important thing. And then, mandatory policies could be a start, but I would definitely phase it out because I think it’s paternalistic and maybe make a point in the stage where there is still a significant disparity in treatment, but I think, but then eventually phase it out to a time where we hopefully don’t have those disparities or ideas about child care and assigning it to gender and allowing families to choose what is best for them. Also this is in the context of all heterosexual couples…
So you touched a little bit on a lot of what I’m about to ask you about, but if you can expand on it that would be great.

Yes, please focus my thoughts.

Supportive work-family policies have become increasingly more common – which is great. However, research shows, consistent with what you’ve said, that men’s responses to these policies are shaped less by their own personal beliefs, and more by their perceptions of what is accepted and expected by their male peers. So what are your views on work-family policies such as parental leave, flexible hours at full pay, and part-time work?

I mean, I think the key is creating the work environment where there aren’t stereotypes and there aren’t expectations that are different for men and women. I, obviously, believe that every family should make whatever choice is best for them and should hopefully be facilitated by their employer to make the choice of whether or not to have a child and have the ability to take care of their child. Not having to make major financial decisions, i.e. whether I can afford to take time off or not or whether both can or who should it be. Um, I don’t trust employers to do that because they’re fundamental purpose is to maximize shareholder value.

Okay, I’m going to ask you a couple of scale questions.

Oh okay, interesting.

So 1 is not likely at all and 5 is very likely.

Okay.

On a scale of 1 to 5 (1-not likely at all, 5-very likely), how likely would it be for you to request & participate in work-family policies (i.e. Parental Leave or Flexible Work Arrangement) if your family situation made that need applicable?

Is it paid?

Yea. Either parental leave or flexible work arrangements. Like if you had the opportunity, if you had the financial backing, how likely are you to actually participate in such policies?

I mean, again, it would still depend a lot, consistent with what you were saying on what the expectations of the work environment were. Because if this were going to seriously destroy my career trajectory, then it would be a major consideration.

Destroy your work trajectory in the sense that other male peers would have a negative view of you or
I don’t speak to men so I couldn’t care less. But I also understand that as soon as I get to the work environment and it’s literally ruled by men, then that’s going to change. I wouldn’t care as much about their perception of me taking a child caring role, but I would be concerned that they think I don’t care about the company, or that I am a bad employer because I’m taking days off. Things like that. Whereas I guess that’s the value of a mandatory policy.

So then, I guess, on a scale of 1 to 5 (1-not influenced, 5-very likely to influence), how much of your decision to participate in the work-family policies is influenced by your perception of what is accepted and expected by leadership/management and your male peers?

That’s very important.

So very likely? 5?

Yea.

The “man box” refers to a set of beliefs, communicated by parents, families, the media, peers, and other members of society, that place pressure on men to act a certain way. These pressures tell men to be self-sufficient, to act tough, to be physically attractive in a certain way, to stick to rigid gender roles, to be heterosexual, to not cry or show emotion, and to use aggression to resolve conflicts.

Gender is entirely a performance.

How much of these descriptions relate to something that you have experienced?

Oh 100%. No, it’s…masculinity is 100% a performance. And I think, I don’t know, I’ve always thought about it a lot. Is this a 1-5 question?

No.

I mean all of this has applied to me. All the time. Especially my experience, being bi, I know that I change the way I behave when I’m interested in a girl versus when I’m interested in a guy. I have to perform my gender in a different way. I have to perform the way I act, the way my voice is, the way I move my hands, the way I dress. Um, all of this is also fundamentally tied to stereotypes about masculinity. So like when I was saying if I’m interested in a girl, I would have to be dressing more masculine or acting more masculine in a certain way and then the opposite sometimes in men but also not because sometimes there’s also a weird fetish with masculinity among gay men. So, yea. I mean just also because a lot of the traditional masculine characteristics don’t come naturally to me and I don’t know whether they come naturally to a lot of people, but, so, I’ve always had to think about it a lot. And, so just constructing that type of personality, those types of responses, definitely reinforced by my parents and society and friends and things like that. So, definitely.

What role does cultural differences play, if any, in your attitudes towards masculinity and allyship?
I mean, yea. I mean it plays a big role, obviously. Am I supposed to give examples? What are you looking for?

**Whatever you want to share.**

Let’s see. This is interesting. I don’t know. I think both because, well I have to first go through a saga. My father is white, like 400th generation American and my mother immigrated from India. So, definitely, you could tell I grew up watching their experiences be very very different for a variety of reasons. So, understanding cultural norms and how they can impact the way you think, the way you experience the world was a part of my everyday life because I witnessed it every single day. And then, also, the fact that I was predominately raised by my mother means that I relate very very strongly with her culture and her values. And then, it’s been kind of a shift because she’s been...just her Indian values shaping views of masculinity and even ideas of femininity. Like, activities that I was supposed to be partaking in…

**What were her ideas of masculinity?**

Just like sports, all of the things that you were mentioning – like I should definitely be self-sufficient. Whenever my dad wasn’t home, I would have to be the man of the house even if I was ten and completely incompetent and my mother is the most competent person that I know. It was like, “oh now you’re the man of the house,” and it’s like no, mother. You’ve been running this house my entire life.

**And what does your mother do?**

She’s a doctor. Yea, I don’t know. I guess just her ideas, to a certain extent are the way we would perceive them in America because, slightly more on the conservative end because Indians are on a different scale and can’t really be translated here. But, yea. As a result, I feel her ideas of what I should have been didn’t always match up to my ideas. But, I think that’s always a generational thing and the cultural aspect of it may have just enhanced it in certain ways. But also because she raised me according to her cultural beliefs, I’m sure I also have those beliefs, kind of inside me, implicitly, a lot. And I’m sure you can tell more than I can because the whole point of implicit bias is that I don’t know.

**Okay, great, thank you so much!**
How do you define allyship? Ally?

For me, Allyship is a form of conscious association with, and proactive support of, an underprivileged person or group. An “ally” forms these associations by, in the first place, trying to understand the issues facing those they are supporting, and thereafter or concurrently, using their privilege or power to facilitate change. Someone ought to be designated an “ally” not purely because they – from an internal viewpoint – believe in or support a certain unprivileged person or group, but because they have embarked on the conscious journey of allyship, which, as stated above, constitutes education and enacting change.

Do you consider yourself to be an ally for women? How so?

I consider myself to be an ally for women. For me, this means that I proactively engage in critical discussion on topics concerning women’s human rights, whether informally amongst friends or formally in the workplace/during my education. During these discussions, I ensure that I practice deference towards the views and experiences of my female peers, so that I can understand the heart of the issues facing women. At the same time, I encourage and work with my male and female peers to think about how these experiences can lead to tangible change. Ultimately, I see critical discourse as the best way for me to understand women’s issues, and in turn, facilitate meaningful change in later life, when I might be even better positioned to support the feminist cause.

How do you speak up for women when they are overlooked?

As someone who has relatively little power, compared to those high up in government or business, the occasions in which I have spoken up for women have usually involved personal and somewhat minor interactions. However, when I have been in a position to speak up for women when they are overlooked, I have done so. For example, last year, I was invited back to speak at my high school, having been one of the first in the school’s history to study at Oxford. During my speech, I talked about something that I had been told by a female friend – namely that Oxford had put on a lecture for female law students at the start of the semester, during which the speaker told the group that professors have generally observed a trend whereby women were less likely to “jump off the fence” in essays. I shared this story with my school, asking the female students to bear this in mind, and encouraging them to be assertive in their writing.

In essence, I have no general philosophy towards how I speak up for women when they are overlooked. Rather, I try to remind myself to look out for occasions – usually in a personal environment – where I can use my voice in support of women.

How do you help amplify women’s voices, not competing with them for influence or for the sake of showcasing what an admirable feminist you are?

My immediate reaction to this question was to think – at the end of the day, the best advocates for women’s causes are women. I often ruminate about past experiences in which I have taken
a feminist lead or advanced a feminist point, even though, upon reflection, it would have been more appropriate to step back and ensure that a woman took the lead or advanced the given point. This is perhaps a weakness of mine, which probably stems from being brought up in the social environment where men earn more than women for doing the same job, and men still dominate the highest positions in industry. Therefore, how I amplify women’s voices is by acknowledging that I have this weakness and working on catching myself before I start competing for influence in a space or on a topic in which women would make better advocates or enact more effective change.

Data has shown that when women do speak out, they can be ignored, or have their ideas taken. As an ally, how will you address this?

Although the world is (slowly) moving away from counterproductive stereotypes and norms, we are not yet at a point where just giving women a platform to speak out is enough – as the question notes, data shows that women are often ignored and have their ideas taken. As an ally, when I assess these situations, I am conscious not to take agency away from a female colleague or peer who has spoken out simply by backing her idea – such a move can thwart the objective of providing support by undermining the female colleague’s authority. At the same time, leaving ignorance unchecked, or failing to confront someone who takes an idea without credit, will also lead to a detrimental effect. I have concluded that the appropriate response to such situations depends on the specific circumstances – however, I am searching for a more definitive answer otherwise.

How would you help a company start a program to attract a diverse talent pool?

As I noted in one of my responses above, I have found that the best way to address diversity problems is to ensure that diverse groups are the ones solving them. As such, to help a company start a program to attract a diverse talent pool, I would encourage the company to put those from minority backgrounds in positions whereby they have a direct and genuine say over which talent is hired. From a personal perspective, as a queer-identifying male from a low-income background, I have found myself most attracted to firms with which I have had the opportunity to speak to those who are also queer and from low-income backgrounds. Likewise, where I have been involved in recruiting myself, I found myself best placed to attract those from queer and low-income backgrounds given my personal experience and consequent ability to relate.

How will you ensure there is no penalty for flexibility policies in the workplace?

Whether someone is an ally or not, everyone ought to support flexible workplace policies as a matter of economic and social logic. The Scandinavian countries are leading the way in their support of workplace flexibility, having adopted extensive and country-wide maternity and paternity leave, as well as a work-at-home culture (indeed, one of the reasons that the Scandinavian countries response to COVID-19 has been lackluster is because they already have a culture of flexible working). The upshot is that flexible workplace policies have proven their potential to increase productivity and improve general well-being. As such, to ensure that there is no penalty for flexibility workplace policies, whether advocating as an executive or as a policymaker, I believe that one merely needs to advance this logical argument, supported with empirical data.

On a scale of 1 to 5 (1-not comfortable, 5-very comfortable) how comfortable do you feel in your ability to fully be yourself at work?
The “man box” refers to a set of beliefs, communicated by parents, families, the media, peers, and other members of society, that place pressure on men to act a certain way. These pressures tell men to be self-sufficient, to act tough, to be physically attractive in a certain way, to stick to rigid gender roles, to be heterosexual, to not cry or show emotion, and to use aggression to resolve conflicts. How much do these descriptions relate to something that you have experienced?

4 – I feel pretty comfortable in my ability to fully be myself at work and school.

I believe that our generation has fared better than those before us with respect to the “man box”. I have quite enjoyed, from an early age, showing dissent through non-conformity with masculine norms. I have also enjoyed the critical self-analysis that has resulted, in which I spend time thinking about whether certain attributes I possess are a product of societal norms or my own choice. However, that all said, I still often observe how the “man box” has negatively impacted other men and believe that my positive experience is still somewhat of an anomaly. On a side note, I have found the LGBTQ+ community to be far worse with many of the pressures described above, particularly the way men must look to be “physically attractive”.

When you see men and women paired together on television, in movies, or in other media platforms, what tends to be their relationship?

In a similar vein to my answer to the previous question, I believe that, within the entertainment industry, the “needle is moving” when it comes to portraying women positively, albeit slowly and with a way to go. Growing up, men were usually the heroes and women were the lovers, awaiting their heroes return. Nowadays, although not that much has changed, we are starting to see more women portrayed as strong, independent characters, or as heroes themselves.

Does the way you see women in positions of power on television influence your view of women leaders?

I think it is incredibly important that women are seen in positions of power in the media, and I certainly believe that, growing up, seeing women portrayed in positions of power had a positive influence. One example that I can think of relates to Karren Brady, one of the judges on the UK version of ‘The Apprentice’. She has often been held up as an excellent role model for young girls in business, and I certainly admired her as a young boy growing up, notwithstanding her gender.
Ryan Plesh  
L’20  
Interviewed by May AlAjlan

How do you define allyship? Ally?

I think allyship is as much about building interpersonal relationships as it is about policy. Being an ally doesn’t just mean advocating for certain policies; it means developing an understanding of those with whom you’re allying. An ally is someone who understands that and who prioritizes around it.

Do you consider yourself to be an ally for women? How so?

Yes, I try to be. I try to be aware of the environment that I’m in and that I’m helping to create. When other men fail to behave in a way that comports with a supportive environment, I try to say something. Additionally, if a female friend or someone else calls me out for saying something, I try to hear their perspective and take accountability.

How do you speak up for women when they are overlooked?

I try to do so in a way that’s not abrasive. If you speak up a way that’s too vociferous, it’s not ostentatious, it’s often counterproductive. The other men in the room won’t take you seriously.

How do you help amplify women’s voices, not competing with them for influence or for the sake of showcasing what an admirable feminist you are?

I think this is where building relationships comes back into play. When you ally yourself with women, it becomes easier for everyone to feel more comfortable. The situation shouldn’t require a man to step in and hold the floor so that women can speak.

How do you bolster and draw attention to women’s voices, and the voices of women of color?

Sometimes, for example in class, I literally raise my hand and then point to my classmate, when she has had her hand up but the professor isn’t calling on her. Aside from those extreme situations, I think it’s important that women get the opportunity to speak on an issue before all of the men in the room pile on with their opinions.

How do you help them to gain as large of an audience as possible?

It’s important to do work behind the scenes too. For example, talking casually with your male friends about how influential some of your female friends are.

What is proactive allyship? How do you behave when women or other members of minority groups are not in the room?
Again, I think it’s important to practice what you preach, and to amplify the voices of women, especially women of color, even when they’re not in the room.

**Do you notice exclusion every day? Do you notice who are not there? Are you proactive? Marc Benioff, ED of Salesforce noticed exclusion and corrected it.**

In short, yes. It’s still astonishing to me, and I’m grateful for that, when I look around at so many spaces on campus, and there are literally zero women of color.

**How do you or will you open the doors to more participation from women and women of color?**

I think it will be important for me to recognize that women need to have mentors and people in their corner, and that I may not always be the right person for that job. In those cases, it’s important for women to be connected with allies and other women of color who can support them.

**How do you make sure women, especially women of color literally take seats at the table, rather than standing on the sidelines?**

I’ve practiced this in my own life, at school and at work.

**Data has shown that when women do speak out, they can be ignored, or have their ideas taken. As an ally, how will you address this?**

One of the most important things is making sure that there is a critical mass of women and women of color in the discussion. If there isn’t, those voices will be unheard.

**Do you attribute an idea to a woman who offered it, and you endorse worthy ideas and ensure the appropriate person is remembered for them?**

Yes, I try to always do this.

**How have you put a woman/women on center stage? How would you do it?**

I would do this by making sure that it’s not just a lot of men sitting around talking about what we need to do for the women in our workplace.

**Are there times when you have or will privilege some women over others?**

I’ve been guilty of this. I think it’s important to keep in mind. Recognizing this allows you the opportunity to correct it.

**If no formal format exists, how do you (or will) offer peer to peer mentoring? Schedule phone appointments? Find a coffee shop or office with other people around? How do you keep it professional?**
It’s definitely important to think about what will feel comfortable for your mentee. Providing them with choice is a good way to ensure that.

**How would you help the company start a program to attract a diverse talent pool?**

I would want to take it upon myself to bear some of this burden while also collecting input from any women of color who want to be part of the initiative.

**What are your ideas on hiring practices that are clear and transparent?** Blind résumé evaluation. Evaluate résumés without names attached in order to reduce potential gender bias.

This is such a big problem for so many entities. I think folks need to recognize their limits with respect to debiasing. Anonymity helps, but I think committees can play a big role in mitigating the biases we all have.

**How would you structure the design and layout of the workplace to advance diversity (portraits, art, architecture, iconography etc.)?**

This is obviously a tremendous problem, around the country, at the law school, and in untold numerous other places. It’s striking that the vast majority of statues are of men. This needs to be totally rethought.

**How would you create a policy on equal wages for equal work?**

This should just be true already, but also, we need to have sick-time, maternity leave, and paternity leave policies as part of this.

**How would you boost gender diversity within their own operations improving retention, and lowering the considerable cost of staff turnover?**

It’s important to help in creating a work environment that makes women want to stay and providing women with some autonomy over who gets hired will help.

**What rules and criteria will you create for promotions?**

There should be an objective rubric, but it should not be administered solely at the discretion of any one man.

**How will you eliminate gender bias eliminated in performance reviews?**

It’s difficult for one person to eliminate this entirely, but again I think a diverse team can provide a much fuller picture than one man can.
What are the sexual harassment policies and interactive training you will put in place in the workplace? How will you deal with arbitration clauses in sexual harassment policies? New York and California have done away with this).

It’s important that all employees be trained and onboarded with harassment training as part of their orientation.

**How will you ensure no penalty for flexibility?**

This should be national policy, but until it is, I would advocate for flexible schedules for anyone who is a caregiver especially.

**What do you think of options for telecommuting?**

It’s become increasingly clear that almost all jobs can be done remotely.

**What clear and transparent rules will you put in place for appointment to committees, leadership opportunities?**

There should be some opportunity to participate for anyone who wants to.

**What are the networking and mentorship/sponsorship?**

There needs to be a strong network of women-women mentorship.

**What is the corporate culture that elevates both male and female employees through appropriate symbols and non-stereotypical leadership roles?**

Frankly, corporate culture is still behind where it should be. Women shouldn’t have to feel like they’re working at Sterling Cooper.

**Will you put in place a program on male allies and sponsors?**

Yes, I think this can be an important initiative.

**What about a program to counter stereotypes?**

I think this kind of thing is best handled informally.

**How will you structure a company’s core mission on diversity?**

The company’s core mission on diversity needs to be all-inclusive.

**How will you structure the diversity committee and its reporting structure?**

There should be a rotation so that the leadership has to change regularly.
What are the programs and plans for structured career planning, mentorship, role models and networking that you would recommend?

I would want to hear from my employees about what they want, and I would want some of these networks to develop organically.

What work/life balance policies through flexible work policies, support systems are available?

It’s frankly really tough to envision how this will substantially change without some direction from the top, but companies can do their part to ensure flexibility for caregivers who need it.

Does the CEO and company take on the role of advocate of female employment within the wider community through raising awareness, launching initiatives and, in general, acting as ambassadors of gender empowerment?

Yes, this is important for the heads of powerful corporations and law firms.

Does the company create partnerships with external partners and the broader community on gender empowerment?

Again, through pro bono initiatives and employment policies, large companies can really shape the environment.

Is the diversity strategy focused on a relatively well-defined groups such as first-generation college graduates, female owners of small businesses, or mothers returning to work?

These groups and others like them are too often overlooked, and it’s important for them to be included.

What are the partnerships with women-led businesses? Are there ventures to ensure they have access to capital?

Access to capital for women entrepreneurs is one of the biggest problems. There needs to be more done in this area.

Is women’s empowerment part of the empowerment of women and part of corporate social responsibility efforts?

It needs to be a bigger part.

What gender equality programs or conferences is the firm engaged in?

The firm should sponsor events like this if and when possible.
How would you collaborate with organizations across industries on research and data backed initiatives that could help generate new ideas and strategies?

Big data is everything. The right data needs to be collected, and it needs to be studied and interpreted by the right people.

How would the Firm/company promote work outside of their organizations to advance gender justice and diversity?

Again, I think pro bono and other community initiatives, such as work with local nonprofits, can be really important in building community.

How would you create processes and incentives for those in the firm/company to serve as a mentor for women in the community, particularly those seeking to engage in industries that have historically been difficult for women to penetrate?

If nothing else, there should be literal pay incentives for more managers and executives to mentor women and women of color.

How would you create provisions for annual bonuses, as a way to incentivize focus on and improve diversity?

Annual bonuses should definitely not be black box, as they are at some law firms. Basing bonuses purely on hours worked can be a problem too though. Again, I think committees have a role to play here.

How will you create external pressures from clients to improve together? “When companies like Microsoft make it clear that they factor diversity and inclusion in their hiring efforts, and will reward performance, it changes the way firms approach the work and the issue. it reinforces and accelerates our own work and makes it clear that there’s a business case for diversity and inclusion.”

Clients can be a driver of change, and they often are.

How will you develop Certification programs like the Mansfield Principle which calls for 30 percent women in leadership?

That seems like a wildly unambitious target. To hear Obama tell it, women should be in power for a while.

How will you encourage Male Champions of Change?

Some men will just be this. Others will need to be given a bit more incentive, such as with bonuses, etc.
What kind of global and local outreach program would you design? Examples might be supporting global symposia, leadership excellence for women awards and symposiums?

I would want to sponsor these kinds of initiatives whenever possible, and I would also want to have a policy of funding travel to such conferences and symposia for women and men who want to attend them.

How is the MeToo movement shaping norms of masculinity?

It’s changing things, but frankly not quickly enough.

Men mentoring women can make a large impact. Do you fear a backlash?

The goal is to have a world where anyone can be an effective mentor for anyone, but we’re a long way from that. In the interim, it’s important to make wise choices about mentorship.

How do you understand that there are times when certain gender specific policies can serve a legitimate purpose, however, that these must be determined on a case by case basis?

Companies can implement a sort of “strict scrutiny” policy regarding gendered workplace policies.

As an ally, how can you play an integral role in constructing these equalizing policies and constructing care as a policy issue?

It’s essential to recognize those people who will be allies and to build a coalition with them. Those people need to be empowered to speak up.

As an ally who will be in a decision-making role, how will you help prevent retaliation and unequal treatment upon parental leave?

If it were up to me, this wouldn’t be an issue. However, I have to reiterate that this requires national policy change.

How will you advocate for Fair Workplace Policies?

I will be proactive by participating in committees and groups/

How will you send out the message that work family policies are important to men and women aren’t the only ones caring for family members? Advocating for flexible hours, working from home, on-site child- care helps men and women. Observing how and when colleagues are evaluated and promoted can also be an important area where policies can be adjusted.

Yes, these are all good points. Holistic evaluation is really important. The whole candidate should be evaluated.
How will you develop caregiving policies for both sexes and offer suggestions on how to design leave so that the outcomes are more egalitarian?

Women and men should both be able to take advantage of caregiving leave policies. They need to be able to take the leave without fear of repercussions.

How will you address challenges that care givers (both female and male) face upon returning to the office?

Their reintegration into the office should be as seamless as possible, but the company also needs to recognize that being away for a year or even some months is going to demand a learning curve of the employee. Things will have chanted in that time.

What are your thoughts on on-ramping (flexible hours at full pay) and guardrails (predictable hours) to help those returning?

I think both of these are good ideas.

What are your thoughts on Onramp Fellowships?

I’m not sure why we don’t have more flexible hours to begin with, but fellowships may be helpful.

How do you feel about flexhours or Agile Working Options, ranging from flexible hours to work from home to remote working?

I think all of these are great for everyone.

What are your perceptions on non-linear leadership tracks that take into consideration women with families?

I think law firms could do a lot more to support this. The partnership structure may complicate things, but it could be done.

What are your views on work-family policies, such as parent leave, flex time, and part-time work?

I think men and women should each be able to take up to a year off for parent leave. Flex time should already be policy, and part-time work at commensurate pay should be allowed.

On a scale of 1 to 5 (1-not likely at all, 5-very likely), how likely would it be for you to request and participate in work-family policies (i.e. Parental Leave or Flexible Work Arrangement) if your family situation made that need applicable?
On a scale of 1 to 5 (1-not likely at all, 5-very likely), how likely do you think your male peers would request and participate in one of the company’s work-family policies (i.e. Parental Leave or Flexible Work Arrangement) if their family situation made that need applicable?

3

On a scale of 1 to 5 (1-not influenced, 5-very likely to influence), how much of your decision to participate in the work-family policies influenced by your perception of what is accepted and expected by leadership/management and your male peers?

2

On a scale of 1 to 5 (1-not comfortable, 5-very comfortable) how comfortable do you feel in your ability to fully be yourself at work?

3

The “man box” refers to a set of beliefs, communicated by parents, families, the media, peers, and other members of society, that place pressure on men to act a certain way. These pressures tell men to be self-sufficient, to act tough, to be physically attractive in a certain way, to stick to rigid gender roles, to be heterosexual, to not cry or show emotion, and to use aggression to resolve conflicts.

How much do these descriptions relate to something that you have experienced?

Very much.

What role does cultural differences (regional, ethnic, religious, class) if any, play in your attitudes to masculinity and allyship?

These cultural attributes are always present and trying to abstract them away helps no one. it’s important to recognize the relative privileges that one enjoys in some spaces.

When you see men and women paired together on television, in movies, or other media platforms, what tends to be their relationship?

They’re often lovers.

How often do you see women in leadership roles on television? Women of color?

Almost never.

Does the way you see women in positions of power influence your view of women leaders?

Undoubtedly, media and artistic forms have a profound impact on how society perceive the roles of women and men.
Has the way you have seen women in positions of power on television influenced your actions or decisions to be an ally for women in your professional life?

I would like to say no but I’m sure that subliminally, yes, that has been the case.

Do you fear allyship or resulting backlash based on how the media portrayal of women?

In a word, no, but that’s probably because of the subcultures I belong to. I don’t know many people who voted for Trump.
Chihiro Tsukada
LLM, 2020
Interviewed by May AlAjlan

How do you speak up for women when they are overlooked?

In Japan, where I had lived for more than 25 years, there are still many discriminations against women especially in connection with hiring, promotion and something like that. Since I was relatively young and most of the discriminations are furtively carried out, I could not usually do anything. However, I am trying to say that it is unreasonable to the person who discriminates, when not only women but anyone faces discrimination.

How do you help amplify women’s voices, not competing with them for influence or for the sake of showcasing what an admirable feminist you are?

Regardless of who discriminates against women, I insist that there is discrimination and it should be prohibited. The important thing is to clearly express my own opinion that any discrimination based on sex or any other unreasonable reasons can not be acceptable.

How do you bolster and draw attention to women’s voices, and the voices of women of color?

I keep insisting that women’s voice and the voices of women of color should be heard as well. For example, when my secretary at the law firm told me that she didn’t want to work with a specific attorney with a reasonable reason, I told what she thought to the firm. Her request was in the end accepted.

How do you help them to gain as large of an audience as possible?

To affect a large audience, I should be in a high-ranking position in my society. Honestly, my ultimate dream is to be a politician in Japan with legal expertise. With that position, I think I can greatly help them to gain a large audience.

What is proactive allyship? How do you behave when women or other members of minority groups are not in the room?

The first and most important proactive allyship could be being an attentive listener. Listening to others attentively is always the very first step to understand the existence of problems. When I notice that minority groups are excluded and confirm that the reasons are unreasonable, I first ask the reason why they are excluded and then insist that they should be invited.

Do you notice exclusion every day? Do you notice who are not there? Are you proactive? Marc Benioff, ED of Salesforce noticed exclusion and corrected it.

As a president of LLM class of 2020, I have seen lots of inequities compared with JDs. Of course, it is understandable to certain extent that the school tends to put an emphasis on JDs. However, every time I think that there is an inequality that should not be accepted, I am always opposed to it and request that it should be modified.
How do you or will you open the doors to more participation from women and women of color?

I will clearly state that every person, regardless of sex, color etc. will be more than welcome.

How do you make sure women, especially women of color literally take seats at the table, rather than standing on the sidelines?

It totally depends on what kind of rights I have. If I have a power to decide who is going to take seats at the table, I will not let such a situation take place. If I do not, I will talk to the person who has that right.

Data has shown that when women do speak out, they can be ignored, or have their ideas taken. As an ally, how will you address this?

I will be an advocate for their ideas and state that I agree with their opinion. For sure, my wife is sometimes ignored. In those cases, I always talk with others on behalf of my wife.

Do you attribute an idea to a woman who offered it, and you endorse worthy ideas and ensure the appropriate person is remembered for them?

Yes, I do. I don’t see any reasonable reasons not to do it.

How have you put a woman/ women on center stage? How would you do it?

When I worked as an attorney in Japan as a team, I was supposed to choose junior associates to work with. Since one of my most trustworthy younger colleagues is female, I used to ask my boss to include her in great projects.

Are there times when you have or will privilege some women over others?

Yes, but as long as a woman is superior to others. I mean I don’t and will not privilege women only because they are women.

If no formal format exists, how do you (or will) offer peer to peer mentoring? Schedule phone appointments? find a coffee shop or office with other people around? How do you keep it professional?

I usually give a cup of coffee or other drinks to and talk with them about problems and concerns they have. I always try to be an attentive listener.

How would you help the company start a program to attract a diverse talent pool?

At my law firm, associates may reduce their working hours due to taking care of their children etc. One of junior associates I sometimes worked with took this system, but it is really hard to leave at the designated time since some bosses and colleagues do not care about it very much. In that case, I tried to assume her responsibilities so that she can leave the office as expected. I believe this effort enables many colleagues substantially use this system, which in the end attract diverse candidates for the law firm.
What are your ideas on hiring practices that are clear and transparent? blind résumé evaluation. evaluate résumés without names attached in order to reduce potential gender bias.

I don’t think that blind resume evaluation is helpful, since lots of companies and law firms conduct an interview before they determine. What matters is that every employee acknowledges that diversity counts and discrimination should not be allowed. In this perspective, particularly employers and high-ranking employees should value diversity.

How would you structure the design and layout of the workplace to advance diversity (portraits, art, architecture, iconography etc.)?

Achieving substantial equality matters. For example, in Japan, many mothers want to (or have to) take care of their children at least a few or several months after their birth. Enough and adequate nursery schools are required for these mothers to be able to keep working. Ideally, employers should have these institutions inside of their companies.

How would you create a policy on equal wages for equal work?

How to evaluate work counts to achieve equal wages for equal work. Of course, the policy should not include sex-based elements for evaluation. In addition, the point is how to prevent implicit discrimination against women. In Japan, since it is common for women to take maternity leave between a few months to one or two years after birth, such women will face disadvantage in terms of promotion. That’s because it is usually taken into consideration how long employees keep working in the company. For example, giving such women opportunities to improve themselves and evaluate their effort in the opportunities during maternity leave, which will contribute to equal wages for equal work.

How would you boost gender diversity within their own operations improving retention, and lowering the considerable cost of staff turnover?

I would need to strongly admit that every person is in different situations. I mean that great majority of attorneys are men at my law firm, maybe because most of associates are always required to work a lot till midnight. But this work style sometimes does not fit women, who tend to leave the law firm in the end. The first step is to admit that not all attorneys can work for such a long time and admit that there should be various work style.

What rules and criteria will you create for promotions?

I would create rules which prohibit any discrimination and make criteria which is not only formally but also substantially equal to employees regardless of their sex. 

How will you eliminate gender bias eliminated in performance reviews?

The first thing I would do is to check whether or not performance reviews are biased in terms of gender. And if there is any gender bias, I would get every reviewer to acknowledge that they tend to be biased, since I think in most cases in Japan, reviewers are unconsciously biased.
What are the sexual harassment policies and interactive training you will put in place in the workplace? How will you deal with arbitration clauses in sexual harassment policies? New York and California have done away with this).

At least every year, sexual harassment interactive training would be mandatory. In this training, recent past examples that may be likely to happen to attendees should be explained. In my country, men who commit such harassment oftentimes do not notice that they are doing such harassment.

**How will you ensure no penalty for flexibility?**

No penalty for flexibility should be secured by laws. But until it is, I will be an advocate for it.

**What do you think of options for telecommuting?**

Telecommuting should be introduced. As mentioned before, in Japan, many women are still expected to take care of their family or children. Under this current situation, telecommuting would be greatly helpful for women regarding not only prevention of any harassment but improvement of their general working environment.

**What clear and transparent rules will you put in place for appointment to committees, leadership opportunities?**

Regardless of gender etc., anyone should be allowed to participate.

**What are the networking and mentorship/sponsorship?**

There should be a network between people who are suffering the same difficulty.

**What is the corporate culture that elevates both male and female employees through appropriate symbols and non-stereotypical leadership roles?**

The corporate culture should be a thing that allows every employee to be able to be as they are. Psychological safety should be secured for minorities. I agree with the Google research saying that psychological safety is the most important factor for establishing an efficient team.

**Will you put in place a program on male allies and sponsors?**

I am not able to imagine that I will be able to ask other entities to put a program into practice.

**What about a program to counter stereotypes?**

The program is necessary especially in Japan. I guess that Not a few high-ranking employees can’t think out of the box.

**How will you structure a company’s core mission on diversity?**

The core mission is to establish an atmosphere which can secure minorities’ psychological safety.

**How will you structure the diversity committee and its reporting structure?**

The diversity committee should be composed of diverse and high-ranking members with different backgrounds. Also, anyone should be allowed to directly have conversation with the committee.
like most whistleblowing systems, which enables employees to report any concerns, violations and everything regarding diversity.

**What are the programs and plans for structured career planning, mentorship, role models and networking that you would recommend?**

As mentioned before, I believe that psychological safety matters. In order to strengthen it, I think mentorship seems the most efficient, since psychological safety is oftentimes damaged by isolation. Networking also might have some positive influence, but relationships between people are usually not so strong compared to mentorships. Frequent regular meetings are indispensable, since I think more time mentors and employees share together, better relationships they can develop.

**What work/life balance policies through flexible work policies, support systems are available?**

Currently, at my law firm, associates can choose a few different plans which enable them to reduce working hours. Also, associates who will have to put their children into nursery schools might be eligible for an allowance.

**Does the CEO and company take on the role of advocate of female employment within the wider community through raising awareness, launching initiatives and, in general, acting as ambassadors of gender empowerment?**


**Does the company create partnerships with external partners and the broader community on gender empowerment?**

Yes, I think so. See the article above. My law firm encourages associates to make contributions to the society. I also was involved in projects to provide legal education to abandoned children as an associate of the firm. The URL is as follows. [http://www.mhmjapan.com/en/news/articles/2018/18194.html](http://www.mhmjapan.com/en/news/articles/2018/18194.html)

**Is the diversity strategy focused on a relatively well-defined groups such as first-generation college graduates, female owners of small businesses, or mothers returning to work?**

No, I don’t think so.

**What are the partnerships with women-led businesses? Are there ventures to ensure they have access to capital?**

There might be, but I don’t know.

**Is women’s empowerment part of the empowerment of women and part of corporate social responsibility efforts?**

Yes, not a few corporations are trying to empower women as their corporate social responsibility.

**What gender equality programs or conferences is the firm engaged in?**
I don’t think my law firm engages in activities for only women. However, the firm keep making efforts to support LGBT people. Several lawyers of the firm participate in various activities that encourage respect for diversity among individuals. As an example, one of our lawyers is a director of Lawyers for LGBT and Allies Network (LLAN). [http://www.mhmjapan.com/en/public-service/pro-bono-project.html](http://www.mhmjapan.com/en/public-service/pro-bono-project.html)

**How would you collaborate with organizations across industries on research and data backed initiatives that could help generate new ideas and strategies?**

As mentioned before, I was working with J.P. Morgan and other organizations to provide legal education to children. Attorneys are legal experts so that it is relatively easy for us to collaborate with other partners like the case I was involved in. Also, the law firm held kind of study meeting regarding LGBT topics cosponsored with globally prestigious financial institution.

**How would the Firm/company promote work outside of their organizations to advance gender justice and diversity?**

Currently, associates at the law firm are free to participate in projects by themselves outside of the law firm, which makes it easier for associates to join pro bono projects. The law firm would count working hours for specific groups of projects outside as working hours to be taken into consideration for their performance.

**How would you create processes and incentives for those in the firm/company to serve as a mentor for women in the community, particularly those seeking to engage in industries that have historically been difficult for women to penetrate?**

As mentioned above, hours to be spent for such activities should be taken into consideration for reviewing performance. It should be a great incentive.

**How would you create provisions for annual bonuses, as a way to incentivize focus on and improve diversity?**

For example, activities, either within or outside of the firm, regarding improving diversity would be taken into account for performance evaluation.

**How will you create external pressures from clients to improve together? “When companies like Microsoft make it clear that they factor diversity and inclusion in their hiring efforts, and will reward performance, it changes the way firms approach the work and the issue. It reinforces and accelerates our own work and makes it clear that there’s a business case for diversity and inclusion.”**

I think it would be really hard for law firms to impose some pressures on other entities, because most of external entities that law firms work with are their clients.

**How will you develop Certification programs like the Mansfield Principle which calls for 30 percent women in leadership?**

It would be really difficult in legal industries in Japan for the time being, since the number of female partners at law firms in general is fairly limited. The main reason is that the number of women who want to take bar exams is small based on some reasons. For example, several Japanese (especially) old people tend to think that women should be married and take care of household chores. This thought must somehow discourage women to have their own dreams like being a
lawyer. What we should and can do first is to prepare environment in which female attorneys can keep working regardless of their gender.

**How will you encourage Male Champions of Change?**

There is (or was) the same kind of group in Japan as well. What I can do is to support their ideas.

**What kind of global and local outreach program would you design? Examples might be supporting global symposia, leadership excellence for women awards and symposiums?**

These things including Symposia and women awards might be useful. However, I believe the most important things to change traditional values which make it difficult for women to keep working etc., since people who are not well educated will not be interested in symposia and something like that.

**How is the MeToo movement shaping norms of masculinity?**

I don’t think shaping norms of masculinity is helpful to solve discriminations against women, but this might get men to understand how many difficulties women are facing in their daily lives.

**Men mentoring women can make a large impact. Do you fear a backlash?**

I should not and will not fear a backlash, as long as I believe that what I’m doing is right.

**How do you understand that there are times when certain gender specific policies can serve a legitimate purpose, however, that these must be determined on a case by case basis?**

I agree in general. It totally depends on the purpose, contents and reasons of the gender specific policies. For example, women have to take a-few-week maternity leave before and after giving birth. It is based on physical difference between men and women and should be accepted.

**As an ally, how can you play an integral role in constructing these equalizing policies and constructing care as a policy issue?**

I should be careful if there is any reasonable reason to adopt a specific policy.

**As an ally who will be in a decision-making role, how will you help prevent retaliation and unequal treatment upon parental leave?**

It totally depends on what kind of positions I have at my company. As a senior associate at my law firm, I will make complaints if my secretary or subordinates will fade these unreasonable treatments.

**How will you advocate for Fair Workplace Policies?**

I would keep the Fair Workplace Policies. Since I believe that actions speak louder than words, keeping policies will have a very large influence on others.

**How will you send out the message that work family policies are important to men and women aren’t the only ones caring for family members? Advocating for flexible hours, working from home, on-site child-care helps men and women. Observing how and when**
colleagues are evaluated and promoted can also be an important area where policies can be adjusted.

I would clearly state that making most of useful things like working at home etc. is important not only for individual workers but companies themselves. But most importantly, I should make use of these tools by myself, which obviously illustrate that I agree with these.

**How will you develop caregiving policies for both sexes and offer suggestions on how to design leave so that the outcomes are more egalitarian?**

I would encourage people to acknowledge that diversity matters for companies. People cannot do anything that they don’t think it’s necessary. Therefore, to encourage understanding of importance should be the first step.

**How will you address challenges that care givers (both female and male) face upon returning to the office?**

It really depends on the kinds of challenges that care givers face. The most serious challenge will be the strong necessity to leave the companies at the designated time. In that case, I will assume his or her responsibilities in case it’s necessary.

**What are your thoughts on on-ramping (flexible hours at full pay) and guardrails (predictable hours) to help those returning?**

It really depends on the situation, but both of them should be introduced at many companies since these must be really helpful.

**What are your thoughts on Onramp Fellowships?**

My thought is that it would be helpful for returners. But at the same time, equality between non-returners and returners matters to keep non-returners motivated. From this perspective, reasonable requirements should be imposed to apply for Onramp Fellowships.

**How do you feel about flexhours or Agile Working Options, ranging from flexible hours to work from home to remote working?**

These should be adopted. I’m sure that these options will strengthen mental health based on my experience. At my law firm, associates are deemed self-employer, so technically they can start working whenever and work wherever unless they have appointments with clients. Although most of us works really hard, very few lawyers develop mental health problems. I believe that thanks to being able to create our own work style, most associates can keep themselves psychologically healthy.

**What are your perceptions on non-linear leadership tracks that take into consideration women with families?**

Especially at law firms, the situation seems worse. I think there are many things they can do.

**Supportive work-family policies have become increasingly more common. However, research shows that men’s responses to these policies are shaped less by their own personal beliefs, and by their perceptions of what is accepted and expected by their male peers.**
This is not true to myself, but the result is understandable. I mean, I can easily guess that not a few men do not welcome these policies. When I was working in Japan, my wife was also working at a company. But I had to ask her to take care of our daughters in principle, due to the amount of work I had. After coming to the US and stop working, I came to know how hard taking care of them is. This is a really difficult task, so I can guess several men might think that these policies are not beneficial for themselves, though I don’t agree with them.

**What are your views on work-family policies, such as parent leave, flex time, and part-time work?**

These are definitely valuable and should be introduced. My wife actually made the most of parent leave and flex time after she gave birth. Without these things, either my wife or I cannot keep working.

**On a scale of 1 to 5 (1-not likely at all, 5-very likely), how likely would it be for you to request & participate in work-family policies (i.e. Parental Leave or Flexible Work Arrangement) if your family situation made that need applicable?**

At my firm, there was few examples of men who took parental leave and/or part-time work. As long as my wife agrees, I will not likely to do it. A scale should be 2.

**On a scale of 1 to 5 (1-not likely at all, 5-very likely), how likely do you think your male peers would request & participate in one of the company’s work-family policies (i.e. Parental Leave or Flexible Work Arrangement) if their family situation made that need applicable?**

I don’t think there are many male peers. So, a scale should be 2 as well, though the number of such male peers have been increasing in general. Also, there are certain number of women who do not want to work.

**On a scale of 1 to 5 (1-not influenced, 5-very likely to influence), how much of your decision to participate in the work-family policies influenced by your perception of what is accepted and expected by leadership/management and your male peers?**

A scale should be 2. My main reason not likely to use these tools is that I strongly want to be a prestigious professional to make my dream come true. For me personally, evaluation by leadership or management is not important very much.

**On a scale of 1 to 5 (1-not comfortable, 5-very comfortable) how comfortable do you feel in your ability to fully be yourself at work?**

I’m very comfortable, so a scale should be 5, since thankfully I have been able to do what I wanted to do.

The “man box” refers to a set of beliefs, communicated by parents, families, the media, peers, and other members of society, that place pressure on men to act a certain way. These pressures tell men to be self-sufficient, to act tough, to be physically attractive in a certain way, to stick to rigid gender roles, to be heterosexual, to not cry or show emotion, and to use aggression to resolve conflicts.

**How much do these descriptions relate to something that you have experienced?**
At least as far as I notice, “man box” does not have substantial meaning to me. Fortunately, my parents did not impose any requests on me, so I always can choose what I want to do.

What role does cultural differences (regional, ethnic, religious, class) if any, play in your attitudes to masculinity and allyship?

As mentioned above, not a few old Japanese people tend to think that men work outside, and women do housework inside. but little by little, these kinds of traditional concepts have been weakened. For me, these things don’t have substantial meaning. Also, I don’t have belief in a specific religion.

When you see men and women paired together on television, in movies, or other media platforms, what tends to be their relationship?

It totally depends on situation, but in most cases, they are a legally married couple.

How often do you see women in leadership roles on television? Women of color?

I understand women of color includes Japanese women. I sometimes see such women in on television. Unfortunately, the fact is, however, that the number of times is greatly limited compared to men.

Does the way you see women in positions of power influence your view of women leaders?

It might do, unconsciously.

Has the way you have seen women in positions of power on television influenced your actions or decisions to be an ally for women in your professional life?

No, it has not. I mean, regardless of such experiences, I hate any discrimination, injustice, inequity and the like. That’s one of main reasons that I want to be a politician in the future.

Do you fear ally-ship or resulting backlash based on how the media portrayal of women?

No, I don’t, because an attorney should be a person who can defend minorities rights. That’s an attorney’s responsibility.
E.G.

Interview by Margaret Gallagher

How do you define allyship? Ally?

The assistance, support and comradeship given by members of a more powerful group (e.g. men) to those of a less powerful one (e.g. women).

Do you consider yourself to be an ally for women? How so?

I do. I have always had strong women in my life: my mother, my two sisters, my long-term girlfriend. I try to support them all with the same levels of love and commitment they show towards me. More generally, I have always enjoyed promoting female inclusion and empowerment. As a law lecturer, for example, I made special efforts to involve female students in class discussion (a space often dominated by male voices). Of course, more could be done. And I am not without faults. For example, as a new lecturer I repeatedly referred to the class with the term “guys” (saying things like, “hey guys, can everyone please quiet down”). It was pointed out to me by a female student that this kind of language is exclusionary and insensitive. Ever since, I have always tried to modulate my language to account for such biases.

How do you speak up for women when they are overlooked?

In conversation with friends and family, I try to speak up for female interests. However, I am probably too “reactive” in this debate – if the subject comes up, I will advocate for women but I am not hugely proactive in doing so.

How do you help amplify women’s voices, not competing with them for influence or for the sake of showcasing what an admirable feminist you are?

That is a great question. I’m not sure. I don’t feel much need to demonstrate my feminist credentials. I’d prefer to let my actions speak louder than words. With that said, words do matter. Hence my attempt to use gender-neutral language and non-exclusionary terminology (see above).

How do you bolster and draw attention to women’s voices, and the voices of women of color?

I enjoy sharing content over social media produced by a number of women. Most recently, for example, I posted in my family WhatsApp group about Dame Helena Morrissey’s Desert Island Discs. DHM is an outstanding female leader and founder of the 30% Club. I also enjoy listening to, and promoting, various podcasts featuring prominent female voices. For example, Deborah Francis-White’s “The Guilty Feminist” and Pandora Sykes and Dolly Alderton’s “The High Low.”

These promotional efforts could, clearly, be far more substantial. They do at least make some progress in bolstering the voices of women.
How do you help them to gain as large of an audience as possible?

By sharing their stories and the content they produce and advocating for them enthusiastically in conversation.

What is proactive allyship? How do you behave when women or other members of minority groups are not in the room?

Proactive allyship, to me, implies active engagement with the idea of allyship. It would capture the difference between, for example, actually campaigning on women’s issues and simply thinking that doing so is a good idea. It’s hard to assess my own behavior when women and other minorities are not in the group. I couldn’t give an accurate answer.

Do you notice exclusion every day? Do you notice who are not there? Are you proactive? Marc Benioff, Executive Director of Salesforce noticed exclusion and corrected it.

Of course. Penn Law is not colorblind. Or if it is, it mainly sees white. The school’s racial diversity is striking and it is hard not to notice this aspect of life at the Law School. This is a systemic problem that, although noticeable, is not necessarily solvable by individual action. It requires comprehensive reform.

To be an ally is to bring intersectionality to the forefront. Gender is only one axis of difference. How do you or will you open the doors to more participation from women and women of color?

How?

By involving them in discussions and bringing them to the table as stakeholders. But above all, by facilitating a space in which they feel truly comfortable and able to participate.

How do you make sure women, especially women of color literally take seats at the table, rather than standing on the sidelines?

This is a very difficult issue. One solution would be to increase representation, to make a particular forum feel more representative and diverse, thereby fostering a sense of inclusion rather than “otherising” minority individuals.

Data has shown that when women do speak out, they can be ignored, or have their ideas taken. As an ally, how will you address this?

Partly, this may stem from overt sexism, an intolerable and unacceptable form of behavior I would not stand for. Partly, however, this stems from all of our unconscious biases (including my own). As such, training on identifying bias and also constant reinforcement of that learning would be necessary to prevent regression.

Do you attribute an idea to a woman who offered it, and you endorse worthy ideas and
ensure the appropriate person is remembered for them?

I certainly try to do so.

**How have you put a woman/women on center stage? How would you do it?**

In team environments (such as when working in a law firm) I have always tried to avoid asserting my own opinion at the expense of others. I have no problem with women occupying center stage. My issue is learning not to over-assert and in doing so shut down the equally (if not more) valid contributions of my female peers.

**Are there times when you have or will privilege some women over others?**

I’m not sure.

**If no formal format exists, how do you (or will) offer peer to peer mentoring? Schedule phone appointments? find a coffee shop or office with other people around? How do you keep it professional?**

It is difficult to observe the boundary between professionalism and personal interaction. I think the answer is person and context dependent. Some people prefer the distance and arm’s length nature of a phone call, which is less intimate (and therefore perhaps less threatening). On the other hand, direct face-to-face communication may suit other women better.

**What are your ideas on the world of work/law firm? Would you help set up or engage in the following? Would you challenge give assumptions about gender, race and sexual identity?**

The situation needs improving. Law firms are places of chronic stress, anxiety and depression. Moreover, the culture of facetime and long hours actively disadvantages anyone (male or female) who wishes to spend time at home with a family.

**How would you help the company start a program to attract a diverse talent pool?**

People need to feel comfortable in the environment they join. A room full of white men is likely to intimidate many who are not white men themselves. Hence, a recruitment program requires diversity of recruiters and also white male allies to break down any negative impression of white masculinity that potential applicants have.

**What are your ideas on hiring practices that are clear and transparent?**

I would advocate non-CV, gender-blind based hiring. Candidates should be required to complete a questionnaire that asks them to answer various questions focused on situational challenges they have faced, strengths they have and weaknesses they want to work on. CVs are often proxies for privilege (those educated privately, for example, are disproportionately likely to go to the best universities). A questionnaire, combined with in-person assessments (interviews, for example) would allow candidates to demonstrate intellectual capacity and ability to work hard. Certain
threshold requirements (e.g. minimum of a bachelor’s degree) could be implemented to provide basic quality control.

**How would you structure the design and layout of the workplace to advance diversity (portraits, art, architecture, iconography etc.)?**

The workplace should not just be a mirror of the people inside it. It should also be aspirational in the design and layout it has. Hence, pictures in a law firm or college should be an opportunity to showcase diversity rather than the bland record of the (doubtless many) white men who have gone before.

**How would you create a policy on equal wages for equal work?**

By advocating for it and lending my voice to any campaign.

**How would you boost gender diversity within your own operations improving retention, and lowering the considerable cost of staff turnover?**

By, among other things, implementing generous paternity and maternity leave (both should be equal in length and remuneration), introducing flexible work policies and by campaigning against stigma (against, for example, promoting women who may take time off work to have children).

**What rules and criteria will you create for promotions?**

Promotions should be merit based without taking into account factors (like the probability of taking maternity leave) that have traditionally inhibited equally well-qualified women from progressing alongside their male peers.

**How will you eliminate gender bias in performance reviews?**

This is a challenging task, which may never be possible given that gender bias is so ingrained and systemic within society. One starting point may be to include mandatory gender bias training for all employees of a workplace.

**What are the sexual harassment policies and interactive training you will put in place in the workplace? How will you deal with arbitration clauses in sexual harassment policies?**

Sexual harassment policies and arbitration clauses are important things to consider for any professional environment. But I am also concerned with the upstream question: How to ensure that proper standards of behavior are communicated to, and enforced among, staff so that (in an ideal world) there would be no need to resort to sexual harassment policies, let alone arbitration. Again, one starting point may be training to improve awareness, particularly among men whose positions of power and dominance in society may make them less sensitive to the respect their female colleagues deserve.
How will you ensure no penalty for flexibility?

This needs to be a firm wide policy that is exemplified from the top down. Partners should work flexibly, setting the example, so that everyone can see there is no problem with (for example) working from home.

What do you think of options for telecommuting?

One silver lining of the COVID-19 outbreak may be to remind us that a lot of work can be done remotely, including key meetings and talks. Hence, telecommuting (and all forms of telecommunication) may become all the more common in future.

What clear and transparent rules will you put in place for appointment to committees, leadership opportunities?

I would strongly consider legislating for mandatory quotas on firm committees and among the partnership (e.g. 30% female representation following Dame Helena Morrisey’s initiative). Moreover, I would actively encourage female colleagues to apply for positions and promote them doing so, to mitigate against the common pattern of men putting themselves forward but women not.

What are the networking and mentorship/sponsorship?

Both are exceptionally important for fostering positive relationships, building trust and encouraging female participation.

What is the corporate culture that elevates both male and female employees through appropriate symbols and non-stereotypical leadership roles?

It is certainly not a culture that we have today. I believe that we can work towards it by promoting diversity, adopting progressive policies (like generous m/paternity leave) and constantly boosting our individual and collective awareness of bias.

Will you put in place a program on male allies and sponsors?

I would certainly like to do so.

What about a program to counter stereotypes?

As above, this would be an option that I would consider.

How will you structure a company’s core mission on diversity?

Diversity involves the recruitment, retention and promotion of diverse hires. As such, a company needs to be focused on diversity in a holistic sense, considering it across the timeline of an employee’s entire tenure at the firm, from initial joining to eventual exiting.
How will you structure the diversity committee and its reporting structure?

The diversity committee needs to be, first and foremost, diverse itself. Reporting should be regular (perhaps on a quarterly basis) and the committee should have broad oversight. Rather like tax partners typically have some input in a broad range of law firm departments (M&A, competition, funds etc.) so too should the diversity committee have insight and input into the working decisions of a broad range of committees (e.g. recruitment, steering etc.).

What are the programs and plans for structured career planning, mentorship, role models and networking that you would recommend?

I would recommend a multigenerational, multilevel buddy-system across the firm. Trainees would be mentored by associates (their “parent” buddy), who in turn would be mentored by a senior associate (their “grandparent” buddy) and so on up the tiers of a firm’s hierarchy. This would allow for mentorship and the fostering of role model relationships.

What work/life balance policies through flexible work policies, support systems are available?

There should be flexible working, with employees allowed to work from home at least one day a week. Additionally, there should be free access to mental health resources (like counselling) for all employees, not just fee-earners in a law firm or senior management in a company.

Does the CEO and company take on the role of advocate of female employment within the wider community through raising awareness, launching initiatives and, in general, acting as ambassadors of gender empowerment?

Certainly. The process is self-enforcing: Positive engagement with a community is likely to boost female engagement, in turn helping to mitigate the problem of under-female representation in various sectors.

Does the company create partnerships with external partners and the broader community on gender empowerment?

This is an excellent idea. In particular, a company would benefit from the diversity of inputs that external partners would bring. It stands to reason that complex problems (like the under representation of women in the workplace) require sophisticated solutions, which would benefit from a diversity of thinking to resolve.

Is the diversity strategy focused on a relatively well-defined groups such as first-generation college graduates, female owners of small businesses, or mothers returning to work?

I would prefer a diversity strategy to be focused on including a broad range of groups, rather than narrowing its focus to (for example) one or two well defined ones.

What are the partnerships with women-led businesses? Are there ventures to ensure they
have access to capital?

I am not familiar enough with how funding structures work to comment substantively on this.

Is women’s empowerment part of the empowerment of women and part of corporate social responsibility efforts?

Yes. In fact, it should not just be part of CSR but central to it.

What gender equality programs or conferences is the firm engaged in?

Similar to the answer above, I would support the inclusion of such programs and promote collaboration with them.

How would you collaborate with organizations across industries on research and data backed initiatives that could help generate new ideas and strategies?

Collaboration needs to be constant. Rather than collaborate on an ad hoc or one-off basis, I would hope to engage with a range of organizations at regular intervals throughout the year. Scheduling such meetings would help embed the ideas of these external organizations in the collective conscience of a firm.

How would the firm/company promote work outside of their organizations to advance gender justice and diversity?

Gender justice requires energetic promotion, and as such I would encourage employees to take an active role beyond the firm in roles that might help promote the cause (for example, putting pro bono hours towards service with a domestic violence charity).

How would you create processes and incentives for those in the firm/company to serve as a mentor for women in the community, particularly those seeking to engage in industries that have historically been difficult for women to penetrate?

Working for the community should not be seen as an extra piece of work, but integral to the work of any firm and part of its mission. Making that message clear requires commitment from the partnership down, who would need to lead by example.

How would you create provisions for annual bonuses, as a way to incentivize focus on and improve diversity?

I am not familiar enough with financial incentives and how they are structured to answer.

How will you create external pressures from clients to improve together? “When companies like Microsoft make it clear that they factor diversity and inclusion in their hiring efforts, and will reward performance, it changes the way firms approach the work and the issue. It reinforces and accelerates our own work and makes it clear that there’s a
business case for diversity and inclusion.”

I am not sure what this question means. If the question is asking whether I would pressure clients to promote diversity, I would be cautious of doing so, since law firms are typically best placed to advise on the law, rather than on diversity. Alternatively, if the question is asking how to encourage clients to pressure the firm to improve diversity, then I am not sure what to suggest. It seems odd that a firm would ask clients to pressure it in this way. Ideally, the initiative to change would come from within a firm rather than without.

**How will you develop certification programs like the Mansfield Principle which calls for 30 percent women in leadership?**

I am a huge fan of the 30% principle and believe it would be good to adopt in a law firm context.

**How will you encourage male champions of change?**

Energetically, enthusiastically and with an awareness of the importance of such initiatives.

**What kind of global and local outreach program would you design? Examples might be supporting global symposia, leadership excellence for women awards and symposiums?**

All these programs sound like excellent ways to advance female inclusion and, as such, I would be keen to support them.

**How is the MeToo movement shaping norms of masculinity?**

MeToo is a welcome challenge to outdated and regressive masculine norms.

**Men mentoring women can make a large impact. Do you fear a backlash?**

I think it is good for men to mentor women and vice versa. I do not see why MeToo should compromise this.

**As an ally, how can you transform the social value attached to child-care including the role of both parents in caregiving equally? How do you understand that there are times when certain gender specific policies can serve a legitimate purpose, however, that these must be determined on a case by case basis?**

It’s a difficult question, which requires ongoing monitoring and an awareness that all individuals are different.

**As an ally, how can you play an integral role in constructing these equalizing policies and constructing care as a policy issue?**

I think that one’s position of power as an ally can be usefully deployed to further these policies and promote them.
As an ally who will be in a decision-making role, how will you help prevent retaliation and unequal treatment upon parental leave?

The example must be set from the top of a workplace, must be encouraged, must be promoted and must be used by all to help minimize stigma and prejudice.

How will you advocate for fair workplace policies?

In a regular and energetic way.

How will you send out the message that work family policies are important to men and women aren’t the only ones caring for family members?

Advocating for flexible hours, working from home, on-site child-care helps men and women. Observing how and when colleagues are evaluated and promoted can also be an important area where policies can be adjusted. This is a message that, both in a firm and society more broadly, needs to be heard more – and more forcefully.

How will you develop caregiving policies for both sexes and offer suggestions on how to design leave so that the outcomes are more egalitarian?

Caregiving policies should be generous and equal, to promote equality between sexes and stress that there is no difference between men and women at the policy level.

How will you address challenges that care givers (both female and male) face upon returning to the office?

A high degree of support, from colleagues and other professionals, must be provided, paid for and be easily accessible.

What are your thoughts on on-ramping (flexible hours at full pay) and guardrails (predictable hours) to help those returning?

I think they are excellent ideas.

What are your thoughts on on-ramp fellowships?

I am not sure but can see the value.

How do you feel about flexhours or Agile Working Options, ranging from flexible hours to work from home to remote working?

Again, I think they are excellent ideas that seek to alleviate a serious set of problems.

What are your perceptions on non-linear leadership tracks that take into consideration women with families?
I think they are sensible ideas that reflect the reality of working life as a woman.

**What are your views on work-family policies, such as parent leave, flex time, and part-time work?**

I think they are very good ideas that should be implemented.

**On a scale of 1 to 5 (1-not likely at all, 5-very likely), how likely would it be for you to request & participate in work-family policies (i.e. Parental Leave or Flexible Work Arrangement) if your family situation made that need applicable?**

5

**On a scale of 1 to 5 (1-not likely at all, 5-very likely), how likely do you think your male peers would request & participate in one of the company’s work-family policies (i.e. Parental Leave or Flexible Work Arrangement) if their family situation made that need applicable?**

3

**On a scale of 1 to 5 (1-not influenced, 5-very likely to influence), how much of your decision to participate in the work-family policies influenced by your perception of what is accepted and expected by leadership/management and your male peers?**

3

**On a scale of 1 to 5 (1-not comfortable, 5-very comfortable) how comfortable do you feel in your ability to fully be yourself at work?**

5

The “man box” refers to a set of beliefs, communicated by parents, families, the media, peers, and other members of society, that place pressure on men to act a certain way. These pressures tell men to be self-sufficient, to act tough, to be physically attractive in a certain way, to stick to rigid gender roles, to be heterosexual, to not cry or show emotion, and to use aggression to resolve conflicts. How much do these descriptions relate to something that you have experienced?

Not very much.

**What role does cultural differences (regional, ethnic, religious, class) if any, play in your attitudes to masculinity and allyship?**

I am not sure.

**When you see men and women paired together on television, in movies, or other media**
platforms, what tends to be their relationship?

Pretty mixed. I’m not sure I would say there is any tendency towards a particular relationship.

**How often do you see women in leadership roles on television? Women of color?**

Quite often.

**Does the way you see women in positions of power influence your view of women leaders?**

I imagine it does, at both the conscious and unconscious level.

**Has the way you have seen women in positions of power on television influenced your actions or decisions to be an ally for women in your professional life?**

I think so.

**Do you fear allyship or resulting backlash based on how the media portray women?**

No.
How do you define allyship? Ally?

Being an ally means supporting and speaking up for marginalized groups. Between my time at state and the organization I founded in Jordan, as a white male from a relatively privileged background I felt it important for me to give others access they may not have.

Do you consider yourself to be an ally for women? How so?

Yes. While at the State Department, I was the first male member of the women's affinity group. While living in Jordan I founded a nonprofit that provides sports and English training to Syrian refugee girls. I also try and counter the narrative of toxic masculinity and encourage men to be more aware of women's issues and their microaggressions.

In Jordan specifically, the country had no female squash team so, we were attempting to fill a gap, and we were in a unique position at the time to fill the void. We’re uniquely positioned to fill that void given the role men have as leaders in sports. In the Middle East the norms about gender and gender stereotyping are even more prevalent than they are here, so women are really not expected to rise to the same level of performance. One girl we had tried to coach was married off to someone at 16 and her opportunity to get involved was cut off, so we are now working with her younger sisters.

How do you speak up for women when they are overlooked?

In many social settings, men overlook women's concerns and make statements and jokes that inadvertently exclude women from the conversation. I try to include women's views and perspectives in these conversations so that men are aware of the one-sided male perspective they bring to the conversation. Relative to a lot of the environments that I’ve been in, I feel Penn Law is pretty good at making women feel comfortable speaking up than in a lot of the workplace environments I’ve been in before. I’ve at numerous times talked to women in various workplaces often after a meeting where they’d then voice concerns, and I’d talk to them about what it was that may have stopped them from bringing something up. I’d then encourage them to bring something up in the next conversation or, I’d drive the conversation in a way that makes that person feel comfortable. Earlier in my career I would call on women directly to speak and that wasn’t always effective, so when possible, I’d drive the conversation towards a path that felt more amenable to jump-in from women who’d previously shared a fear of speaking up.

The two most prominent women in our organization – one is the Executive Director, Isra – have opinions that matter. The Executive Director’s opinion probably matters more than any male’s does. In that sense, we’ve empowered a voice that may never have been heard. We also have a
Syrian woman chaperone who is in charge of managing the girls’ behavior and making sure that they come to and from practice. She also convinces parents that they need to send their girls more often or to allow them to travel outside of the country. She takes that responsibility very seriously and by being in that position has become much more vocal than she might have been in another career or work setting.

**How do you help amplify women’s voices, not competing with them for influence or for the sake of showcasing what an admirable feminist you are?**

Deferring to them in conversations and giving them the space to express their viewpoints.

**How do you bolster and draw attention to women’s voices, and the voices of women of color?**

Same as above.

**How do you help them to gain as large of an audience as possible?**

Same as above.

**What is proactive allyship? How do you behave when women or other members of minority groups are not in the room?**

Although I cannot speak from their perspective, I try to make people aware that there are other perspectives not represented in the room. I try not to make the arguments I think they would make though, nor make it seem like their perspectives are monolithic.

**Do you notice exclusion every day? Do you notice who are not there? Are you proactive? Marc Benioff, ED of Salesforce noticed exclusion and corrected it.**

Yes. I could be more proactive, but I also have to be careful not to let proactivity become a sledgehammer that will simply turn other people off.

**To be an ally is to bring intersectionality to the forefront. Gender is only one axis of difference. How do you or will you open the doors to more participation from women and women of color?**

The first step is being aware of the diversity or lack of diversity of people in leadership positions and making others aware. That awareness can then help guide making decisions that will incorporate more participation from women and women of color.

**How do you make sure women, especially women of color literally take seats at the table, rather than standing on the sidelines?**

By doing exactly what this question says. Ensuring that women of color are at the table. I try not to do so at the expense of men, because that breeds resentment, undercutting the allyship. It's
important that female inclusion not be seen as either or but rather as both and.

**Data has shown that when women do speak out, they can be ignored, or have their ideas taken. As an ally, how will you address this?**

Always try to give credit to women's ideas rather than appropriate them.

**Do you attribute an idea to a woman who offered it, and you endorse worthy ideas and ensure the appropriate person is remembered for them?**

Yes, see above.

**How have you put a woman/ women on center stage? How would you do it?**

My organization has a female executive director and prominent women on our board. I try to let them speak on behalf of the organization. I also empower the voices of the girls in my program as well as our female chaperone. I recognize that it's more powerful to hear from them than from me.

**Are there times when you have or will privilege some women over others?**

Yes, see above.

**If no formal format exists, how do you (or will) offer peer to peer mentoring? Schedule phone appointments? Find a coffee shop or office with other people around? How do you keep it professional?**

I haven't done this, but when I was in the female affinity group at State I helped women find other female members.

**What are your ideas on the world of work/ law firm? Would you help set up or engage in the following? Would you challenge give assumptions about gender, race and sexual identity? How would you help the company start a program to attract a diverse talent pool?**

I am not an expert in this area and do not feel qualified to answer it.

**What are your ideas on hiring practices that are clear and transparent?**

I strongly believe in blind resume evaluation.

**How would you structure the design and layout of the workplace to advance diversity (portraits, art, architecture, iconography etc.)?**

I am not informed in this area and do not feel qualified to answer it.
How would you create a policy on equal wages for equal work?

By eliminating the biased structure of salary negotiations.

How would you boost gender diversity within their own operations, improving retention and lowering the considerable cost of staff turnover?

I am not informed in this area and do not feel qualified to answer it.

What rules and criteria will you create for promotions?

I am not informed in this area and do not feel qualified to answer it.

How will you eliminate gender bias eliminated in performance reviews?

I am not informed in this area and do not feel qualified to answer it.

What are the sexual harassment policies and interactive training you will put in place in the workplace? How will you deal with arbitration clauses in sexual harassment policies?

Most sexual harassment interactive trainings I've seen are very poor and I think most men gloss over them or multitask their way through them. I really don't know how to fix this.

How will you ensure no penalty for flexibility?

I don't know what this means.

What do you think of options for telecommuting?

I'm a strong believer in telecommuting. Many offices I've been in promote the concept, and I always loved the option. It also helps with making working and childcare possible.

What clear and transparent rules will you put in place for appointment to committees, leadership opportunities?

I have no experience with this.

What are the networking and mentorship/sponsorship?

When I was at State I found that having an affinity group that promotes mentorship and networking was very helpful.

What is the corporate culture that elevates both male and female employees through appropriate symbols and non- stereotypical leadership roles?

I am not informed in this area and do not feel qualified to answer it.
Will you put in place a program on male allies and sponsors?
I would encourage men to join the female affinity groups.

What about a program to counter stereotypes?
I have no idea what one would look like.

How will you structure a company’s core mission on diversity?
I would structure to emphasize the importance of women in leadership positions. Doing so would inspire more women to take leadership positions and help men recognize that women are very effective leaders.

How will you structure the diversity committee and its reporting structure?
I am not informed in this area and do not feel qualified to answer it.

What are the programs and plans for structured career planning, mentorship, role models and networking that you would recommend?
Female affinity groups.

What work/life balance policies through flexible work policies, support systems are available?
Telecommuting is the most effective policy.

Does the CEO and company take on the role of advocate of female employment within the wider community through raising awareness, launching initiatives and, in general, acting as ambassadors of gender empowerment?
Yes.

Does the company create partnerships with external partners and the broader community on gender empowerment?
Yes.

Is the diversity strategy focused on a relatively well-defined groups such as first-generation college graduates, female owners of small businesses, or mothers returning to work?
The first and third for sure. I'm not sure it makes sense in a company to emphasize female owners of small businesses, because that could run counter to the business purpose of the company. I would focus on female leadership instead.
What are the partnerships with women-led businesses? Are there ventures to ensure they have access to capital?

I am not informed in this area and do not feel qualified to answer it.

Is women’s empowerment part of the empowerment of women and part of corporate social responsibility efforts?

Yes. Such as partnerships with organizations like my nonprofit.

What gender equality programs or conferences is the firm engaged in?

Promoting volunteer/pro bono hours for organizations focused on empowering women.

How would you collaborate with organizations across industries on research and data backed initiatives that could help generate new ideas and strategies?

I am not informed in this area.

How would the firm/company promote work outside of their organizations to advance gender justice and diversity?

Promoting volunteer/pro bono hours for organizations focused on empowering women, like my nonprofit.

How would you create processes and incentives for those in the firm/company to serve as a mentor for women in the community, particularly those seeking to engage in industries that have historically been difficult for women to penetrate?

I am not informed in this area.

How would you create provisions for annual bonuses, as a way to incentivize focus on and improve diversity?

Have bonuses also tracked to pro bono accomplishments.

How will you create external pressures from clients to improve together? “When companies like Microsoft make it clear that they factor diversity and inclusion in their hiring efforts, and will reward performance, it changes the way firms approach the work and the issue. It reinforces and accelerates our own work and makes it clear that there’s a business case for diversity and inclusion.”

I don’t really understand this question.

How will you develop certification programs like the Mansfield Principle which calls for 30 percent women in leadership?
Certification programs for having female empowering policies like telecommuting or for having female affinity groups.

**How will you encourage male champions of change?**

Create incentive structures, such as awards, for men who help empower women.

**What kind of global and local outreach program would you design? Examples might be supporting global symposia, leadership excellence for women awards and symposiums?**

Encouraging participation in female-empowering nonprofits.

**How is the MeToo movement shaping norms of masculinity?**

Certainly toxic masculinity is viewed negatively now. Men are discouraged from sexual harassment and from behavior in that vein. I think this is actually a positive development for men as well, as many men feel pressured to behave in ways that they don't want to.

**Men mentoring women can make a large impact. Do you fear a response?**

I do sometimes fear a backlash because there's always the concern of "mansplaining" as well as whether I truly understand their issues. I have mentored women in the past though and found it to be very effective. I try to keep in the back of my mind the possibility that when I’m mentoring someone, I might be seen as mansplaining. So am I giving information that is helpful or am I just taking pride in explaining something or doing it for the sake of doing it when it’s very likely that the person already knows that? There often are hierarchies in organization and those are fine to respect, but when you’re giving advice just to feel big and important, you risk creating an artificial hierarchy.

**As an ally, how can you transform the social value attached to child-care including the role of both parents in caregiving equally?**

Having equal parental leave policies are good because they promote having the man take on an equal burden in child-rearing, which also helps them respect the hard work women have traditionally put into child-rearing.

**How do you understand that there are times when certain gender specific policies can serve a legitimate purpose, however, that these must be determined on a case by case basis?**

That's exactly what I understand. There are innate biological differences, particularly in the areas of childbirth and rearing, and that policies that respect this difference are justified.

**As an ally, how can you play an integral role in constructing these equalizing policies and constructing care as a policy issue?**
By proposing and advocating for them. Helping other men understand that gender-specific policies should not be seen as some kind of reverse discrimination.

**As an ally who will be in a decision-making role, how will you help prevent retaliation and unequal treatment upon parental leave?**

Encouraging people to take their full parental leave. Making sure it does not negatively affect their performance reviews and by creating consequences for people who discourage employees from taking their full leave.

**How will you advocate for fair workplace policies?**

Speaking up in meetings and communicating my views to leadership.

**How will you send out the message that work family policies are important to men and women aren’t the only ones caring for family members?**

Advocating for flexible hours, working from home, on-site childcare helps men and women. Observing how and when colleagues are evaluated and promoted can also be an important area where policies can be adjusted.

**How will you develop caregiving policies for both sexes and offer suggestions on how to design leave so that the outcomes are more egalitarian?**

See above.

**How will you address challenges that care givers (both female and male) face upon returning to the office?**

I am not sufficiently informed in this area.

**What are your thoughts on on-ramping (flexible hours at full pay) and guardrails (predictable hours) to help those returning?**

I strongly support but am not informed enough.

**What are your thoughts on on-ramp fellowships?**

This is the first I have heard of it, but it sounds great.

**How do you feel about flexhours or Agile Working Options, ranging from flexible hours to work from home to remote working?**

Strongly support. In my experience they are very popular with employees.

**What are your perceptions on non-linear leadership tracks that take into consideration women with families?**
Strongly support, popular with employees, could be concerning for company leadership and the bottom line.

Supportive work-family policies have become increasingly more common. However, research shows that men’s responses to these policies are shaped less by their own personal beliefs, and by their perceptions of what is accepted and expected by their male peers. What are your views on work-family policies, such as parent leave, flex time, and part time work?

Strongly support, as noted above.

On a scale of 1 to 5 (1-not likely at all, 5-very likely), how likely would it be for you to request and participate in work-family policies (i.e. parental leave or flexible work arrangement) if your family situation made that need applicable?

5

On a scale of 1 to 5 (1-not likely at all, 5-very likely), how likely do you think your male peers would request and participate in one of the company’s work-family policies (i.e. parental leave or flexible work arrangement) if their family situation made that need applicable?

5

On a scale of 1 to 5 (1-not influenced, 5-very likely to influence), how much of your decision to participate in the work-family policies influenced by your perception of what is accepted and expected by leadership/management and your male peers?

1

On a scale of 1 to 5 (1-not comfortable, 5-very comfortable) how comfortable do you feel in your ability to fully be yourself at work?

3

The “man box” refers to a set of beliefs, communicated by parents, families, the media, peers, and other members of society, that place pressure on men to act a certain way. These pressures tell men to be self-sufficient, to act tough, to be physically attractive in a certain way, to stick to rigid gender roles, to be heterosexual, to not cry or show emotion, and to use aggression to resolve conflicts. How much do these descriptions relate to something that you have experienced?

I’ve experienced it my whole life, especially when I was bullied as a kid and felt pressure to work out and put on muscle to make myself seem more intimidating. I definitely feel judgment when I speak out on behalf of women. But in law school, that is certainly completely reversed. I feel
reactions from others, so that judgment is palpable. You get comments questioning whether you’re straight (heterosexual) or not; it’ll often be mocking perceptions or in the best-case scenario, maybe I’ll just be ignored for speaking out on behalf of women. At Penn Law, though, a lot of those conversations don’t even happen, so the environment is welcome.

**What role does cultural differences (regional, ethnic, religious, class) if any, play in your attitudes to masculinity and allyship?**

A huge role. I think that these initiatives to change attitudes toward masculinity are most prominent in Western traditions. When I've worked in the Middle East, I've seen almost none of these efforts. I had a crazy incident when I was in Jordan where, when I was in my Arabic class, the teacher was very progressive and did a unit on sexual harassment in Jordan as part of the class. When we out for our break in between classes he turned to the guys in the group and said, “Let’s practice what we learned!” and started yelling things at women walking by. Maybe he thought it was funny, but it was just a shocking moment for me.

**When you see men and women paired together on television, in movies, or other media platforms, what tends to be their relationship?**

Male is usually dominant, woman is usually in a supporting role.

**How often do you see women in leadership roles on television? Women of color?**

Not very often to either, but definitely more white women than women of color.

**Does the way you see women in positions of power influence your view of women leaders?**

Of course it does. I find myself regularly combating the aversive biases that media has instilled in me. Awareness is key.

**Has the way you have seen women in positions of power on television influenced your actions or decisions to be an ally for women in your professional life?**

It's made me want to encourage more women to be in leadership roles.

**Do you fear allyship or resulting backlash based on how the media portrayal of women?**

No.
How do you define allyship? Ally?

Allyship is an ongoing process of supporting marginalized groups across intersectional identities obtain equal and equitable social, political and economic rights. An ally is the person who takes on the difficult role of committing to the process of allyship even when it may be hard.

Do you consider yourself to be an ally for women? How so?

I do consider myself to be an ally for women. I believe that over the years I have listened to the concerns and advice of women leaders in my personal and professional networks and tried earnestly to implement change related to the fight against the patriarchal norms and sexism. This extends to challenging male figures (friends, professors, and bosses) on how they speak about women, try to control women’s bodies and movements, and stifle women success and achievement in life.

How do you speak up for women when they are overlooked?

I have made it a point, particularly among male friends, to counter against sexist or anti-women narratives about leadership, emotional states, and ability. I also attempt to highlight the injustice that is perpetrated against women in social and private sphere by relying on the golden rule and asking them: if they would like to be spoken about or treated in such a manner?

How do you help amplify women’s voices, not competing with them for influence or for the sake of showcasing what an admirable feminist you are?

Similarly to my response above, I listen to the words and wisdom of my women counterparts and while giving them credit relay such information back to male dominated spaces. Additionally, I have learned that you can amply women’s voices by operating in the background as administrative and logistical support. For example, when women have risen to positions of power, I have made myself available to handle mundane topics so that they may focus on big ticket items.

How do you bolster and draw attention to women’s voices, and the voices of women of color?

First and foremost, you have to start with bringing women’s voices into the conversation. There are numerous ways that I have done this, including: bringing women into heavily male-dominated discussion spaces and giving them the floor/inviting them to engage with the topic, naming that because of intersectionality what may be the experience of men is not and most often won’t be the experience of women let alone women of color.

How do you help them to gain as large of an audience as possible?
Admittedly, I haven’t been in many spaces where gaining an audience was a goal. Yet, when that opportunity has arisen I have made sure to show up with my own physical body and then encouraging all of the friends and confidants to do the same, even if the topic or reason for gathering is not necessarily of passionate interest to them. I believe that simply being physically present is first step to empowering women to be able to speak and command public forums.

**What is proactive allyship? How do you behave when women or other members of minority groups are not in the room?**

I think proactive allyship is seeking out and having the tough conversations about gender experiences with women, even when it challenges what you have been raised to belief and are comfortable with. Such conversations include topics like consent, sex, abortion, and politics, how to demonstrate respect, and how to show passion. After having and receiving woman perspectives, I find it important to take the lessons learned from those conversations back into heavily male dominated (whether majority white male or POC male) spaces for discussion to break up the echo chamber.

**Do you notice exclusion every day? Do you notice who are not there? Are you proactive? Marc Benioff, ED of Salesforce noticed exclusion and corrected it.**

I wish that I could say that I was totally engaged and aware of exclusion in everyday practices, but that is not the case. In my day-to-day, I often get caught up in moving from one task to the next that I don’t spend a substantial amount of time on who is demographically present. But, with that being said as a black man, that has been a minority in almost every space I’ve been present in, I think that I have become accustomed to doing a reflexive scan of the room which almost immediately uncovers who is absent. I have been known on occasion to make note after the fact of why there were so few of one minority group/woman to participants that were friends, but even in such notice I don’t think that I am aware of the presence/absence of all minority groups in the same way.

**How do you or will you open the doors to more participation from women and women of color?**

I like to believe that my personality lends itself to speaking to and being inviting presence to everyone, but where that is not enough, I have no problems asking anybody who is around what their opinions are on the subject up for discussion. Furthermore, once women have become engaged, I make sure to continue asking them their opinions and what there read is on the situations or questions are.

**How do you make sure women, especially women of color literally take seats at the table, rather than standing on the sidelines?**

There are not too many times when I feel that I have any say in who is taking seats at the table, but when opportunities for applying for fellowships, programming, or roundtables arise I try to encourage my POC woman to apply and if I have any direct knowledge of expertise offer up myself as a resource through the respective process.
Data has shown that when women do speak out, they can be ignored, or have their ideas taken. As an ally, how will you address this?

I think it’s an ally’s job to make sure that when a woman speaks that they cannot be ignored. To me this is done when you acknowledge, affirm, and ask follow-up questions after a woman has offered up a contribution. Additionally, when other members attempt to steal women’s ideas make sure to call the theft of knowledge out for what it is and return that credit back to its originator. In smaller meetings this is usually easier, but in larger settings it requires a little bit more diplomacy so that the overall message is not lose without all participants having full context.

Do you attribute an idea to a woman who offered it, and you endorse worthy ideas and ensure the appropriate person is remembered for them?

Absolutely, to me there is no other way to operate. In addition to being the right thing to do, if you try to steal credit for an idea that is not yours, when you are pressed for further information on the thought you most likely will be unable to provide it.

How have you put a woman/women on center stage? How would you do it?

There have been times within student social and academic organizations where a woman had a better grasp of the material then I did and I publicly deferred to them and their expertise, I find this to be effective because it communicates that I trust this woman to communicate to the group (which speaks volumes for both her and the rest of the participants).

Are there times when you have or will privilege some women over others?

Yes, and it is here that I believe intersectionality comes into play. When the topic at hand has more of a direct impact on a specific cultural/ethnic/religious community, I see no problem in soliciting and highlighting the women of that group to speak and engage over the less affected women present.

If no formal format exists, how do you (or will) offer peer to peer mentoring? Schedule phone appointments? find a coffee shop or office with other people around? How do you keep it professional?

I am not the best at this because I often don’t feel that I have much to offer in terms of mentoring my peers. Yet, I do enjoy having candid spur of the moment conversations about respective experiences and how we managed to deal with them. On the professional note, I think that it is important to create a rapport while making sure not to cross certain emotional/physical boundaries. To ensure I manage this line, I think it is imperative to be mindful of how close and how much physical comforting (hand-touching, shoulder-patting, distance between persons) is given. In addition, managing tone and steering the conversation to make sure that it stays on professional topics is a skillset worth developing.

How would you help the company start a program to attract a diverse talent pool?

Diverse talent wants to go where there is already diverse talent and where they will made to feel
like a respected member of the team and not a token. So, to this end, I would have a company hire more POC middle and top tier management. Once this is done, dedicate programming funds/budgets for developing POC new hires and providing mentoring opportunities.

**What are your ideas on hiring practices that are clear and transparent blind résumé evaluation?**

I haven’t come to a conclusion if I think a blind evaluation process would be more beneficial to women and persons of color, because I want my employer to want to hire me because they know about all of me instead of because they were forced to check their prejudice at the initial hiring stages but will let it out during employment. Yet, I recognize that holding such a position may also becoming from a place of privilege in having an Anglo-Saxon and cis-gendered name. I think that panel hiring, while making sure that the panel is diverse with men, women, diverse racial backgrounds, and members of both the diversity and HR teams on it may be more fruitful.

**How would you structure the design and layout of the workplace to advance diversity (portraits, art, architecture, iconography etc.)?**

First, I think it would be helpful to have members of affinity networks within the workplace sit on building/facilities/design committees to ensure that displays and interior design is mindful of a diverse experience. Second, I think it would be helpful to solicit and commission local artists to submit designs and works of art to be featured within the workplace.

**How would you create a policy on equal wages for equal work?**

It seems simple to me that companies should have equal pay for equal work. For me this means that people who are under the same work title should be receiving the same base pay. Beyond this foundation, I am not opposed to providing employees with half and full step raises for additional qualifications that they bring to their position, but these qualification raises must be equal across genders and need to be transparently available internally within the company.

**How would you boost gender diversity within their own operations improving retention, and lowering the considerable cost of staff turnover?**

It’s my belief that people are more prone to stay with their employer when they feel valued, supported, and respected. Along these axes, it is important to provide woman employees with institutional support of how to navigate their profession as a woman that has intersectional identities. So, I envision formal dual/parallel formal mentoring program structures that give woman employees access to mid-level and senior-level employees to provide them with a space to ask questions and generate feedback. Additionally, creating strong anti-discrimination/anti-harassment policies and training seminars which all employees including C-Suite employees are required to attend would be a great foundation.

**What rules and criteria will you create for promotions?**

Promotions would be based on a stratified process where employees would be reviewed by immediate mentors, project supervisors, and members of the HR team. If following my earlier recommendations, this would ensure that the individuals determining an employee’s promotion
would itself be diversified and able to speak to different aspects of the candidates work persona.

**How will you eliminate gender bias eliminated in performance reviews?**

Performance reviews would also be conducted in a panel format, so that no one voice/opinion has priority or elevated importance. I think the panel style will also force people to be accountable for their opinions and defend them in a mixed gender setting.

**What are the sexual harassment policies and interactive training you will put in place in the workplace? How will you deal with arbitration clauses in sexual harassment policies? New York and California have done away with this.**

Arbitration clauses for sexual harassment must go if the culture of protecting sexual harassers and profit over people is to be eradicated. Interactive training that simulates examples of sexual harassment both minor and egregious will be mandatory. Additionally, training will include a section on how to report and who to report to within the company. Sexual Harassment Policies should incorporate a hotline or blind review process, so that victims have the security of knowing that they will not be on the receiving end of punitive action.

**How will you ensure no penalty for flexibility?**

In professions where work is collaborative and requires in-face communication and interfacing, flexibility is more difficult to allow. In professions where work is more individualized flexible hours is good for those who have or are expecting families, which I support.

**What do you think of options for telecommuting?**

There is value in creating a face-to-face work culture, that cannot necessarily be fostered over the phone or computer, so I support telecommuting to an extent but would limit telecommuting hours to 25-33% of the working week.

**What clear and transparent rules will you put in place for appointment to committees, leadership opportunities?**

I haven’t given this issue much thought outside of imposing a requirement that all employees be made aware and allowed to submit an application/candidacy statement for these committees and leadership opportunities.

**How is the MeToo movement shaping norms of masculinity?**

The MeToo movement is affecting masculinity differently across generations. Among older men (50+), there is a large backlash and fundamental misunderstanding of how women’s rights to not be harassed do not equal a lessening of men’s rights. In middle age men (30-49), the movement has created feelings of fear and trepidation on how to interact with women in the new era. In the younger male category (1-29), I think there is more of an embrace around the changing of the guard and an easier sense of grappling with and engaging with protecting women and showing them the respect they deserve.
Men mentoring women can make a large impact. Do you fear a backlash?

I do not fear a backlash, I think there are enough good men out there to pick up the slack for any men that would be obstinate or try to make a indignant point on mentoring women.

How do you understand that there are times when certain gender specific policies can serve a legitimate purpose, however, that these must be determined on a case by case basis?

It seems simple to me that women employees should be afforded additional leniency and protections in regard to sanitary products and pregnancy/family leave. In addition, to blanket provisions, additional requests should be taken on a case by case basis.

As an ally, how can you play an integral role in constructing these equalizing policies and constructing care as a policy issue?

I can advocate for and make the argument that woman shouldn’t be penalized for choosing to have a family. That operating a business and caring about your employees is good for both internal business retention as well as producing solid work deliverables. It is also worthwhile to let my employers know that I don’t mind taking on extra work while colleagues are on leave because it sets the culture that they would do the same for me if I had a family or medical situation.

As an ally who will be in a decision-making role, how will you help prevent retaliation and unequal treatment upon parental leave?

The first step is put anti-retaliation clauses into the bylaws of the company. Secondarily, I think a lot of the possible retaliation comes from jealousy, so it will be important to also provide family leave for male parents or parent’s to be so that they can bond with new family members as well.

What are your thoughts on on-ramping (flexible hours at full pay) and guardrails (predictable hours) to help those returning?

On-ramping is a good policy and should be implemented so as to not overwhelm returnees.

What are your thoughts on on-ramp fellowships?

I don’t know enough about them to have an opinion.

On a scale of 1 to 5 (1-not likely at all, 5-very likely), how likely would it be for you to request & participate in work-family policies (i.e. parental leave or flexible work arrangement) if your family situation made that need applicable?

5- Very Likely

On a scale of 1 to 5 (1-not likely at all, 5-very likely), how likely do you think your male peers would request & participate in one of the company’s work-family policies (i.e. parental leave or flexible work arrangement) if their family situation made that need applicable?
3- Somewhat likely. I think that younger men would be more likely to take their leave because we tend to not be as wed to our job as older male generations.

**On a scale of 1 to 5 (1-not influenced, 5-very likely to influence), how much of your decision to participate in the work-family policies influenced by your perception of what is accepted and expected by leadership/management and your male peers?**

1- Not influenced

**On a scale of 1 to 5 (1-not comfortable, 5-very comfortable) how comfortable do you feel in your ability to fully be yourself at work?**

4

The “man box” refers to a set of beliefs, communicated by parents, families, the media, peers, and other members of society, that place pressure on men to act a certain way. These pressures tell men to be self-sufficient, to act tough, to be physically attractive in a certain way, to stick to rigid gender roles, to be heterosexual, to not cry or show emotion, and to use aggression to resolve conflicts. How much do these descriptions relate to something that you have experienced?

They resonate quite a bit, but they no longer play a significant role in how I act or interact with others.

**What role does cultural differences (regional, ethnic, religious, class) if any, play in your attitudes to masculinity and allyship?**

Previously, I was informed by religious and ethnic beliefs about masculinity, but as I have become an adult I no longer myself to be directed by such stereotypical/trope related sentiments.

**When you see men and women paired together on television, in movies, or other media platforms, what tends to be their relationship?**

Traditionally, it has been with men as the dominant and women as the subservient roles. Now, while the interactions are starting to change, they are still majorly directed by men in the superior or important role and women in the inferior/supportive role.

**How often do you see women in leadership roles on television? Women of color?**

This depiction is definitely in the minority and a niche representation. Women of color in those positions is even less visible, but I have recently been able to find and enjoy representation on platforms like Netflix and HBO that do show these demographics in power.

**Does the way you see women in positions of power influence your view of women leaders?**

No, because I have had the privilege of being around brilliant and fantastic women leaders, so I know that they have just much capability if not more to lead then men do.

**Has the way you have seen women in positions of power on television influenced your actions**
or decisions to be an ally for women in your professional life?

Not in any significant way, but when I see that representation on the TV it more so reinforces my ideas about woman being great leaders that I have seen in my own day to day.

**Do you fear allyship or resulting backlash based on how the media portrayal of women?**

No.
A.C.

Interview by Margaret Gallagher

How do you define allyship? Ally?

I think of an ally as someone who not only appreciates some of the inherent challenges faced by a minority group that he or she belongs to but is also willing to take some sort of positive action on behalf of that minority. I wouldn’t consider someone who is sympathetic to that particular minority but otherwise passive to be an “ally.”

Do you consider yourself to be an ally for women? How so?

I want to say “yes” because I think that women and gays face many of the same challenges in a professional setting, but then looking at my own definition above, I don’t think I am much of an ally if ultimately I am doing it for self-serving reasons. Maybe I should change my definition of ‘allyship’ to include a situation where two people from different minority groups or minority/majority groups acknowledge that they have a common objective and work together towards achieving that common objective.

How do you speak up for women when they are overlooked?

That’s a difficult question because I think there are two forces at play in a professional setting: biases, but also an office hierarchy. As a junior person, I can’t challenge my boss for not letting women speak up or for shifting the conversation to topics that exclude anyone who is not a straight male. Among peers, however, I don’t think I would have any problem shifting the conversation to ensure that everyone is involved and can contribute.

How do you help amplify women’s voices, not competing with them for influence or for the sake of showcasing what an admirable feminist you are?

I don’t think there is anything admirable about being a feminist – to me it’s just about recognizing that everyone benefits from empowering women in society. As a gay man, I prefer working with women than with straight men, so I know that I have everything to gain in seeing them progress professionally. That means recognizing their contributions day to day and having the humility to role they have played in my professional development too.

How do you bolster and draw attention to women’s voices, and the voices of women of color?

I think the answer to that is visibility within the organization. You need women and women of color in leadership roles throughout the organization. I have experienced this myself. When I learned that the GC of the international bank where I worked was not only a woman but also a lesbian, my perspective of the place changed completely. I had someone that I could look up to and I could feel confident being myself in what was otherwise a very masculine environment.
How do you help them to gain as large of an audience as possible? Women face a lot of everyday hurdles that men do not, especially if they have a family or they want to have a family. Too often that decision means that they have to take a step back and their “audience” as a result of it smaller than for someone who can dedicate 100% of his time to his work. We need more flexibility in the work place and large companies should provide childcare facilities for working mothers.

**What is proactive allyship? How do you behave when women or other members of minority groups are not in the room?**

I find that I can’t engage if everyone around me is a straight male. So no, not exactly proactive.

**Do you notice exclusion every day? Do you notice who are not there? Are you proactive?**

Marc Benioff, Executive Director of Salesforce noticed exclusion and corrected it.

Yes, I do – see my answer above.

**To be an ally is to bring intersectionality to the forefront. Gender is only one axis of difference. How do you or will you open the doors to more participation from women and women of color?**

I think one way of doing this is by putting them in positions of leadership. People need to have someone to look up to and empowers them to participate more actively in the work place.

I also think that people should be allowed to actively recruit people from specific minorities. I don’t buy the argument that it’s unfair because some other people from the majority may be more qualified. Of course it’s harder to find a perfect fit for a role within a minority. By definition that person is harder to find because it’s a minority, but that doesn’t mean that the employer needs to cut corners. Just look harder.

**How do you make sure women, especially women of color literally take seats at the table, rather than standing on the sidelines?**

See above. Quotas and representation matters.

**Data has shown that when women do speak out, they can be ignored, or have their ideas taken. As an ally, how will you address this?**

I suspect that this data (referred to above in the question) would not be the same if the manager in the room were a woman – so again, we need more women in positions of leadership.

**Do you attribute an idea to a woman who offered it, and you endorse worthy ideas and ensure the appropriate person is remembered for them?**

Yes absolutely. I think everyone gains from ensuring that women are empowered in the workplace.

**How have you put a woman/women on center stage? How would you do it?**
… I am not the kind of person to put anyone center stage. People should be given the opportunity to put themselves in the center stage if they feel comfortable doing it. So I would say that the key would be to ensure that women are comfortable taking center stage, by making sure that they will be listened to and treated fairly.

**Are there times when you have or will privilege some women over others?**

No

**If no formal format exists, how do you (or will) offer peer to peer mentoring? Schedule phone appointments? find a coffee shop or office with other people around? How do you keep it professional?**

I think coffee in a public place is probably the most appropriate place to meet.

**What are your ideas on the world of work/ law firm? Would you help set up or engage in the following? Would you challenge give assumptions about gender, race and sexual identity? How would you help the company start a program to attract a diverse talent pool?**

Hire from a wider group of universities. An A should be an A, whether it’s from Harvard or a second-tier university.

**What are your ideas on hiring practices that are clear and transparent?**

I’ve heard some people suggest that interviewers should be prevented from using the “team fit” criteria in interviews, because that tends to perpetuate the current paradigm.

**How would you structure the design and layout of the workplace to advance diversity (portraits, art, architecture, iconography etc.)?**

I think open spaces are generally good to ensure that people get to know each other. Law firm offices are not conducive to a culture of openness.

**How would you create a policy on equal wages for equal work?**

Transparency. I think that’s something that law firms do well with their lock steps. I am not sure why other corporates seem to think that that would be impossible to achieve in other industries. I disagree.

**How would you boost gender diversity within your own operations improving retention, and lowering the considerable cost of staff turnover?**

Flexible working arrangements. Firms lose so much talent when women are forced to choose between their careers and raising a family. This coronavirus crisis is proving that a new working model is possible.

**What rules and criteria will you create for promotions?**

Quotas for management roles.
How will you eliminate gender bias in performance reviews?

That is a tough question. I think it requires greater training around these practices.

What are the sexual harassment policies and interactive training you will put in place in the workplace? How will you deal with arbitration clauses in sexual harassment policies?

Arbitration clauses in sexual harassment claims should not be permitted, full stop.

How will you ensure no penalty for flexibility?

I think flexible working arrangements should be generalized indiscriminately. If you implement a policy that requires some sort of justification, then there will already an implicit judgment being made that it’s going to cost the company in terms of productivity. I just don’t think that’s true and if everyone gets to take advantage of it, then the advantages will become obvious.

What do you think of options for telecommuting?

See above.

What clear and transparent rules will you put in place for appointment to committees, leadership opportunities?

I think as a starting point mandatory quota could be helpful

What are the networking and mentorship/sponsorship?

Mentoring and sponsorship should be provided for males and females at all stages of the career ladder.

What is the corporate culture that elevates both male and female employees through appropriate symbols and non-stereotypical leadership roles?

Without strong female leaders in positions of power as role models across all sectors it is difficult to instrumentalize a cultural shift like this so it is important to focus on giving women a seat at the table and empowering those that have one to empower others.

Will you put in place a program on male allies and sponsors?

Yes.

What about a program to counter stereotypes?

I would suggest a program around the general banner of promoting diversity rather than something negative like countering stereotypes.

How will you structure a company’s core mission on diversity?

By having women at the table and a diverse intersectional group shaping the policy so as to have a more inclusive approach.

How will you structure the diversity committee and its reporting structure?
The diversity committee should have 50% females at least and the reporting structure should take account of the work/life balance of the committee.

**What are the programs and plans for structured career planning, mentorship, role models and networking that you would recommend?**

Often and active.

**What work/life balance policies through flexible work policies, support systems are available?**

Flextime. There should also be access to upskill facilities and programs at no cost.

**Does the CEO and company take on the role of advocate of female employment within the wider community through raising awareness, launching initiatives and, in general, acting as ambassadors of gender empowerment?**

Yes, it absolutely should.

**Does the company create partnerships with external partners and the broader community on gender empowerment?**

Again, this would be a very positive step.

**Is the diversity strategy focused on a relatively well-defined groups such as first-generation college graduates, female owners of small businesses, or mothers returning to work?**

At the initial stages and then it should be reconsidered periodically and expanded.

**What are the partnerships with women-led businesses? Are there ventures to ensure they have access to capital?**

Yes.

**Is women’s empowerment part of the empowerment of women and part of corporate social responsibility efforts?**

Yes.

**What gender equality programs or conferences is the firm engaged in?**

I think such programs should be encouraged

**How would you collaborate with organizations across industries on research and data backed initiatives that could help generate new ideas and strategies?**

I think collaboration needs to occur at every level and really be imbricated into the work process

**How would the firm/company promote work outside of their organizations to advance gender justice and diversity?**
In my last role, the international bank that I worked for sent surveys to all the law firms on its panel of firms asking them about their diversity initiatives and their diversity scores across employee and management segments. The idea was for the big bank to use its leverage as a major user of legal services to pressure law firms into being more diverse in their recruitment/promotion decisions. The big bank would also give an award at the end of the year to the law firm that showed most commitment to diversity.

**How would you create processes and incentives for those in the firm/company to serve as a mentor for women in the community, particularly those seeking to engage in industries that have historically been difficult for women to penetrate?**

Male ally awards.

**How would you create provisions for annual bonuses, as a way to incentivize focus on and improve diversity?**

I am not sure it’s a good idea to tie diversity to bonuses directly because people will get cynical, but it helps if involvement in diversity committees is considered (and is recognized as) a plus on an employee’s end of year review.

**How will you create external pressures from clients to improve together? “When companies like Microsoft make it clear that they factor diversity and inclusion in their hiring efforts, and will reward performance, it changes the way firms approach the work and the issue. It reinforces and accelerates our own work and makes it clear that there’s a business case for diversity and inclusion.”**

See above question.

**How will you develop certification programs like the Mansfield Principle which calls for 30 percent women in leadership?**

I think it’s a great idea and should be developed in companies and law firms alike.

**How will you encourage male champions of change?**

See above.

**What kind of global and local outreach program would you design? Examples might be supporting global symposia, leadership excellence for women awards and symposiums?**

All of the above ideas and principles are great benchmarks and I support all of them.

**How is the MeToo movement shaping norms of masculinity?**

I think that the MeToo movement and the series of high-profile arrests that ensued have helped men to confront the sheer scale of the problem across society and the corporate world, in particular. Traditional norms of masculinity have a role to play in terms of shaping this permissive corporate environment. Inappropriate banter, objectification of women, glorification of the “bro” culture, all these things have to change and cannot be tolerated, in particular a place of work.
Men mentoring women can make a large impact. Do you fear a backlash?

Not if the mentoring is done properly. There is a risk of “mansplaining”, but if the mentor actually takes an interest in the mentee, then there shouldn’t be anything to fear.

As an ally, how can you transform the social value attached to child-care including the role of both parents in caregiving equally? How do you understand that there are times when certain gender specific policies can serve a legitimate purpose, however, that these must be determined on a case by case basis?

Absolutely, there are times when biological functions must be accounted for. This makes me think of the potty parity movement as a great example.

As an ally, how can you play an integral role in constructing these equalizing policies and constructing care as a policy issue?

As an ally I think active promotion and not just passive reaction is required.

As an ally who will be in a decision-making role, how will you help prevent retaliation and unequal treatment upon parental leave?

By supporting generous male and female parental leave.

How will you advocate for fair workplace policies?

In discourse and at meetings and by supporting my female colleagues.

How will you send out the message that work family policies are important to men and women aren’t the only ones caring for family members?

Advocating for flexible hours, working from home, on-site child-care helps men and women. Observing how and when colleagues are evaluated and promoted can also be an important area where policies can be adjusted. By having these conversations with friends, family, colleagues and others.

How will you develop caregiving policies for both sexes and offer suggestions on how to design leave so that the outcomes are more egalitarian?

Parental leave should be mandatory, in my opinion.

How will you address challenges that care givers (both female and male) face upon returning to the office?

Childcare on site, if not provided publicly.

What are your thoughts on on-ramping (flexible hours at full pay) and guardrails (predictable hours) to help those returning?

I think they are great ideas.
What are your thoughts on on-ramp fellowships?

Equally a good idea.

How do you feel about flexhours or Agile Working Options, ranging from flexible hours to work from home to remote working?

I think it should be encouraged and indiscriminately so – to my mind, it’s the only way to make sure that no one is penalized for it.

What are your perceptions on non-linear leadership tracks that take into consideration women with families?

I think that’s to be encouraged. Again, gender quotas could help.

Supportive work-family policies have become increasingly more common. However, research shows that men’s responses to these policies are shaped less by their own personal beliefs, and by their perceptions of what is accepted and expected by their male peers.

What are your views on work-family policies, such as parent leave, flex time, and part-time work?

I certainly wouldn’t care. I think it’s more of an economic question – the person who earns more or cares more about their current career prospects is the one who tends to make sacrifices in terms of child-rearing work. At least in Europe.

On a scale of 1 to 5 (1-not likely at all, 5-very likely), how likely would it be for you to request and participate in work-family policies (i.e. Parental Leave or Flexible Work Arrangement) if your family situation made that need applicable?

5

On a scale of 1 to 5 (1-not likely at all, 5-very likely), how likely do you think your male peers would request and participate in one of the company’s work-family policies (i.e. Parental Leave or Flexible Work Arrangement) if their family situation made that need applicable?

5

On a scale of 1 to 5 (1-not influenced, 5-very likely to influence), how much of your decision to participate in the work-family policies influenced by your perception of what is accepted and expected by leadership/management and your male peers?

1

On a scale of 1 to 5 (1-not comfortable, 5-very comfortable) how comfortable do you feel in your ability to fully be yourself at work?

3
The “man box” refers to a set of beliefs, communicated by parents, families, the media, peers, and other members of society, that place pressure on men to act a certain way. These pressures tell men to be self-sufficient, to act tough, to be physically attractive in a certain way, to stick to rigid gender roles, to be heterosexual, to not cry or show emotion, and to use aggression to resolve conflicts. How much do these descriptions relate to something that you have experienced?

Very much so.

What role does cultural differences (regional, ethnic, religious, class) if any, play in your attitudes to masculinity and allyship?

My rejection towards toxic masculinity is definitely shaped by my experiences growing up gay and toxic masculinity in my home country.

When you see men and women paired together on television, in movies, or other media platforms, what tends to be their relationship?

Love interest.

How often do you see women in leadership roles on television? Women of color?

Hardly ever.

Does the way you see women in positions of power influence your view of women leaders?

Yes, women make better leaders!

Has the way you have seen women in positions of power on television influenced your actions or decisions to be an ally for women in your professional life?

Yes, see above.

Do you fear allyship or resulting backlash based on how the media portray women?

No.
How do you speak up for women when they are overlooked?

At this moment I think it is primarily coming up in a political sense. Women and women’s issues are frequently overlooked in national politics. It is important to try to center these issues and expand our scope of what we think of as so called “women’s issues.” So yes, reproductive justice is a core issue, but we need to make sure that when we talk about things like race and class and economic and environmental justice that we understand how everything intersects with gender as well.

How do you help amplify women’s voices, not competing with them for influence or for the sake of showcasing what an admirable feminist you are?

One thing everyone does, myself included, is that when you believe in something your first instinct is to want to talk about it. But part of the process of being an ally is that you need to learn to just sit back and listen and try not to dominate the conversation. It means having more humility, more than you have been socialized to have as a man, and so that process of humbling is also an unlearning of a lot of prior socialization.

How do you bolster and draw attention to women’s voices, and the voices of women of color?

It mainly comes from trying to read things by and about women and women of color and share those texts with people. They are saying things in significantly better way than I ever could because it comes from experience and just a much broader and longer course of learning than what I have. It is just in a lot of ways a different way of seeing and knowing. People like Nancy Fraser and Adrienne Rich have, for me, been especially instructive.

What is proactive allyship? How do you behave when women or other members of minority groups are not in the room?

I guess proactive allyship means that when you find yourself in a situation when you need to be the one speaking, you have to have done the work, the ongoing, never ending reading and listening. You have to always be educating yourself so that when the time for speaking does arrive you don’t fall on your face and misarticulate some crucial point.

Do you notice exclusion every day? Do you notice who are not there? Are you proactive? Marc Benioff, ED of Salesforce noticed exclusion and corrected it.

I do, I believe a lot of that comes from the media and larger structural problem. I used to write criticism for a magazine and looking back I certainly noticed a blind spot in my own writing and the writing of many other critics to issues of gender, especially when “great artists” are involved.
There’s kind of an injunction towards positivity nowadays and it stops people from maybe being as critical and harsh as a work deserves. Something media and media-adjacent critics can do going forward, and many are already doing this, is take a more critical eye, gender-wise (and beyond the cheap neo-liberal representation-as-politics we’ve been seeing).

**How do you make sure women, especially women of color literally take seats at the table, rather than standing on the sidelines?**

Broadly just supporting and advocating for policies such as free, universal healthcare and the redistribution of wealth is the way to elevate all women and not just a small fraction of them. CEOs should be reevaluating what it means to be a worker at their company and not just say “the important ones are the ones generating capital for us.” Rejecting that kind of thinking can help shift the culture away from one which tolerates recriminations against women (and men) for wanting parental leave or for getting pregnant. Furthermore, all of the staff, no matter where they fall on the pay scale, deserve basic dignity, benefits, and living wages.

**Data has shown that when women do speak out, they can be ignored, or have their ideas taken. As an ally, how will you address this?**

I think one thing that is really important is to try to speak out for them when they are not heard, not to steal the idea but to help refocus the attention (but you need to be careful not to speak up where you aren’t wanted or needed, to not make it a kind of white-knight attention stealing scheme). Also, when you have gotten an idea from a woman, always say so and acknowledge them.

**How would you help the company start a program to attract a diverse talent pool?**

One thing law firms can do is continue scholarships programs and, especially, keep class in mind as an aspect of diversity and use that as an advantage in the hiring process because it really is a big determinant for representation in certain industries, like the law, with massive barriers to entry. It’s a problem though when companies think about diversity initiatives only as box ticking without understanding the actual benefit and ethical rectitude of diversity informed hiring.

**What are your ideas on hiring practices that are clear and transparent?**

I think blind résumé evaluation can be fine, but I also see some drawbacks to that as it might inadvertently elevate people who had a lot of opportunities because of family connections or class benefit (e.g. unpaid internships), so I am not totally in favor of them.

**How would you structure the design and layout of the workplace to advance diversity (portraits, art, architecture, iconography etc.)?**
In general, get an artist! Lots of buildings just have terrible corporate art and it would be nice to see some of that decorating money go to artists actually taking risks in the field instead of recapitulating the same zombie-formalist fluff.

**How would you create a policy on equal wages for equal work?**

My understanding is that a lot of this stems from parental leave problems, so I think one measure would be to have paid, mandatory parental leave for every employee.

**How will you eliminate gender bias eliminated in performance reviews?**

Eliminate people who are biased! It is a long process and I don’t think any one policy can do it.

**What are the sexual harassment policies and interactive training you will put in place in the workplace? How will you deal with arbitration clauses in sexual harassment policies? New York and California have done away with this.**

Completely getting rid of mandatory arbitration clauses across the board can be a great thing (Penn Law Women’s Association advocated for this if I’m not mistaken, you might want to check this), parties can move to arbitration if that is what they want, but I do think that forcing arbitration is certainly a way of buying or coercing people’s silence. In terms of interactive trainings, I have been to 1 or 2 and they have been uniformly bad. Have harassment policies that are strong enough to protect low wage worker and contractors and everyone else. These policies need to cover everyone top to bottom.

**How will you ensure no penalty for flexibility?**

Make sure you have a culture where everyone takes flexible hours. When you have unlimited vacation days, take as many as you can within reason because you are the person who will help set the standard and if you take no vacation, then everyone will be measured against you. This is especially true if you are in a relatively privileged position with respect to office culture.

**What do you think of options for telecommuting?**

As long as you do not truly need to be physically in a space, there is no reason you should be forced to.

**How will you structure a company’s core mission on diversity?**

Companies should be generally reflective of the areas in which they exist.

**How will you structure the diversity committee and its reporting structure?**

Make sure that the diversity committee is accurately reflective of the people in the company and do not have an all-white diversity committee or all-male diversity committee (this seems like
common sense, but it happens!). The diversity committee should be as diverse as you are striving to make your company.

**What are the programs and plans for structured career planning, mentorship, role models and networking that you would recommend?**

I would not recommend structured mentorship in general.

**What work/life balance policies through flexible work policies, support systems are available?**

You should have a yearlong parental leave for every employee, it should be paid, it should be mandatory, you shouldn’t be penalized for taking it, and you should receive trainings to keep you up to date with developments in your field so you don’t fall behind. I also think a 4-day work week is important. Also, not requiring people to work or respond to emails after working hours is crucial—these requirements disproportionately affect women who still do the lion’s share of domestic labor. Being forced to always be on the clock means many women will need to work while they are also trying to take care of all the social reproductive work our system has placed in their laps.

**Is women’s empowerment part of the empowerment of women and part of corporate social responsibility efforts?**

Yes, of course it is, but again if you are restricting women’s empowerment only to corporate women’s empowerment then you cannot accurately say that this is women’s empowerment writ large—rather, it’s just class solidarity, it’s corporate empowerment.

**What gender equality programs or conferences is the firm engaged in?**

I think the biggest gender equality program that a firm could be engaged in is making sure all lower wage staff get paid more and get benefits.

**How would you create processes and incentives for those in the firm/ company to serve as a mentor for women in the community, particularly those seeking to engage in industries that have historically been difficult for women to penetrate?**

It goes back to the formal mentorship problems that we were talking about, where the ideas of having incentives for how many women you can recruit into the company or how many women you can mentor can just end up recapitulating the same problems with predatory bosses.

**How would you create provisions for annual bonuses, as a way to incentivize focus on and improve diversity?**

I think it would be better to do away with bonuses altogether and to just pay people a fair wage for their work.
How will you encourage male champions of change?

Changing workplace culture doesn’t start at the workplace. If you are trying to make change in the workplace through policy initiative but you and your employees still have these sexiest ideas that you continue to perpetuate outside of the workplace, your initiatives are almost certainly doomed from a structural standpoint. I think an important measure would be to change curricula starting from the lowest grade levels—getting rid of “great men of history” narratives, getting exposure to more female artists and authors, elevating and explaining the absolutely essential nature of social reproductive work, etc....

What kind of global and local outreach program would you design? Examples might be supporting global symposia, leadership excellence for women awards and symposiums?

I don’t think that global symposia or leadership excellence for women awards, generally speaking, do much for anybody or anything beyond resumes.

How is the MeToo movement shaping norms of masculinity?

I think it’s doing well in terms of putting more stories out into the open and making men reconsider masculine norms, which they have always taken as natural, in light of the horror they enable. It’s forcing people to question social arrangements and behaviors that, again, they’ve always taken as natural, to start to understand that things don’t need to be this way.

How do you understand that there are times when certain gender specific policies can serve a legitimate purpose, however, that these must be determined on a case by case basis?

I think in general most policies shouldn’t be gender specific everyone should get paid parental leave and it should be mandatory. I also think that ideally, having universal healthcare and childcare would add to that.

How will you advocate for fair workplace policies?

Taking the lead by studying the policies in place and moving them to the right direction. Just be really vocal about fair treatment of all workers, about wage increases for lower waged employees, about the need for more robust benefits and leave policies, etc....

How will you address challenges that care givers (both female and male) face upon returning to the office?

By having training programs people can avail themselves of while on leave or just by having a grace period upon return and fair, informed evaluation during that period.

What are your thoughts on on-ramping (flexible hours at full pay) and guardrails (predictable hours) to help those returning?
The better option is to give everyone flexible hours all the time and to have a grace period when people return to work so they can have enough time to readjust (at full pay) in a way that would not be counted against them in evaluations.

**How do you feel about flexhours or Agile Working Options, ranging from flexible hours to work from home to remote working?**

I think everyone should work wherever they please, as long as the nature of the work can accommodate that.

**On a scale of 1 to 5 (1-not likely at all, 5-very likely), how likely would it be for you to request and participate in work-family policies (i.e. parental leave or flexible work arrangement) if your family situation made that need applicable?**

5

**On a scale of 1 to 5 (1-not likely at all, 5-very likely), how likely do you think your male peers would request and participate in one of the company’s work-family policies (i.e. Parental Leave or Flexible Work Arrangement) if their family situation made that need applicable?**

2.5

**On a scale of 1 to 5 (1-not influenced, 5-very likely to influence), how much of your decision to participate in the work-family policies influenced by your perception of what is accepted and expected by leadership/management and your male peers?**

3. These policies don’t really apply to me so this is all hypothetical, but I put a number in the middle to signify that my decision is informed both by a personal, self-interested desire to avail myself of any applicable work-family policy as well as a desire to use my position as a man to help push for a culture that not only allows for robust policies, but encourages people to take advantage of them.

**On a scale of 1 to 5 (1-not comfortable, 5-very comfortable) how comfortable do you feel in your ability to fully be yourself at work?**

It really just depends upon the workplace.

The “man box” refers to a set of beliefs, communicated by parents, families, the media, peers, and other members of society, that place pressure on men to act a certain way. These pressures tell men to be self-sufficient, to act tough, to be physically attractive in a certain way, to stick to rigid gender roles, to be heterosexual, to not cry or show emotion, and to use aggression to resolve conflicts.

**How much do these descriptions relate to something that you have experienced?**
Certainly, I was socialized in a way that fits some of that description, we all were. I’m not so sure it applies much to my experience now. I hope it doesn’t but maybe others would see it differently and I know a number of people who would identify quite closely with that description.
**Pablo Arana**  
LLM, 2020

*Interviewed by May AlAjlan*

**How do you speak up for women when they are overlooked?**

In any situation, I make sure that everyone (regardless of gender, race, age, sexual orientation, origin, nationality, religion, etc.) who wants to speak is duly heard. If, for example, a woman says something and she is for any reason overlooked, I will make sure she has another opportunity to speak and make her argument.

**How do you help amplify women’s voices, not competing with them for influence or for the sake of showcasing what an admirable feminist you are?**

I may amplify women’s voice if I believe, for any reason, they are being overlooked. However, I believe gender discrimination depends highly on where and when the facts occur. In most of the cases where I work and live, women were (or had the opportunity to be) in the same positions as men, if not in higher positions. Their voices were (and must always) be heard. No one would be comfortable of not hearing what a woman (or a man) has to say. If one day this is not true, I would do what is in my power to amplify women’s voices.

On the other hand, I compete with women as I compete with men at my workplace. No differences, from my end. One point worthy of note, though, is that usually (more likely than not) women put more effort in their work and work harder than men. In most of these cases, these women are acknowledged for their accomplishment.

**How do you bolster and draw attention to women’s voices, and the voices of women of color?**

As I said the previous answer, I would only bolster attention to women in case I believe they were not heard as they should in first place. The same manner, I would do every effort possible to draw attention to women of color in case people don’t hear them as they should.

**How do you help them to gain as large of an audience as possible?**

I ask everyone’s attention, to the extent that I can, and express that the woman or person who was initially overlooked has something to say and everyone should hear it.

**What is proactive allyship? How do you behave when women or other members of minority groups are not in the room?**

In case women or other members of minority are absent in the room, I ask if there is a reason for this absence in such a way to embarrass the person hosting the meeting in case there is no proper explanation.
Do you notice exclusion every day? Do you notice who are not there? Are you proactive? Marc Benioff, ED of Salesforce noticed exclusion and corrected it.

As I said above, it is uncommon that women are excluded from meetings in any workplace I have been part of. In my entire career and with no exception, women were either my peers (in my team or counterparty’s team) or my bosses.

On the other hand, I often notice exclusion of men and women of color, unfortunately. However, almost all big law firms in Brazil have recently engaged in projects to include minorities in their firms, in particular people of color. Since then, my law firm has hired more people of color, specially interns, and I have trained and tried give them as many opportunities I can so to develop their skills.

How do you or will you open the doors to more participation from women and women of color?

Once I reach a position in charge of hiring people, I intend to have my team composed of half women and half men (almost every team of my firm is already like this). I also intend to form team with people of color, both men and women, representing at least 20% (hopefully more). So far (while I don’t have enough power to decide on the people to be hired), I forward with good recommendations the resumes of candidates of color I receive.

How do you make sure women, especially women of color literally take seats at the table, rather than standing on the sidelines?

If there are any women of color present in the gathering, I would make sure they will have seats at the table and their voices will be heard, in case this is not spontaneously guaranteed by the other participants. Likewise, if there is any project of which I am part, while there are no women (or women of color), I would ask the partner in charge the reason for that.

Data has shown that when women do speak out, they can be ignored, or have their ideas taken. As an ally, how will you address this?

I don’t let anyone be ignored, in particular if she has a good idea to share. If anyone’s (in particular a woman’s) ideas are for any reason taken by others, I would make sure to make amends and clarify whose idea was that.

Do you attribute an idea to a woman who offered it, and you endorse worthy ideas and ensure the appropriate person is remembered for them?

Of course, I would always make sure the right person (including a woman) receives due credit for her idea.

How have you put a woman/women on center stage? How would you do it?
Sure, often. For example, once I was training a brilliant young female lawyer and we had an important precedent case to defend. We studied a lot and wrote the appeal together. Then, I made sure she was the one to stand up in front of all commissioners of the agency to present our arguments. After we won the case, I gave her all the merits, in front of our bosses.

**Are there times when you have or will privilege some women over others?**

Sure. As I would prefer to work with some men over others, I will definitely have my preferences in relation to women, based mainly on their competence.

**If no formal format exists, how do you (or will) offer peer to peer mentoring? Schedule phone appointments? find a coffee shop or office with other people around? How do you keep it professional?**

I would either have a lunch, coffee or a meeting in the office. Mentoring by phone does not seem right, unless there is a good reason for that (e.g. trip, virus outbreak).

**How would you help the company start a program to attract a diverse talent pool?**

Yes, I would help engaging in a program to attract a diverse talent pool. Currently, more and more law firms in Brazil are engaging in similar projects (which aim to promote equality of gender, sex orientation, sex identity and race) and I have already volunteered to make my part, for example, selecting and interviewing candidates, giving initial instructions to recent hired personnel.

**What are your ideas on hiring practices that are clear and transparent? blind résumé evaluation. evaluate résumés without names attached in order to reduce potential gender bias.**

I don’t think in my workplace there is any discrimination about gender. At all. The worst I have seen was some female lawyers saying that they would only hire female interns because they take work more seriously. Never the opposite.

That being said, I believe hiring teams only review (or pay attention to) the essays and exams of those candidates who performed well in the interviews. As a possible development in the hiring process would be making sure the essays and exams are blind reviewed.

**How would you structure the design and layout of the workplace to advance diversity (portraits, art, architecture, iconography etc.)?**

Don’t have enough knowledge on that to opine.

**How would you create a policy on equal wages for equal work?**

I would and am really supportive of this idea. In fact, I believe I would only work in firms that follow this ideal (my law firm has no difference of wage based on race, gender, sexual orientation,
sexual identity, age, etc.). The only thing that is considered is how long the professional become licensed to practice law.

**How would you boost gender diversity within their own operations improving retention, and lowering the considerable cost of staff turnover?**

Same rule should apply to everyone. I think fair wages and bonus, proper training, valuable experiences, fair and polite treatment to everyone regardless of the circumstances, and realistic career expectations are the aspects that improve retention. I would make sure these criteria are duly met.

**What rules and criteria will you create for promotions?**

I really like using experience as a criteria (i.e., how many years the employee had his degree in law). However, differential competence in any given year can be rewarded with higher bonus.

**How will you eliminate gender bias eliminated in performance reviews?**

I don’t think this is a problem in my workplace. On the opposite, I can fairly say that women are more likely than not to be better evaluated in my law firm, considering how competent and driven they are.

**What are the sexual harassment policies and interactive training you will put in place in the workplace? How will you deal with arbitration clauses in sexual harassment policies? New York and California have done away with this).**

I would put in place the most recent ethics code the market applies. Sexual harassment cannot be.

**What do you think of options for telecommuting?**

Broadly speaking, I really like the idea of home work. However, I know by experience home work is not a really good practice when it comes to training less experienced professionals, such as interns and junior associates. In many cases, they lack discipline to manage their to-do’s and/or have difficult to learn from distance (we can compare this scenario with our current online classes now).

**What clear and transparent rules will you put in place for appointment to committees, leadership opportunities?**

I would put a policy establishing a certain percentage of votes from the Board members (or a specific committee) for new members, once the candidate has reached the eligibility thresholds (e.g. billing goals met).

**What are the networking and mentorship/sponsorship?**
I think networking, mentorship, sponsorship are really useful and should be foster by the firm considering each employee’s particularities.

**Will you put in place a program on male allies and sponsors?**

I would if I think male allies are in need of such support. Sometimes, men may have a lot of problems that are simply not discussed in any workplace.

**What about a program to counter stereotypes?**

It would seem interesting, but, from a practical perspective, it may take time to reeducate people.

**What gender equality programs or conferences is the firm engaged in?**

I think all of the questions above are important and should be forward to a CEO of a firm or person in charge of these matters.

**How will your allyship help in “Moving the Needle”: Collaborating with Industry Partners Locally and Globally**

All the questions below seem also interesting to ask a CEO or a person of higher position. Nevertheless, I will try to answer them as far as I can.

**How would you collaborate with organizations across industries on research and data backed initiatives that could help generate new ideas and strategies?**

I would fully support and help them to the extent possible. Of course, some data may be confidential and would not have clearance to disclose.

**How would the Firm/company promote work outside of their organizations to advance gender justice and diversity?**

My firm foster secondment experiences (in both clients and foreign law firms), master’s, and every training possible in equal proportion between the gender.

**How is the MeToo movement shaping norms of masculinity?**

I don’t have specific knowledge on the link between the MeToo movement and any change of masculinity. However, as far as I could perceive, firms have been fighting sexual harassment and trying to eradicate it from the workplace. As a result, some actions originally attributed to masculinity may be changing in such a way that women feel more comfortable in the same workplace as men (e.g. prestigious firms would repudiate any man looking at women as a sexual approach or insinuating something).

Men mentoring women can make a large impact. Do you fear a backlash?
It may cause a backlash, yes. With no doubt, men mentoring women may lead, in some cases, to sexual harassment. But I’m not sure the way to deal with this is by forbidden it for good. I’m sure in the majority of the cases, there can be a more experienced man that can teach much to younger professionals, both women and men.

**As an ally, how can you transform the social value attached to child-care including the role of both parents in caregiving equally?**

I can do it at home. I intend to divide my time at work/home so that my wife has her own time to dedicate herself to her career the same way I do. Once I reach a higher position in a law firm, I may defend policies in this sense.

**How do you understand that there are times when certain gender specific policies can serve a legitimate purpose, however, that these must be determined on a case by case basis?**

It is hard to imagine an example, but I’m sure a policy may be interpreted out of context or in other circumstance in such a way that the intended goal is misplaced.

**As an ally, how can you play an integral role in constructing these equalizing policies and constructing care as a policy issue?**

As I said above, I could give an example first. I would be more than happy to invest my time taking care of my son, while my wife invests in her career.

**As an ally who will be in a decision-making role, how will you help prevent retaliation and unequal treatment upon parental leave?**

Parental leave may be one of the hardest challenges women suffer in the workplace. Most, if not all, discrimination events I witnessed against women at workplace was in relation to women who were about to give birth and would be absent for parental leave, so that they would not be considered for an important project or even promotion. Probably not the best, but a way of trying to combat this (although not necessarily smart from an economic perspective) is to (mandatorily) grant to male employees parental leave equal to women’s. Once this practice becomes usual, not only men but also women would be considered absent for many months after having a child, so it may lead to less discrimination against women.

**How will you advocate for Fair Workplace Policies?**

Retention is pretty much about how happy an employee is in his/her workplace. By defending this idea, I would be able to advocate to fair workplace policies with less (or hopefully no) discrimination.

**How will you send out the message that work family policies are important to men and women aren’t the only ones caring for family members? Advocating for flexible hours, working from home, on-site child-care helps men and women. Observing how and when**
colleagues are evaluated and promoted can also be an important area where policies can be adjusted.

Agree. I would give my example that I care about my wife and son. I need flexible hours, home work and may be greatly benefited from similar policies because I intend to be present for my family and give my wife the same opportunities I have.

**How will you develop caregiving policies for both sexes and offer suggestions on how to design leave so that the outcomes are more egalitarian?**

By serving as an example and knowing what would be ideal, I would be in a better position as to suggest caregiving policies.

**How will you address challenges that care givers (both female and male) face upon returning to the office?**

Hard question. Maybe providing some courses and updates to those who are returning to the office would be a first and important step.

**What are your thoughts on on-ramping (flexible hours at full pay) and guardrails (predictable hours) to help those returning?**

I would suggest flexible hours since every family has different needs.

**What are your thoughts on on-ramp fellowships?**

To extent I know (which is not much), it seems really interesting. Lawyers returning to work would have a valuable help in this moment of need.

**How do you feel about flexhours or Agile Working Options, ranging from flexible hours to work from home to remote working?**

I don’t know enough to opine.

**What are your perceptions on non-linear leadership tracks that take into consideration women with families?**

On one hand, I would say it is impressive and great thing. These women put a lot of effort and were rewarded accordingly. On the other hand, it may give the wrong example to many other women. The mothers who become leaders on non-linear tracks probably gave up much of their time, including precious time with their family, to dedicate to their career. The fact that some women did that may mean that giving up your personal life is the only way of succeeding in the career.
Supportive work-family policies have become increasingly more common. However, research shows that men’s responses to these policies are shaped less by their own personal beliefs, and by their perceptions of what is accepted and expected by their male peers.

Unfortunately, this sounds accurate. By and large, employees behave in a way they believe they are expected to behave. Unless there is a general change of practices, which may be boosted by law or health reasons, it is unlikely that a policy stating that men are allowed to work more from home will be spontaneously followed if that it is not the common practice.

What are your views on work-family policies, such as parent leave, flex time, and part-time work?

As a father, I intend one day to work many hours from home, having flex time and, if the case requires, part-time.

On a scale of 1 to 5 (1-not likely at all, 5-very likely), how likely would it be for you to request and participate in work-family policies (i.e. parental leave or flexible work arrangement) if your family situation made that need applicable?

4

On a scale of 1 to 5 (1-not likely at all, 5-very likely), how likely do you think your male peers would request and participate in one of the company’s work-family policies (i.e. parental leave or flexible work arrangement) if their family situation made that need applicable?

3

On a scale of 1 to 5 (1-not influenced, 5-very likely to influence), how much of your decision to participate in the work-family policies influenced by your perception of what is accepted and expected by leadership/management and your male peers?

3

On a scale of 1 to 5 (1-not comfortable, 5-very comfortable) how comfortable do you feel in your ability to fully be yourself at work?

4.

The “man box” refers to a set of beliefs, communicated by parents, families, the media, peers, and other members of society, that place pressure on men to act in a certain way. These pressures tell men to be self-sufficient, to act tough, to be physically attractive in a certain way, to stick to rigid gender roles, to be heterosexual, to not cry or show emotion, and to use aggression to resolve conflicts. How much do these descriptions relate to something that you have experienced?
Almost all of it. However, aggression is not acceptable as a normal behavior, even if only spoken. Besides, many of my peers, including many of the partner of my law firm, are self-declared homosexuals, and discrimination tend to be minimum.

**What role does cultural differences (regional, ethnic, religious, class) if any, play in your attitudes to masculinity and allyship?**

Not sure if my cultural differences play a role in my masculinity. But certainly, they play a decisive role in my allyship and the way I perceive all people as equals (regardless of gender, sexual orientation, sexual identity, age, origin, religion or class).

**When you see men and women paired together on television, in movies, or other media platforms, what tends to be their relationship?**

Husband and wife; boyfriend and girlfriend.

**How often do you see women in leadership roles on television? Women of color?**

Really often I see women in the main role on television. It may be rare to see women of color as main role, though.

**Does the way you see women in positions of power influence your view of women leaders?**

I guess so. We tend to understand things based on our experience, molded by our rationality.

**Has the way you have seen women in positions of power on television influenced your actions or decisions to be an ally for women in your professional life?**

Probably not. The way I see women in positions of power in real life influences me to advocate towards having more women in leadership positions.

**Do you fear allyship or resulting backlash based on how the media portrayal of women?**

Not really. I believe the role media plays in our lives tend to decrease as time goes by.
How do you define allyship or being an ally?

Oh, very broad. Well the question is very broad, I don’t know if I would describe it very broadly. Um, just in general? Not from me to a woman?

Yea, just in general.

I obviously think it’s being supportive, just generally. It’s, I think it’s more listening than anything – probably like 90% listening, 10% acting on that. It’s not listening and saying, “oh I think this is what you should do.” It’s listening and saying, “okay,” and asking another question and then asking another question and what do you want me to do to help you get there or what do you need from me. I think that’s like it at the high level.

Then focusing on women, do you consider yourself to be an ally for women based on your definition?

Yea, I really try to be.

How do you speak up for women when they are overlooked?

I think, I mean, I think that’s something I struggle with – noticing when they are overlooked. When I do notice, I mean probably just the general stuff.

Why do you think you struggle with noticing that?

Because, I think that I’m never afraid to assert myself, or talk or speak up. So, if a woman isn’t speaking up, or another man, or anyone isn’t speaking up and talking, I usually just chalk that up to a choice they’re making. That’s a knee-jerk reaction. Going deeper than that, obviously it’s a socialized choice – it’s something that has been ingrained in them. You know, “oh women should be quiet.” Or something I notice a lot or something I’ve been told is that women use a lot more qualifiers than men. So, like, I guess, I notice the qualifiers way more than I notice women not talking which is different than the question you asked.

That’s okay. What do you mean by qualifiers?
Just saying like, “I think.” Or like, a man would be like, “this is what we should do.” Like that is what I would say. And then in all my interactions with men, a guy would push back and be like, “no we should this.” Not, “I think we should do this because xyz” followed with “oh that’s a great idea, but I think…” That’s something I experience much less with men than I do with women. And I think that’s something that women get overlooked because they don’t push back as hard or they will push back in a way that doesn’t seem like a push back to a man, so the opinion might get discounted.

**How do you bolster and draw attention to women’s voices, or the voices of women of color?**

Well, I don’t know if I necessarily do that.

**Or is this just consistent with not noticing?**

No, I don’t know if I draw attention to them. When I hear that, I think that when you’re in a group setting and you know there’s a black woman there, how do you make sure her voice is heard. I don’t think I necessarily do that. I think I’m very apt to listen to her though. And I think as apt I am to a man or a white woman, I’ve definitely learned a lot from those voices. So I try to listen to them and I try to learn from them. And I think my learning from them has helped me incorporate or change and better my views and opinions and things like that. So I guess kind of in a diluted or distilled way, whichever way that would go, I can draw attention to them by making them a part of my voice in the same way.

**What do you mean by that?**

Like in the same way that – my views are informed by any stimulus I’ve observed. I’ve learned a lot from interacting with people on the Journal. Like I’ve learned a lot from ****, and that’s made me reassess some of my views. So when I speak on certain issues now, it will be different than before I knew [him]. And the same goes for my friend ***** who I knew from college and she’s a black woman. And now when I speak, I can hear things that I learned from her and I know in what I say.

Since we’re talking a little bit about intersectionality – actually even before that. You mentioned how sometimes when women speak up, they either qualify it or they can be ignored or things like that. And data supports that. That when women do speak out, they can be ignored, or have their ideas taken. So, as an ally, I know you said you don’t do much and that you try to listen is that stuff that you’ve undertaken, but how else can you go about addressing this?

Addressing what? That women aren’t heard?
That women are ignored when they do speak out. Or have their ideas taken. Like a woman says something, but then a man says it louder and it’s his idea now.

Oh, you just got to – “didn’t xyz say that?” Obviously there’s no name in this situation, but just doing things like that. You know, a big part of allyship, and I think this is going back to the beginning for me in listening is not like, and I don’t know if this is right or not, but this is the way I see it, is that it’s not acting on someone’s behalf. It’s helping them to or supporting them to act for themselves. And obviously I know that it’s like, you know, it will be much harder if they only act for themselves and they don’t have someone supporting them, vocally. But, I think that’s something you need permission for. I don’t think it’s very supportive to speak up on somebody’s behalf if they don’t want you to.

So, going back to the intersectionality conversation – gender is only one axis of difference. How do you or will you open the doors too more participation from women and women of color? And, how will you make sure that women and women of color literally take a seat at the table, rather than standing on the sidelines – whether it’s in the classroom or the work setting.

Oh, well hell yea. I mean, I hope so. I don’t know how I…I have no idea what my day tomorrow looks like so I don’t know how the conference room I’ll be in 5 years from now looks like. But yea, I mean, when I’m at a point where I can implement some kind of structural change, or, you know, if I can do it tomorrow, I will.

So then the conversation is, if you could do it tomorrow, what would you do?

If I could do it tomorrow, I would make everybody just respect each other. Like what? I don’t know. I guess, as EIC of this journal, I’ll make your voice just as important as anyone else’s. All the women (there’s a ton of women on the board), they will all have equal talking time and their opinions will be considered equally. So there, that’s something I will actively and affirmatively do. Especially on this international publication specifically, intersectionality is so important. That’s something we talked about – we had an articles editor meeting last night and **** said that something she regrets in her time is that there are areas of the world that were underrepresented both in authors and subject matter. And that’s something that the articles editors and I are going to work on – so something like publishing more women, publishing more women from different parts of the world from places that their voices aren’t historically heard. Which, that’s something that will be balanced against quality of the article, things like that. But there’s two things we can do.
Were you at a law firm last summer and are you going to a law firm next summer/after law school?

No, I was not at a law firm last summer – I was working for a district judge in Ohio who, unintentionally hired 7 white males. It was in Ohio so like, other races weren’t really available. I think the law school there is like 96% white. And also, all of the other people had gone through minority hiring programs, so they didn’t apply to this clerkship. And they did, they did make offers to women and everything, it just happened this way. But I am going to a law firm this year.

What are your – from whatever you know – what are your ideas or assumptions on the world of work/law firms and the assumptions about gender, race, and sexual identity?

I know it’s super shitty. Like you see in the news, as a law student, Jones Day’s copious law suits about how they hate women. Uh, which is interesting when you talk to people at Jones Day about that and men about that, but… yea, I can’t imagine it’s going to be, I don’t know. I don’t know what it’s going to be. I like to assume the best and I don’t want to assume the worst because it is so prominent and prevalent right now, I’d imagine things are being done, if not as much as they should be, at least to a certain extent. It also brings up worries of, like, yea, it’s really important to be an ally, it’s really important to speak up in xyz setting. But then also as a summer associate, and I imagine also in your early career, it’s frightening to speak up because you don’t want to go against the grain and you don’t want to make waves about yourself and hurt your own career prospects and jeopardize your future. So I understand why change has been slow in those areas.

If you had the opportunity to do so, how would you help your future company/law firm to start a program to attract a diverse talent pool? Or like something with the judge and what happened with that?

That was crazy because two out of his three clerks were women. And it wasn’t the judge who was in charge of hiring – like he has judge stuff to do. It was his career clerk who was a woman who was in charge of it so it was really her that hired all these seven guys. I think having a woman in charge is awesome, especially for like these recruitment initiatives and changing the structure. I think in the same way that successful women have noted that their career benefits from male allyship, I think that something that would be awesome would be to put a man there that supports the initiative. Whether they both are in charge of the program or whatever it is. Having a male voice that supports the woman in charge. But I also think in these situations, because the industry is so male dominated, to serve also in a consultancy role, because I think when you want to do things to reach an ultimate end goal, the means are important, but you have to assess what’s more important – the means or the end?
So you’re saying to have women in a more consulting role to attract a more diverse pool?

No, no, no. Have the women be in charge of recruitment. Which I think is also something that is tough because I think a lot of people view that as a “women thing.” I think there’s a lot of a stereotype around that which is tough….these are very complex problems huh? So yea, I think you just have to put a man in there because that also shows equality and I think it’s really important to not be like for purposes of showing that women are the same as men because they’re not and I think that’s super hurtful to the cause and to promote equality or to promote female success. I don’t even know if saying equality is hurtful because do we really want them to be equal or have equitable status?

What are your ideas on hiring practices that are clear and transparent, like blind resume evaluation, resumes without names attached, things like that?

You know, you want to say it’s good but it’s obviously not because of – I’ve been alive for 24.5 years and I know that my resume looks the way it does because I’m a white male. And I recognize that. I understand that if I had a more traditionally black name on my resume or a spanish name, it wouldn’t be viewed as favorably as if it were my name.

So do you think that would make a difference then?

Blind resume? I think blind resume would because there’s obviously people of color and women and women of color that –

But you think the experiences that are on the resume would be indicative of whatever is being blindly assumed?

Well, no, no, no. I don’t think they would look at my resume and be like “oh this is a white dude.” I think they would look at my resume and be like, “oh we like this, we like this, we like this.” And the reason I have those things is partially attributable to the way I look, the way I was raised, socioeconomic, all those factors. So I think blind resume review is good, but I don’t think it accounts for these institutionalized roadblocks.

Two parts to this next question. What rules or criteria will you create for promotions? And, consistent with that, how will you help to eliminate gender bias in performance reviews since so often performance reviews are used for promotions?

I know nothing about gender bias in performance reviews. I imagine that it’s generally worse for women. And for promotions, can you repeat the first part?
What rules or criteria will you create for promotions?

Oh god. Of course we want a complete and honest meritocracy. But, I remember, I’ve heard that there are problems with that. It seems very impractical to do it as a complete and honest meritocracy because we aren’t just pieces of paper that you can just list credentials. We’re individuals. I don’t know. I don’t think that that’s something that I can come up with. I don’t think it’s something that I or any single person can come up with. God, wouldn’t it be awesome if we could just feed everything into an asexual robot and they could decide it? I don’t know. Of course, you want to say that like 3 women, 3 men. The women deliberate together. The men deliberate together. They come together and then talk to each other about who they think the best candidates are. And you have one wizard who rules over it all – like they make the right decision every time. Because you can’t split it 50-50. That’s ridiculous. That’s a quota system. Ah, this sucks that we have to do this, but this is kind of fun.

Yea. It’s because it’s not things that you normally think about. Like you know that issues exist, but thinking about the policy changes that you need to implement, the practical minutia is huge.

Yea, I don’t know. I think you would have to have voices in the decision process that…I don’t know. Something that I’ve learned in my first year of law school – when we did our rape unit in crim, was just about how rape laws are made by men.

Who did you have for crim?

Well I went to Ohio State, so I had Joshua Dressler who you may have heard of.

I had Morse and he loves Dressler.

Really? I love Dressler. So yea, we did a rape unit in crim and we talked for a day about how rape laws are created by men and men react differently to someone trying to rape them than women do. So, naturally, I think women would be more understanding of what makes a female good…but then I think our whole economic system is based on men. Like if you want to succeed in American capitalism (or really anywhere in the world), you have to do it the way a man wants you to do it because that’s what the system is based on. You know what, all women should be men and that’s what should happen, haha.

Interesting.

That’s a joke. Please don’t soundbite me. Please. Please put in italics – “dripping with sarcasm.”
Will do.

Yea, I think we just have to put women at the top. It’s tough to get them there – which is what we’re trying to figure out how to get them there.

*It’s interesting that you talk about it as this difficult thing and this inherently societal, structural thing.*

I mean, yea, isn’t it.

Yea, it is. So when we talk about it from the law firm context, we’re trying to move the needle, just a little bit. A little bit at a time and hopefully, eventually get to some sort of change or some sort of policy that will assist in that change. So, when we talk about moving the needle, do you think collaborating with organizations that have research and data that show which types of initiatives will help with the advancement of women…do you think something like that would be helpful in a law firm setting?

Well you can show me data till I’m blue in the face. But, if I don’t care about it, it’s a waste of time. So I think you have to have a committee that wants to put these initiatives in place to achieve these goals. Sure, if they want to look at data which says which initiatives are generally successful, that would be great if they had that and institute those initiatives or derivatives of those initiatives. See if it works over however long. And they have to really care about it and look at the data they come up with. I mean that data, if somebody outside of the law firm compiles it, or analyzes it and says, oh, this huge spreadsheet means xyz, to make it digestible, that’s fine. I would imagine. Because then they can look at it and realize what didn’t work. And then I don’t know much about corporate structure psychology. Hopefully, they wouldn’t just double down and say, “oh we just have to do it harder. Do the thing that’s not working harder.”

**How do you think the MeToo Movement has shaped norms of masculinity?**

I think it’s pissed a lot of men off. I think some of that anger comes from fear. Like a lot of men are like, “oh I did that and I didn’t think it was bad.” Whatever. And I think it’s obviously entrenched a lot of people and you can’t really be surprised that they’ve become entrenched. I think it’s great when there are men who are like, “oh yea, something like that happened to me.” I just found out Brendan Frasier became part of the MeToo Movement which I thought was cool. That’s sick. Norms around masculinity…I don’t know if it’s changed norms around masculinity really. I think that’s so…yee, I have not seen the MeToo Movement practically in effect. I’ve seen it practically, but not men being like, “oh because of this, I’m changing xyz.” And maybe they’ve done that personally, but I haven’t read a ton about it.
You talked a little bit about this fear that men might have post MeToo Movement or within the MeToo Movement. There’s science and data that supports the idea that men mentoring women can make a large impact. But now, men fear that one-on-one and fear backlash from it. Do you think that fear is valid and do you also fear backlash in similar situations?

Um, no, I don’t fear backlash. When I got to college, I joined a fraternity. And I got, one of my first, most prominent memories of joining this fraternity was that one of the guys who was in it was like, it was right before one of our first parties or mixers or something like that. And he was like, “dude, just keep it together. You don’t want to catch a case.” And I was like, “what is catching a case?” and he was like, “you don’t want someone accusing you of rape or sexual assault or anything like that.”

Oh my god.

Which like, calling it “catching a case” is shitty, but it was like, obviously you can’t remove the bias from the words, but if you could, like it’s good advice. It’s like don’t get too drunk. Don’t do anything that somebody could take issue with or that could hurt somebody or could be considered rape or something. I mean I think that’s a pretty good mindset to go into any situation with. Like, you don’t have to have a meeting with a woman and tell her how beautiful she is and then say okay now I’m going to mentor you. If you think it’s going to get you in hot water, don’t do it. How important do you think that is to your meeting – if you want to compliment her, tell her she’s smart. Tell her how the great work she’s been doing. I just think men are stupid and they want to continue to be who they are and be in the positions they are in, and whether they are conscious of it or not, they know what they’re doing is keeping them there and they don’t want to change that.

Switching gears to work-family policies now. Work-family laws have the potential to advance a radical substantive equality approach which seeks to protect the rights of both men and women. Such reconciliation policies and laws are key to combating negative stereotypes that exclusively confine women to caregiving and assume that men cannot provide caregiving. While the gendered nature of family leave policies results in subordinating the woman, both in the family and in the workplace, allyship can show how gender egalitarian parental leave policies can dismantle the many historically embedded gender stereotypes. So, as an ally, so two parts to this because one part is that this is socially constructed. So, how can you transform the social value attached to child-care, including the role of both parents in caregiving equally? And then, how would you transfer that over to the professional sphere or the work environment?
Interesting. I mean, the only reason I’m getting a job is to take care of a family. Otherwise, I would live in the woods. I mean, I think taking your parental leave if you get it is important or if not, advocating for having your parental leave if they don’t give it to men. I think it’s an interesting issue because what I’m about to say is going to sound like what I was just railing against, but it’s a choice to take parental leave. Men could take it if they wanted to, I’m sure. And women don’t have to take it. Even if a woman is the only one getting it…I understand that it’s huge to be with your children, that’s huge for their development. Especially early on. But I’m sure there’s a way where if a woman wanted to work instead of being home with her kid, she could. That being said, nobody should have to make that choice. And I know that there are law firms that have instituted mandatory parental leave whether that’s two weeks, four weeks, six weeks, whatever. And you have to take it because if you don’t make it mandatory, women are going to take it and men aren’t because they’re like, “oh, I can get six weeks ahead.” Yea, I don’t know. I don’t have kids yet.

I am in the child advocacy clinic right now, and I have had just amazing experiences with fathers there who are willing to do anything for their child in the same way that you would stereotypically expect a mother to. I forget what I was talking about…I think mandatory parental leave because it’s important for you to spend time with them both for the child and for you, medically, probably. But then, will that make people stop having kids? Probably not.

You talked a little bit about, or mentioned as a side note, how some men might fear some sort of backlash from the firm or their coworkers if they took parental leave just because they’re a man. Do you fear that similarly?

Hell yea. Yea, if I didn’t get mandatory parental leave, I don’t think I would take more than a couple days.

But you would take a couple days?

Yea, yea. I mean…

Wait, before you go on, I’m going to ask you a couple scale questions. On a scale of 1 to 5 (1-not likely at all, 5-very likely), how likely would it be for you to request & participate in work-family policies (i.e. Parental Leave or Flexible Work Arrangement) if your family situation made that need applicable?
On a scale of 1 to 5 (1-not influenced, 5-very likely to influence), how much of your decision to participate in the work-family policies is influenced by your perception of what is accepted and expected by leadership/management and your male peers?

The men I know? Oh god. I think my friends here at law school, I don’t think I know them well enough to say that for them. My friends from college who are working in similar industries like finance and that kind of stuff, I would say, god out of 8 of them, maybe 1 or 2 of them would. So I would say somewhere between 2 and 3.

Okay. And then On a scale of 1 to 5 (1-not influenced, 5-very likely to influence), how much of your decision to participate in the work-family policies is influenced by your perception of what is accepted and expected by leadership/management and your male peers?

Um, so I know I’m not answering based on the scale, but I think it’s important because, when you said your family situation makes it necessary, over the last ten years, my grandfather has had terribly progressive Alzheimer’s. And that’s been a situation where my family has had to rearrange their work arrangements, work schedules, and take time off or change their lives to do that. That’s something I see as making it necessary and I would do anything, anything to be able to do that kind of stuff. I’m emotional and sappy. So when you say make it necessary, I would say 1 on this. It’s my family. So 1.