WHY WOMEN GIVE TO WOMEN: A PORTRAIT OF GENDER-BASED PHILANTHROPY

Amy C. G. Beck
Virginia Commonwealth University

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/etd

Part of the Educational Leadership Commons, and the Higher Education Commons

© The Author

Downloaded from
https://scholarscompass.vcu.edu/etd/6098

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at VCU Scholars Compass. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of VCU Scholars Compass. For more information, please contact libcompass@vcu.edu.
WHY WOMEN GIVE TO WOMEN: A PORTRAIT OF GENDER-BASED PHILANTHROPY

AT A PUBLIC COLLEGE IN VIRGINIA

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Virginia Commonwealth University.

by

Amy Catherine Gray Beck
B.A., Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech), 2007
M.Ed., Clemson University, 2010

Chair: Katherine Cumings Mansfield, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Educational Leadership and Cultural Foundations
School of Education, UNC Greensboro

Virginia Commonwealth University
Richmond, Virginia
December 2, 2019
Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to the loves of my life: My husband Jeffrey - my biggest supporter, and my 1 year old, Sonny, who unlocked for me the gift of motherhood. I also dedicate this dissertation to my grandmother, Shirley. You embody selflessness, held my hand through Sonny’s first few months, and provided me with the confidence to be a mother. Finally, I dedicate this dissertation to the generosity of female philanthropists around the world, the women of the Society of 1918, and Val Cushman. You welcomed me with open arms, “adopted” me, and I can’t thank you enough for trusting me to share your inspirational story.
Acknowledgements

First, I would like to acknowledge that this research project would not have been possible without the donors to the Society of 1918 at William and Mary. I hope I was able to illustrate your stories, motivations, generosity and experiences through this dissertation process. I learned so much from what you were willing to share with me, and I will be a better practitioner because of it.

I am incredibly grateful for the four members of my dissertation committee: Dr. Katherine Mansfield, Dr. Genevieve Siegel-Hawley, Dr. Whitney Newcomb, and Dr. Amy Lane. Thank you for your guidance, motivation, patience, support and research expertise throughout my graduate program and my career. I feel so fortunate to have had each of you on my committee for this specific topic - I am certain I could not have gotten any luckier. I would especially like to thank my chair, Dr. Katherine Mansfield. Dr. Kat: Your expertise and professionalism is something I aspire to, but your approach and supportive nature is without equal. You have been patient, encouraging, and you exerted confidence in me when I needed it the most, whether near or far. I am forever grateful for you and our relationship.

I would also like to acknowledge VCU, my educator but also my employer. I could not have done this without the financial support, but also the time and encouragement of my supervisors and colleagues. First, Gordon McDougall for hiring me and believing in me and my success. Many thanks to all of my colleagues in Development and Alumni Relations along the way for understanding and supporting me in this personal conquest. But mostly, Samantha Marrs. You are the best mentor I could have ever asked for, not only in my career but in reaching this point in my education, and in becoming a working mother. VCU is beyond lucky to have you and I wouldn’t have gotten here without your listening ear, wisdom and heart.
Additionally, I could not have found the Society of 1918 without the help of a few women making connections for me and believing in me. First, Dr. Amy Lane for guiding me and connecting me to Dr. Anita Friedmann and Dr. Patty O’Neill at William and Mary - your research was an inspiration for me finding my place in the research world, and your connection to Val was invaluable. And Val - you took a chance on me. Your unwavering patience, support, and openness is the reason I have gotten to this point. You have made this possible for me, and I can only hope to become a fraction of the professional you are.

Finally, I would like to thank my family and friends for their belief and patience with me as I continued my education all these years. Especially my mother, Catherine, for quizzing me over the kitchen table for the countless tests and spelling bees. You taught me that not only education, but perseverance, is what would help me succeed. My father, Tom, for your acceptance, but also exposing me to your love of your alma mater, something that encouraged me to develop that same love of connection. My mother-in law Joyce and late father-in-law Jeff, for your unyielding love and pride. Paw-Paw Eddie, for your quiet confidence and unwavering love for me and my mom. My brother, Tripp, for your support and love from afar. My beautiful son, JB3, for inspiring me to finish so I could enjoy weekends with you uninterrupted, and my loving husband, Jeff. “Unpopular opinion - this dissertation was harder for you than it was for me.” Thank you for your patience, therapy, love, dinners, cleanliness and support for this 6 and a half year commitment of our 8 years together. Here’s to the next chapter. I love you forever.
# Table of Contents

List of Appendices .......................................................................................................................... ix

List of Tables ........................................................................................................................................ x

Abstract ................................................................................................................................................. xi

1. Introduction .......................................................................................................................................... 1

   Researcher’s Experiences Informing this Study.............................................................................. 3
   Purpose of Study ................................................................................................................................. 5
   Research Questions............................................................................................................................. 5
   Overview of Research Design............................................................................................................. 6
   Portraiture............................................................................................................................................ 7
   Summary and Conclusion..................................................................................................................... 8

2. Review of Literature .......................................................................................................................... 10

   Historical Overview............................................................................................................................ 10
   Motivations........................................................................................................................................ 13
   Women and Philanthropy.................................................................................................................... 14
       Why we should care......................................................................................................................... 17
       How women give............................................................................................................................ 17
       Women inherit family money ......................................................................................................... 19
       Women make decisions about money in the family ....................................................................... 19
       Women, education, and income .................................................................................................... 20
       Women are more generous............................................................................................................. 22
       Women give more to education than men .................................................................................... 24
   Additional identities............................................................................................................................ 26
       Sexual orientation............................................................................................................................ 26
       Race and ethnicity.......................................................................................................................... 27
   Women’s motivations for giving.......................................................................................................... 27
       Making a difference........................................................................................................................ 27
       Connection..................................................................................................................................... 28
       Efficiency and stewardship............................................................................................................ 28
       Building relationships.................................................................................................................... 29
       Volunteering and engagement........................................................................................................ 30
   Anonymity.......................................................................................................................................... 31
   Women giving to women and girls..................................................................................................... 31
   Similar Programs............................................................................................................................... 34
   Feminist Theory................................................................................................................................. 41
       Principles and purposes of feminism and feminist theory............................................................ 41
       Unique characteristics of feminist research............................................................................... 43
Izzy - Founder - Alumna of the 70s decade.........................................................91
Jessica - Alumna of the 70s decade.................................................................92
Discussion of portraits.................................................................93
Mothers and W&M parents.................................................................94
Awareness of research on philanthropy.................................................97
Leaders in their communities and in careers......................................98
Mentorship.........................................................................................99
Perceptions of Experiences & Engagement..............................................101
Participants’ Perceptions of Their Experiences at William & Mary ...........102
High levels of student involvement...........................................................102
High student satisfaction........................................................................104
Alumnae engagement.............................................................................105
Trust in the leadership of college..............................................................110
Lifelong relationships..............................................................................111
Involvement with the Society of 1918.....................................................113
The importance of relationships..............................................................114
Asked personally to get involved.............................................................117
History of giving.....................................................................................119
Serving in a leadership capacity..............................................................121
Concerned with political agenda............................................................122
The Roles of Womanhood and Motivations............................................123
Gender Mattered Throughout their Lives..............................................125
Perception and experiences of gender inequality..................................125
Juggling multiple priorities...................................................................127
Experience as a woman during women’s movement............................129
Gender matters in the workplace...........................................................129
The experiences of women who chose not to work outside the home ....132
Supporting women outside of W&M & the Society of 1918.................134
Experiences as a Woman at W&M.........................................................135
Lack of women leaders at W&M.............................................................137
A history of ignoring women.................................................................138
Experiences as Women Giving to both W&M and Society of 1918 .......139
Women’s movement...............................................................................139
Women as donors before the Society of 1918.......................................144
Support for President Rowe.................................................................145
Relationships with women.................................................................147
The Future of 1918.................................................................................148
Founders..................................................................................149
Members.........................................................................................151
5. Implications, Recommendations, and Final Conclusions.................................................................156

Implications for Practice.......................................................................................................................156
Considerations for starting a women and philanthropy organization............................................156
Research on alumni population........................................................................................................157
Hiring (relationships and trust are key)............................................................................................157
Financial resources.........................................................................................................................158

Considerations for structuring a women and philanthropy program.............................................159
A standalone program in addition to inclusive fundraising practices..............................................159
Giving threshold but with inclusive engagement opportunities....................................................159
Clear mission and vision for the organization................................................................................160

Considering donors’ perceptions of their experiences.................................................................161
Satisfaction and involvement.............................................................................................................161
Trust should be built........................................................................................................................162
Practice asking...................................................................................................................................162
Relationships and sisterhood............................................................................................................163

Consider the role of womanhood......................................................................................................163
Considering feminism and exercising listening............................................................................164
Gender identity and inclusivity.........................................................................................................164
Missing voices....................................................................................................................................165
Women’s lived experiences..............................................................................................................165

Implications for Future Research.......................................................................................................166
Limitations..........................................................................................................................................168
Final Conclusions............................................................................................................................168

References..............................................................................................................................................170

Vita.......................................................................................................................................................187
List of Appendices

A. Summary of study’s documents ...........................................................................................................190
B. Interview protocol .................................................................................................................................191
C. Recruitment script via email from Val Cushman ..................................................................................192
D. Recruitment script via email from Amy Gray Beck ............................................................................193
E. Consent form and in-person script ........................................................................................................194
F. Participant pseudonym and demographic summaries ..........................................................................197
G. List of observations conducted ...........................................................................................................198
H. Signed W&M Volunteer Agreement .................................................................................................199
I. Timeline of major events ......................................................................................................................200
J. Future of the Society of 1918 ..............................................................................................................201
K. Member Checks ...................................................................................................................................202
List of Tables

1. Research Questions ......................................................................................................... 7
2. Methods Matrix ............................................................................................................... 55
3. Timeline Graphic ............................................................................................................ 62
Abstract

WHY WOMEN GIVE TO WOMEN: A PORTRAIT OF GENDER-BASED PHILANTHROPY AT A PUBLIC COLLEGE IN VIRGINIA

By Amy Gray Beck, Ph.D.

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Virginia Commonwealth University, 2019

Chair: Katherine Cumings Mansfield, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Educational Leadership and Cultural Foundations
School of Education, UNC Greensboro

The cost of public higher education is steadily increasing, with state and federal government cutting its support year after year. Students are having to pay more out of pocket for classes and tuition, and institutions rely on private funding support to provide educational opportunities to students in need. Historically, fundraising operations in higher education have focused on a traditional solicitation model, focusing on fundraising from men in households, but savvy institutions have begun to focus on philanthropy from specific populations, including women, to increase dollars raised. Research shows women are more philanthropically generous than their male counterparts, especially when giving to education.

The main purpose of this qualitative case study was to highlight the successes of a women and philanthropy program at William and Mary, a public college in Virginia, as it is the first and only women and philanthropy program in the country where the funds donated are given back to benefit women, as well as add to the growing body of literature on women and philanthropy, and the lack of literature that exists on women giving to women in higher education.
The alumnae initiatives endowment funded by the Society of 1918 offers alumnae leadership development, networking opportunities, continuing education, empowerment, and more. Private funding in this case is enabling a social justice program to exist that otherwise would not be funded through tuition and state and federal funding. Interviews, observations, and document analysis were utilized to examine contextual factors contributing to the development of the Society of 1918 and motivations for members joining the Society at a $10,000 level.

A feminist standpoint theoretical framework helped to develop meaning-making of alumnae’s motivations for joining the Society of 1918. Utilizing portraiture as a qualitative method, findings showed how gender and timely social justice movements played a role in influencing alumnae motivations to join the Society of 1918. Finally, best practices are shared for institutions considering a comprehensive women and philanthropy program whose private gifts benefit women.
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

The cost of public higher education is steadily increasing, with state and federal government cutting its support year after year. Students are having to pay more out of pocket for classes and tuition, and extracurricular offerings from the university are the first to go when funding is not readily available. Institutions have been relying on private support more and more in order to provide educational opportunities to students (Lambert, 2014). Fortunately, private giving to both public and private institutions has increased over time. Data from Giving USA reports that since 1965, giving to all aspects of education has increased from $2.01 billion to $58.72 billion in 2018, an increase of 2,821% (Giving USA, 2019).

While giving to education has increased, funding for higher education has decreased from the state level since 1980, even though the demand for higher education has been on the rise (Mortenson, 2012). A major emphasis on higher education fundraising has taken place in the last twenty years due to two economic recessions drying out the government’s support. In the 1980s, tuition increased 30% more than state appropriations. During the great recession in the late 2000s and early 2010s, state appropriations to higher education fell while enrollment in universities spiked due to unemployment, leading to increased demand for financial aid (Lambert, 2014, p. 43). In 2008, the average endowment fell 30%, decreasing even more in 2009 (Drezner, 2011, p. 1.). The state of Virginia alone reduced support of higher education by 53.6% from $10.47 per $1,000 of state personal income in 1980 to $4.86 in 2011 (Mortenson, 2012). If continuing at this rate, Mortenson predicts, state funding will reach zero by 2038, and some even saying by 2032. The average for the United States is zero state funding to higher education by the year 2052 (2012).
Educational opportunities at colleges and universities do not only consist of enrolling in courses, and the cost doesn’t stop at classes and room and board. The need for career support, mentoring, leadership development, research experience, as well as internships and job placement is higher than ever as people realize the importance of developing students holistically and it increases their likelihood of being hired after they graduate (Brown, David, & McClendon, 1999; Callanan & Benzing, 2004; Chenoweth & Smith, 2015; Koc et al., 2016; McGee & Keller, 2007; Pryor et al., 2012; Rainie & Anderson, 2017; Seymour, Hunter, Laursen & DeAntoni, 2004).

Studies show that students are seeking colleges that offer multiple opportunities such as those listed previously, at the lowest cost they can find. In 2012, a survey conducted on almost 200-thousand first-year college students found that the second most important factor in choosing a college to attend was that alumni of the college were hired into good jobs (55.9%), the third being offered financial assistance (45.6%), and fourth being the cost to attend (43.3%), all behind academic reputation as first in 63.8% of the responses (Pryor et al., 2012). In addition, it is becoming more widely known that women prove to be more successful if they are mentored by other women who can offer them experiential advice and support (Allen, Day & Lentz, 2005; Edds-Ellis & Keaster, 2013; Noe, Greenberger, & Wang, 2002; Sherman, Munoz, & Pankake, 2008; Sherman, 2014). Moreover, these opportunities are more often afforded to women at schools with more resources. To develop sustainable and valuable opportunities for students is not free. It takes financial resources as well as intellectual and experiential resources, all for which universities tap into their alumni networks. And in the current political and financial climate of higher education funding, it is ever more important for colleges and universities to increase their understanding of potential development opportunities.
**Researcher’s Experiences Informing this Study**

While I applied to only a few colleges as a high school senior, I submitted a whopping 42 community-based scholarship applications, the gains of which paid for my first two years at Virginia Tech in the early 2000s. Since receiving these scholarships, I have felt very much indebted to my community. Growing up, philanthropy was not a part of my family values as we were not significantly wealthy enough to make a large impact to any causes about which we felt strongly, though I remember making small donations into the offerings tray at church as a young child. I have been the fortunate recipient of others’ philanthropic deeds through higher education, and that period in my life instilled in me a great interest in the motivations behind philanthropy.

Relatedly, I have been working in the field of development and alumni relations for seven years, and prior to that I studied higher education for my master’s degree. In my professional role, I have developed an interest in the affinity that alumni feel to parts of the institution that helped to develop them as human beings while they were students. Further, in my work in alumni relations, I get to explore these reasons and connect alumni back to the programs and classmates they value so deeply. I decided to obtain my graduate degree in higher education right before the market crashed in the fall of 2008, which was timely for me, as the public university I attended underwent significant budget cuts while I was enrolled. Studying higher education during this time was eye-opening, as part of my comprehensive exams included cutting an operating budget in half without compromising the value of the program. Functioning with limited resources has been a constant struggle while working at state public institutions, so the need for individual private support and the generosity of alumni has always fascinated me. I have given back modestly to both my undergraduate and graduate institutions, and choose to give
back to programs that significantly impacted my growth and development, hoping others will benefit as I did. The culmination of all these activities and interests built a foundation for my PhD studies and dissertation topic.

For my dissertation I wanted to focus on a philanthropic group from which I could learn, but also a group with which I could empathize. I shared my thoughts with Dr. Amy Lane, a mentor and eventual dissertation committee member, who connected me with faculty at The College of William & Mary (W&M) where she conducted her doctoral work. The two women I met there, Dr. Anita Friedmann and Dr. Patty O’Neill, both conducted their dissertation research on development populations at universities. They provided me with great insight into doing research in the field, and connected me with Dr. Valerie Cushman, another colleague at W&M, because she had just started an alumnae initiatives program in 2015 with a fundraising component which was unique for various reasons. First, this program offered leadership development and networking opportunities for female students and alumnae; so, the group had programmatic and engagement components that were especially appealing to me. Another unique characteristic of the group was that members added a fundraising component to its mission. Group members had decided on their own that the funds that they raised would go back to the alumnae initiatives endowment in perpetuity. I felt that the alumnae initiatives program at W&M blended my interest in both student and alumni engagement, as well as my interest in exploring more deeply people’s motivations for giving to their alma mater.

There has been some research on the motivations behind why women give financially to philanthropic endeavors. There has also been more recent research about women’s motivations of giving to institutions of higher education over other philanthropic entities. However, there has been little to no research exploring why women as individuals and organizations give to
women’s programs at colleges and universities. Determining the motivations of women who give to initiatives that support alumnae and female students at their alma maters could help development officers and administration in the future to better understand their donors and their potential. This research would also add to the very small body of knowledge that exists about why women give to women and girls in a very targeted manner.

I came to the study with several assumptions. First, I assumed that the women in the fundraising program had gender-based experiences as either a student or alumna that influenced them to give a significant financial gift. As a female manager and serving in a professional leadership role, I had personal biases about the lack of female mentors and networking opportunities for women in universities and other professional settings. I assumed that other women would have similar experiences, and thus desire to create and sustain leadership and networking opportunities for others so they might learn how to navigate certain situations.

**Purpose and Research Questions**

The current study examines the contextual factors that contributed to the development of the Society of 1918 at W&M. This project also describes the nature of the Society of 1918 at W&M and how donors’ experiences as women have informed their perceptions, engagement, and activities. This is important because government funding has decreased for education while the demand has increased, and universities are trying to find ways to fund programs to not only educate and house their students, but also prepare them to be ready and confident to positively impact the world after graduation. W&M’s alumnae initiatives endowment funded by the Society of 1918 offers alumnae leadership development, networking opportunities, continuing education, empowerment, and more. Private funding in this case is enabling a social justice program to exist that otherwise would not be funded through tuition and state and federal funding. Illustrating the
motivations behind these alumnae donors will help practitioners to better understand how we may fund programs such as these that are highly sought after by prospective college students.

The following research questions guided the research:

1. What contextual (political, historical, social) factors contributed to the development of the Society of 1918 at W&M?

2. What is the nature of the Society of 1918 at W&M?
   a. Organizational structure? Who are the leaders/donors?
   b. Organizational mission? Who do they serve? And why do they serve them?
   c. Organizational activities and initiatives? How do they serve?

3. How do the donors of the Society of 1918 at W&M perceive and experience their engagement with their alma mater generally and the Society of 1918 in particular?

4. What role, if any, do the donors’ lived experiences as women shape their perceptions and experiences around their philanthropic activities at W&M?

Overview of Research Design

The four research questions above lent themselves to using a qualitative research design. A qualitative research design, described by Marshall and Rossman (2006) is, “naturalistic, draws on multiple methods that respect the humanity of the participants in the study, focuses on context, is emergent and evolving, and is fundamentally interpretive” (2006, p. 2). Within the qualitative research tradition, I used portraiture (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis) because it allowed me to uncover details and nuances about the organization and experiences of the women with whom I spoke to be shared an illustrative manner. Using portraiture as a method for the current study allows me to draw a picture for the reader of my experience with the women donors, one that I would not have been able to portray without the method. I spent much time
with these women in interviews, meetings, and at events, and I could better paint a picture of their motivations and the genuine feelings behind their gifts by using this descriptive method.

Table 1 indicates which data collection method I used to answer each research question:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Interviews</th>
<th>Participant Observation</th>
<th>Document &amp; Artifact Analysis</th>
<th>Website</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What contextual factors contributed to the development of the Society of 1918 at W&amp;M?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. What is the nature of the Society of 1918 at W&amp;M?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. How do the donors of the Society of 1918 at W&amp;M perceive and experience their engagement with their alma mater generally and the Society of 1918 in particular?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. What role, if any, do the donors’ lived experiences as women shape their perceptions and experiences around their philanthropic activities at W&amp;M?</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Portraiture.**

For the current study, I use portraiture as the vehicle for reporting the findings gleaned from interviews, observations, and document analysis. Portraiture is a qualitative methodology developed by Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot. Portraiture is an artistic process that is framed by the phenomenological paradigm, and shares the techniques and goals of ethnography (Given, 2008).

Portraiture, as defined by Rivera (2006), “combines art and science to develop a textual in-depth image of an individual or an organization […] Most portraitists desire to capture the complexity, dynamics, and subtlety of the human experience or organizational life” (2006, p. 35). Rivera (2006) goes on to describe portraiture by stating:

“Dialogue between the portraitist and h[er] subject is the medium that is used to place the subject in the social and cultural context within which he or she lives. The connection
between the subject and the portraitist has the potential to develop and grow into a rich and meaningful relationship. Portraiture also allows for introspection and self-narrative which helps to place and identify the portraitist’s social and cultural environment.”

(p. 35).

I graduated with a bachelor of arts degree in English, and I selected portraiture because I am most comfortable explaining settings with words and interpretation given my academic background. I used portraiture as a method to describe my findings to create a fuller and more just picture of the people and organization at W&M. I use the text from my interview coding, mixed with my interpretation of mood, setting, characters, and the relationship that was developed, to create a written portrait of the interviews that was deemed acceptable to both myself and those being interviewed. The portraiture method allowed me to become more a part of the research, as Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) state, “In portraiture, then, the place and stance of the researcher are made visible and audible, written in as part of the story. The portraitist is clear: from where I sit, this is what I see; these are the perspectives and biases I bring; this is the scene I select; this is how people seem to be responding to my presence” (1997, p. 50). Mansfield (2013), referencing Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (2002), says that revisionists, “called for research relationships that are more complex and reciprocal because in addition to being more ethical, they are likely to yield deeper, more empirical data.” My own perception and experience as the researcher, as well as the setting and characters, was critical to understanding the motivations behind the philanthropy of the organization.

**Summary and Conclusion**

There is a growing demand in higher education for understanding donor motivations as state funding decreases, the need for philanthropy increases, and the pressure to be more strategic
with fewer resources continues to rise. In addition, a need to understand an important and often misunderstood population of donors is critical in higher education. Finally, further research was needed about women giving back to women students and alumnae in higher education, where a significant gap in the literature exists. A qualitative exploration of this phenomenon is helpful to more deeply understand donor motivations of women giving to women and girls, and using the portraiture method sheds light on the culture of women’s fundraising groups and individual women that give to this specific need.

**Looking Ahead**

The following chapter gives a detailed overview of relevant and related literature. A brief history of existing research on fundraising is also included in the literature to give context to how recently the industry has been studied as a field of research. The final chapter will give a more detailed overview of the methodology of the current study.
CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this literature review is to give an overview of the research informing this study. First, I give an historical overview of higher education funding and alumni giving. I then share what we know about women and philanthropy, after which I will share a summary of other philanthropy groups that are similar to the one under consideration. I close with an explanation of the purposes and tenets of feminist theory, summarizing how feminist theory has been used in educational leadership and policy research, and clarifying feminist standpoint theory as it is the lens I use to analyze my data.

Historical Overview

While individual giving has increased, funding has decreased for higher education from the state level since 1980, even though the demand for higher education has been on the rise (Mortenson, 2012). State funding is almost always one of the first to be cut during economic downturns, especially with the knowledge that fundraising has become more prevalent. Iannozzi (2000) writes, “As public funding bases dwindle and individual donors begin to identify themselves as investors as well as philanthropists, higher education institutions must increasingly seek out new ways to integrate academic planning, budget processes, and fundraising efforts” (2000). Although budget cuts have plagued administration at universities for the last thirty years, there have been marked gains by turning to philanthropic giving from individuals and corporations. Chao (2008) states that fundraising is:

Essential to a vibrant democracy because it brings attention to important causes and innovative remedies for which government and business are often less effective. It
ensures community ownership of these remedies and guards against total dominance of ‘top down’ national policies and majority rule. (p. 816)

In this way, colleges and universities are vastly more independent from government rule than their k-12 neighbors.

According to the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education (2019), advancement is defined as “a strategic, integrated method of managing relationships to increase understanding and support among an educational institution's key constituents, including alumni and friends, government policy makers, the media, members of the community and philanthropic entities of all types.” Funding for academic enrichment dates back to financial support for Aristotle’s Lyceum from Greek philanthropist Cimon (Elliott, 2005). From Cimon’s one time gift, to Harvard’s most recent campaign raise of $9.62 billion, $3 billion over their goal and the largest in higher education’s history, institutions have come a long way in the realm of academic fundraising (Inside Higher Ed, 2019). Although advancement has evolved into a sophisticated practice and discipline, Drezner (2011) states that most of the literature and best practices are written from a majority perspective based on practice. With little theory used to guide the discipline, there is much to be desired for researchers and future practitioners.

In the United States, higher education fundraising began nearly four centuries ago. In 1641, Harvard created the first fundraising brochure titled New England's First Fruits as part of the first fundraising campaign in higher education. It took more than 150 years for growth to occur in the field, when finally, Yale University developed a class system using student records and address lists (CASE, 2019). This class system model is a common fundraising model for most private and longstanding public universities, and has led to successful class reunions on college campuses.
Managing and engaging alumni is critical to the profession of Advancement. The more engaged and pleased alumni are with the institution, the more likely they are to give back financially (Seiler, 2016). Brown University often gets credited with starting the first alumni association with its development of the Alumni Fund in 1823. Alumnus Reverend Rogers was appointed to chair a committee “to raise a fund of $1000, an income of which should be used for the purchase of medals to be awarded to the winners of contests in declamation and composition” (Bronson, p. 237, 1914).

This elongated and slow moving history of Advancement has brought us to the past forty years, when most of the progress in Advancement as a discipline has taken place. The importance of diversifying and creating sustainable revenue streams through individual giving was not a priority for higher education until they faced the immense budget cuts from both state and federal governments (Liu, 2006; Brown, Mesch & Rooney, 2007).

More recently, Stanford University has set a new record for college fundraising becoming the first school to collect more than $1 billion in a single year (Chea, 2013), and Stanford has led the way for colleges and universities for the most giving over the past several years, becoming a leader in the field of advancement.

In 2018, a total of $427.71 billion was given in philanthropic donations in the United States, the most ever given in any year. While many think corporations or foundations give the most money in philanthropy, only 23% of the total was given by corporations and foundations, while 77% was given by individuals or bequests, a total of $331.8 billion. In 2018, 14% of all charitable giving went to education, a total of $58.72 billion, the second largest subsector behind religion at 29%. In 2018, education saw its first decline in giving, from it’s $58.9 billion total from 2017, a drop of 1.1%. (Giving USA, 2019). Adjusting for inflation, that number is even
greater, with a 3.7% decrease from 2017 to 2018 to education, compared to the significant increase of 8.6% from 2016-2017. Neimier stated, “if the upward trend doesn’t resume in 2019, there could be serious cause for concern, including tuition increases, reduction in programming and hiring freezes for professors” (Neimier, 2019).

Motivations. Often with too few resources, it behooves colleges and universities to understand what motivates each subsector of donors to the university so they can utilize their staff and operational funding most effectively and efficiently. Brown, Mesch and Rooney (2007) support this by stating, “Individuals in the fundraising field are increasingly becoming aware of the importance of understanding patterns of giving behavior and the decision making process as they strive to improve upon targeting, soliciting, and cultivating different donors,” (p. 230). Without a clear understanding of what motivates diverse populations of alumni and donors, one may not know the best techniques used to solicit and steward those donors, missing out on potential revenue gains.

Konrath (2016) states that there is little research on donor motivations compared to the vast research that exists on motivations behind volunteering for a cause. The researcher explains that three known reasons explaining why people make donations are 1. because they are aware of the need, 2. they care about the recipients, and 3. they trust that organizations will use their money appropriately and productively (p. 19). Konrath (2016) goes on to say:

There are also a number of less prosocial motives for giving: to avoid being embarrassed when publicly asked to donate or to fit in with others, to gain power or recognition for their gifts, to enjoy tax incentives for giving, to avoid feeling guilty, or to feel good about themselves. One additional major reason people give is simply because they are asked.
Studies find that the vast majority of charitable donations (between 85-86%) come after being directly asked to give. (p. 19)

Several research dissertations and publications support the idea that motivations for alumni participation in the form of financial giving are tied to their satisfaction levels as students. Several variables make up “satisfaction” depending on the study, however most tie back to academic satisfaction and extra-curricular involvement. Spaeth and Greeley (1970), Mosser (1993), and Gaier (2005) are often cited for their studies on the student experience and giving, suggesting that in order to increase alumni giving participation, the university must invest in increasing undergraduate satisfaction. Spaeth and Greeley (1970) mentioned that while most alumni have positive attitudes towards their institution, only one in four feel strong loyalty (1970, p. 248). Their findings also found that students who are involved in three or more extracurricular activities gave at higher rates than those who were not involved. Additionally, Spaeth and Greeley (1970) linked motivations for giving due to academic prestige of university, capacity to give based on income, and how many years they have been graduates of the university. While often cited even in the most current of the literature, this study looked at graduates from the class of 1961, almost sixty years ago.

Women and Philanthropy

There is a history of philanthropic women giving to many different causes in the United States since the beginning of American history. The first educational gift from a female on record was a gift to Harvard in 1643 from a wealthy childless woman for a scholarship (Gaudini, 2006, p. 25). Though there are gifts like this throughout history, not much attention has been paid to women donors, or women in a wealthy family, until the last twenty years (Taylor & Shaw-Hardy, 2006, p. 21).
As women earned their rightful spot in the workplace and society, they were able to make decisions about their own money as well as their families, with many wealthy women choosing to make a difference in society through philanthropy. There are many factors that led to why more individuals have been paying attention to this, including the continuing education of women, the leadership of women in the business sector, the generosity of women, and the fact that women are living longer lives than men, inheriting significant money from their families. Taylor and Shaw-Hardy (2006) titled it a “revolution”, stating "Women are poised to become significant philanthropists as never before, ready to transform the world and themselves in the process” (p. 3-4).

The first initiative for a women’s philanthropy organization at a coeducational institution was in 1988 at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (Mesch & Pactor, 2016; University of Wisconsin Foundation, 2019). This model has been replicated many times across the country through present day, and several examples will be given in the next section of this paper to be compared to W&M’s group.

Just a few short years after the first women’s philanthropy organization was founded in 1988, Sondra C. Shaw and Martha A. Taylor co-founded the National Network of Women as Philanthropists in 1991 at University of Wisconsin-Madison, which later became the Women’s Philanthropy Institute in 1997 when it became an independent nonprofit entity. Through this organization, Shaw and Taylor pioneered the idea that fundraising is not a one-size-fits-all model (Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, 2019), which would go on to increase research on diverse donor populations through present day. In addition to giving to higher education, Taylor & Shaw-Hardy explain that since 1996, “great strides have been made in women's giving through
women's funds, the United Way, universities, giving circles, and community foundations" (2006, p. 4).

The Women’s Philanthropy Institute moved from the University of Wisconsin-Madison to the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy in 2004, and it is the only institution dedicated to understanding gender and philanthropy through research (Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, 2019). Although women’s fundraising programs in colleges and universities exist around the country, leading research has come from the Indiana University’s Lilly Family School of Philanthropy.

Colleges and universities considered women as donors before others sectors, as it wasn’t until the early 2000s that national nonprofits such as the United Way World Wide and the American Red Cross provided specific programming for and solicitation of women (Mesch and Pactor, 2016). Although there are many different types of fundraising organizations other than higher education, Mesch and Pactor (2016) explain that the ways in which you fundraise are the same, stating, “their common focus is to provide women with the opportunities for philanthropy in ways that are well-suited to their values, passion, and financial abilities” (p. 120). It’s important to note that during this time, giving circles became popular in philanthropy, and they attracted donors from diverse racial backgrounds, income levels, and age. Bearman (2007) defines a giving circle as, “when individuals come together and pool their dollars, decide together where to give the money (and other resources such as volunteers time), and learn together about their community and philanthropy (p. 1).

Though the cultural power dynamic for women has changed greatly in the last 40 years, Mesch and Pactor (2016) referenced a poll conducted in 2014 by the Chronicle of Philanthropy that found, “40% of women in nonprofits with assets greater than $25 million said their
organizations were not attending to women as donors” (p. 113). More research is needed for women philanthropists to understand their motivations, and more education for nonprofits is critical if they are to cultivate donors to their utmost giving potential.

**Why we should care.** Several studies have proven that different types of donor groups have different motivations and preferences when it comes to their charitable giving (Briechle, 2003; Brown, Mesch, & Rooney, 2007; Liu, 2006; Mesch, D. J. & Pactor, A., 2016). Sara Blakely, founder of Spanx and the Spanx Foundation, a premier philanthropist for women and girls, and first woman to join Gates-Buffet Giving Pledge (a commitment started to encourage wealthy individuals to give at least half of their wealth to charity) (O’Connor, 2013) stated that, investing in women “offers one of the greatest returns on investment” (Blakely, 2013). When considering women donors, there are many glaring statistics to pay attention to: women are living longer than men, more women are graduating from colleges and universities than men, women often make financial decisions in their households about family philanthropy decisions, and women have proven to be more financially generous than their male counterparts.

**How women give.** Women hold much of the wealth in the United States. Using the Internal Revenue Service from 2007, Mesch and Pactor (2016) stated, “women represent 42% of the nation’s top wealth holders with gross assets of $2 million or more and 39% of the total wealth in that category, approximately $5.15 trillion” (2016, p. 115). As much as this is true, there are perceptions that exist that women do not make large financial philanthropic gifts. Research has found that often, women give to several destinations, therefore the fundraiser doesn’t always fully comprehend the donor’s capacity for giving (Andreoni, Brown, & Rischall, 2003; Mesch & Pactor, 2016). Mesch and Pactor give an example of the impact of large gifts from female donors by saying, “For example, gifts by individual women from 2000 to 2013 to
higher education alone totaled more than $4.5 billion” (Using the Million Dollar List managed by Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, 2016, p. 116).

Not only do women give large gifts, but there are examples that they continue to increase their giving over time. Cam (2013) gave an example of when Duke University’s development office analyzed lifetime giving for alumni men, women and heterosexual couples, women alumnae were the only group that improved their philanthropic giving to the institution every year since 1996. This trend for women makes sense when comparing it to the finding from Women Give 2017 that, “Single men see the greatest increase in life satisfaction when they become donors. For single and married women, life satisfaction increases most when they increase their giving” (Mesch, Osili, Okten, Han, Pactor & Ackerman, 2017, p. 5).

Colleges and universities that have made an effort to understand the role of women and philanthropy have done it many different ways, from creating a program devoted to alumnae giving, to teaching all fundraisers about the ways in which gender plays a role in the giving cycle. Mesch and Pactor (2016) warn that standalone programs are difficult to sustain, “given competing interests and pressures in development offices along with constrained financial and human resources” (p. 120). This is important to note considering W&M’s Office of Advancement developed a task force to conduct research on the best types of programs at institutions, and decided to develop a hybrid program that offered both a stand-alone program that would be endowed in perpetuity, and an expectation among fundraisers that they will use gender-sensitive and balanced approaches to fundraising. The endowment of a program ensures the sustainable nature of the program, while educating fundraisers on the nuances of gender-based fundraising helps to ensure many opportunities for fundraising from alumni is reached at full capacity.
Women inherit family money. The rise of women inheritance has been a significant reason that organizations have begun to focus more on women and philanthropy, especially when considering planned giving (Damen & McCuistion, 2010; Mesch & Pactor, 2016; Shaw-Hardy & Taylor, 2010). Mesch and Pactor (2016) stated that women in heterosexual marriages often inherit money twice, from both their parents and their spouse, as they live, on average, five years longer than men (p. 115). Shaw-Hardy and Taylor (2010) also support this by explaining the history of the rise of attention to women and philanthropy when, “women would eventually control much of the nation’s assets simply because they live longer than men and inherit 7% of all estates” (p. 20).

Women are the future of giving. Damen and McCuistion stated that in 2010, women controlled 60% of the nation’s wealth, and predicted that, “since women outlive men by an average of five years, in the next twenty years, it is predicted that 80-90% of women will be in charge of their families’ financial affairs sometime in their life” (Damen & McCuistion, 2010, p. 2).

Women make decisions about money in the family. Studies over time have proven that women are becoming a decision maker in family giving more and more. Women’s influence over charitable giving in the household has increased since more women have received their education and attained careers, resulting in their income increasing in the family (Brown, 2005; Mesch and Pactor, 2016). A study in 2005 by Burgoyne, Young and Walker found that in a married family, larger planned giving tended to be a joint decision in a household, but smaller gifts were made individually (Burgoyne, Young & Walker, 2005). Indiana University Center on Philanthropy (2011) reported that in two separate studies (one of women who gave more than $10,000 or more annually to the Red Cross, and the other of 800 respondents from a survey of
women who have a household income greater than $200,000 and/or net worth of at least $1,000,000) of high net worth households, nine out of ten times the woman was the decision maker or equal partner in decision making for charitable giving (Indiana University Center on Philanthropy, 2011). Mesch et al. (2017) found through their research that in lower- and middle-income households, individuals reported that life satisfaction increases with the percentage of household income given to charity if the women decided or both spouses decided jointly on their charitable giving (2017, p. 5). Brown (2005) also found that when only one spouse decides in a household, the wife was twice as likely to be the decision-maker than the husband. This is important to know for fundraisers who visit donors that are in relationships, that there are complex decision making tactics among families, and women are often a part of the decision making process.

**Women, education, and income.** The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) reports that in 2017, 56% of students enrolled in undergraduate degree-granting postsecondary institutions were female, 9.4 million compared to the 7.3 million of their male counterparts. The gap is even greater in regards to post baccalaureate, as female students make up 59% of enrollment, 1.8 million female compared to 1.2 million male students. Shaw-Hardy and Taylor (2010) elaborate on this now well-known phenomenon by stating, “There are now more women enrolled in higher education than men, and they are more likely than men to graduate as well. What’s more, recent studies show that women work harder in school than men and are walking off with a greater number of high honors.” (Shaw-Hardy & Taylor, 2010, p. 27). NCES reports support this by stating that the overall 6-year graduation rates for undergraduates in 2017 were 63% female and 57% male. Shaw-Hardy and Taylor go on to predict that although women still earn less than their male counterparts, this figure will likely change due to graduation rates and
high honors (2010, p. 27). The Pew Research Center reported that in 2018, though the gender gap is narrowing, women still earned 85 cents on the dollar compared to their male counterparts, but for individuals in the 25-34 age group, it was 89 cents on the dollar respectively. This is compared to 1980, where earnings were 64 cents on the dollar, respectively (Graf, Brown & Patten, 2019). Increased education typically leads to higher paying jobs, and as the workforce begins to reflect the outputs of higher education, this too will likely change (Mesch & Pactor, 2016; Shaw-Hardy & Taylor, 2010). The National Association of Women Business Owners (2019) reported that in 2017, 11.6 million businesses (39% of all businesses in the United States) are owned by women, employing 9 million people and earning over $1.7 trillion in revenues.

Wang, Parker and Taylor (2013) found through the Pew Research Center that in 40% of households with children under the age of 18, women are the primary breadwinner, (with 37% of them being married and bringing in a higher income than their husband, and 63% of them being single mothers). This is a 29% increase since 1960 (Wang, Parker and Taylor, 2013). Wang, Parker and Taylor (2013) also found that almost half (47%) of the work force in the United States is made up of working women, and the rate of married women with children working increased from 37% in 1968 to 65% in 2011. The researchers go on to share an interesting finding, stating, “the median total family income of married mothers who earn more than their husbands was nearly $80,000 in 2011, well above the national median of $57,100 for all families with children” (Wang, Parker and Taylor, 2013).

An important finding to note for fundraisers at institutions, is Brown, Mesch and Rooney (2007) found that educational attainment levels had a positive and significant effect on both men and women on whether or not they gave to education (p. 237).
**Women are more generous.** Many studies show that women are more likely to make a charitable donation than men (Brown, Rooney, Hao, & Miller, 2007; Eckel & Grossman, 1998; Mesch, 2010; Mesch, Brown, Moore, & Hayat, 2011; Mesch, et. al, 2015; Micklewright & Schnepf, 2009; Piper & Schnepf, 2008). Brown, Rooney, Hao, and Miller (2007) found that women are more likely to give than men, even at the highest income levels (above $100,000), with women giving $4,223 annually and men giving $3,904 annually (Brown, Rooney, Hao, & Miller, 2007).

Using the Philanthropy Panel Study (PPS) and the Bank of America/U.S. Trust Studies of High Net Worth Philanthropy surveys (HNW), researchers Mesch et al. (2015) found that single women are more likely to give and give in higher amounts to charities than men, but in high net worth individuals ($200,000 annual earnings or above), there was no statistical difference in the amount of their giving. Women in the Millennial generation (born since 1980), Boomer generation (born 1946-1963), and the Great generation (born before 1946), were more likely to give than males of the same generation. When individuals were married, giving in likelihood and total amount was higher, regardless of gender, except for those in high net worth households.

Single women were more likely to give to secular causes than any other population (Mesch et al., 2015), which is important for fundraisers of non-faith-based institutions to know.

Mesch et al. (2015) also looked at household decision making and found that when women primarily make giving decisions or when giving decisions are made separate from one another, the likelihood that a charitable donation is made increases. This did not hold true for high net worth households where there was no statistical difference based on giving decision-making. Another interesting finding was that when income increased for women, they were more likely to give to things like basic-needs based organizations such as education, where men were
more likely to give across every sub-sector. Educational attainment of husband and wife was also researched, and Mesch et al. found that for giving to secular causes, households were more likely to give if the husband had a higher level of education than his wife, but when looking at high net worth households, there was no statistical difference based on education attainment level of the couple (Mesch et al., 2015).

Despite the findings from Mesch et al. (2015), other studies have found that high net worth women are very generous. Ledbury Research (2009) found that women earning over $1 million per year gave 3.5% of their net worth away in philanthropic work, while their male counterparts who made over $1 million per year only gave 1.8%. In addition, The National Foundation for Women Business Owners (2000) found that 30% of high net worth female business owners were “very engaged” in philanthropy, compared to 12% of all female business owners.

Andreoni, Brown and Rischall (2003), using data from surveys conducted in 1992 and 1994 by the Gallup Organization, found that married women who made the decisions in the family were more likely to give more money than married men making philanthropic decisions in the family in the following categories: Health, Education, Human Services, Environment, Public/Society benefit, Recreation – adults, Arts/culture/humanities, Private Community Foundations, International/Foreign, and Other, which was all but two categories of charities listed (religious organizations and youth development). Using the same categories of charities, unmarried women were more likely to give than unmarried men in all but two categories of charities (recreation-adult, and other). The researchers also found that women spread their money across several destinations, while their male counterparts tended to focus more of their money on singular destinations (Andreoni, Brown, & Rischall, 2003).
Women give more to education than men. Education as a nonprofit is a popular destination among women donors. Andreoni, Brown and Rischall (2003), found that in married households, if women were making giving decisions, they were significantly more likely to give to education than a jointly deciding married couple or if the husband was the one deciding. Brown, Mesch and Rooney (2007) filled in the gaps in the Andreoni, Brown and Rischall (2003) study by looking at giving specifically to education as a philanthropic destination.

Although not as recent, this study still proves to be relevant as it was quoted many times in the 2016 textbook, “Achieving excellence in fundraising.” Brown, Mesch and Rooney (2007) used data from the Center on Philanthropy Panel Study and the Panel Study on Income Dynamics to look at giving history on 8,000 households since 1968, which is the longest running panel study in the world. The researchers found that when single, 8.8% of men gave to education compared to the nearly double 16.4% of women (2007).

In giving to education, Brown, Mesch & Rooney (2007) found that the wife decides twice as often as the husband if there is a main decision maker in the family, 1.6% of men compared to 3% of women. The researchers stated, “Among couples in which the decision was made, ‘mostly by the female,’ giving to education grows in a nearly exponential manner” (2007, p. 237). When women made exclusive giving decisions in households, giving to education was much more likely. When husband’s made the exclusive giving decisions, there was no significant effect on giving to education.

Brown, Mesch and Rooney (2007) also found that couples made decisions separately in only 9% of the cases, which meant that the majority of the time, decisions about financial gifts to education were made jointly, in over 50% of households (p. 235-236).
Educational attainment, number of children under 18 in the house, income, and wealth were all positively associated with the amount of money given to education as well. A higher amount of money was also given to education if decisions were made mostly by women or separately by married couples (Brown, Mesch, & Rooney, 2007).

Some surprising findings from this research study was that the more children a household has under the age of 18, the more likely they are to give to education, as well as a wife’s increased age has a positive association with likelihood and amount of giving to education, while the husband’s age did not make a difference in likelihood or amount (Brown, Mesch, & Rooney, 2007). More recently, Indiana University Center on Philanthropy (2010), found that in 2009, Education was the second most common destination for philanthropic giving of high net worth women at 19.3%, not far behind the most popular destination of foundations, trusts and funds at 22.1%. Religious giving was in third at 13.3%, which is different than all giving across all genders and income where religion is the most common destination year after year, and basic needs was the most common for all high net worth individuals in 2009 (Indiana University Center on Philanthropy, 2010). Giving USA (2019) found Education to be the second most popular destination for giving at 14% overall in 2018, behind religion at 29%.

Brown, Mesch and Rooney (2007) stated, “as the trend continues, in which women are becoming more affluent and moving into the ranks of middle and upper classes at an increasing rate, fundraisers would be well advised to pay attention to the giving preferences of women” (p. 240-241). This further proves how important it is for fundraisers at colleges and universities to involve women in conversations about giving to education. Women have only increased their income levels, educational attainment, financial independence and equality in the household since this research has been conducted and published, which further proves the necessity of
investing in women as donors to higher education. It is important to note that these research findings for households are for married heterosexual couples, and racial composition is not included.

**Additional identities.** My research focused on the identity of women, and happened to focus on Caucasian women as that was mostly who I spoke with during observation and random sample interviews. However, I was prepared through literature review for multiple identities to surface, including but not limited to race, professional industry, academic background, and sexual orientation. While I will focus on the female identity, it is important to share research other identities. Research has shown that colleges and universities often find difficulty in connecting alumni from diverse communities back to the campus in meaningful ways, due to the alumni feeling historically disenfranchised on campus (Drezner & Garvey, 2016; Gasman, 2002; Gasman & Anderson-Thompkins, 2003; Smith, Shue, Vest & Villarreal, 1999). What we do know about donors from marginalized backgrounds is that they give as a form of social uplift and obligation by providing services and opportunities (Carson, 2008; Drezner & Garvey, 2016; Gasman, 2002; Smith, Shue, Vest & Villarreal, 1999).

**Sexual orientation.** There is little research that exists on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) alumni as donors, and even fewer for LGBTQ alumni donors that identify as females (Drezner & Garvey, 2016). Specifically, Drezner and Garvey (2016) state that, “Currently, there exists no empirical research on LGBTQ communities’ involvement with and motivation to give philanthropically to higher education. Within philanthropy literature more broadly, most pieces regarding LGBTQ giving is anecdotal and relies on professional or personal experiences and philosophies” (Drezner & Garvey, 2016, p. 53-54). Drezner and Garvey (2016) found that, for LGBTQ alumni, they initially said that their sexuality did not have
an impact on their giving, until asked more probing questions. Their destinations to higher education more often than not were to support LGBTQ students and initiatives. This study mostly quotes males, and only one female, therefore LGBTQ alumnae findings are not able to be teased out from this study.

**Race and ethnicity.** In addition to heterosexual normatives in household giving research, racial composition in regards to gender and marriage is also not identified in the household data for Brown, Mesch and Rooney (2007). While there is little research on women of color and philanthropy, what is known is promising and should be very enticing to researchers and fundraisers. Stanley (2004) found that African-American women were the most generous of all ethnic groups studied, donating 10% of their income. Muley (2009) found that, “between 1997 and 2006 the number of privately held firms with majority of ownership by women of color grew almost six times faster than all privately held firms (120% versus 24%)” (p. 34). The National Association of Women Business Owners (2019) reported that in 2017, 5.4 million businesses were majority-owned by women of color (46% of all women-owned businesses) in the United States, employed 2.1 million individuals, and generated $361 billion in revenue annually.

**Women’s motivations for giving.**

Several studies have found varying motivations for women deciding to give philanthropically. The following sub-sections detail these based on previous findings.

**Making a difference.** One key motivation for women giving is making a difference in the world and the lives of others. Indiana University Center on Philanthropy (2011) found through their study of high net worth individuals that the leading motivation for both genders for giving a gift was that they believe their gift would make a difference, however women listed this
as a motivation 81.7% of the time, while men reported it 70.9% of the time, which proved to be a statistically significant difference.

Einolf (2011) stated that because women are more involved in prosocial behavior, defined as actions intended to help others, this leads to more philanthropy. Shaw-Hardy and Taylor (2010) quoted Linda Basch, then president of the National Council for Research on Women, stating, “For women it’s not just the thrill of making money, it’s the social purposes that the money can be used for. What we’ve seen with some women in our research in fund management is that they have a sense when they’ve made enough and cash out” (Shaw-Hardy & Taylor, 2010, p. 7). Shaw-Hardy and Taylor also found that women were more likely than men to say they give because they feel a responsibility to give if they have money and can help those that have less (Shaw-Hardy & Taylor, 2010, p. 8).

Brown and Rooney (2008) found through their research that different generations of women gave for different reasons, but that they still wanted to make a difference. Millennial women responded generously to messages of improving the world, while Boomers and older responded generously to helping others (Brown & Rooney, 2008). Overall, making a difference was repeatedly found through the research for a top motivation of giving for women.

**Connection.** The theme of connection is interwoven as a motivation for women’s philanthropy throughout the literature in many different ways.

**Efficiency and stewardship.** In much of the research, women were interested in knowing how money was being used at nonprofits, and how the impact of their gift has made a difference. Indiana University Center on Philanthropy (2011) found a statistically significant difference through their study that high net worth women were more likely than high net worth men to give to a charity due to its efficiency, 80.5% compared to 69.2%. The researchers also found that
women were more likely than men to give because the organization communicated about both efficiency (62.6% versus 51.3% respectively) and impact (46.4% versus 32% respectively, that which proved to be statistically significant) (Indiana University Center on Philanthropy, 2011). Stewardship responsibilities include communicating with the donor about the impact of their gift as well as communication on how the organization is doing financially and programmatically. It is true that this means a higher amount of effort must come from the fundraising and marketing staff in order to make sure donors are aware of the impact of the gift, but that this level of effort will pay off in much greater amounts later. Mesch and Pactor support this by explaining, “organizations that engage women fully in all facets of their fundraising strategy will raise more money, develop more loyal and satisfied donors, and create powerful advocates for the organization’s mission” (Mesch & Pactor, 2016, p. 114).

Building relationships. Existing research found that building relationships during the cultivation process was important to women. Mesch and Pactor (2016), stated that relationship building with the organization and those involved in the organization was a key component of the giving cycle for women. They report:

Today’s female donors often prefer to engage with an organization or cause and to learn more about it before making a gift. They want to build relationships with staff, volunteers, board members, and other stakeholders. Then they will consider generous gifts. The nonprofit organization that provides them opportunities to deepen engagement, apprises them periodically of the impact of their gift, and connects them regularly to the mission through effective storytelling will benefit in the long term by loyalty and likely increased giving over time. (p. 119)
Vanderbilt University Dean of Nursing, Colleen Conway-Welch (2003), stated that the way men and women respond to who the solicitor is, is different for both genders. In her lecture, she stated that women wanted a solicitor that had built a relationship with her as a donor as well as had a significant role with the cause (Conway-Welch, 2003).

Tannen (1991) also supports the importance of relationship building by stating that women prefer to connect through storytelling and relationships, while men connect through status and primarily with their jobs (Tannen, 1991). This further proves the importance of communication about the gift and the organization, as well as developing a relationship between female donors and the nonprofit. Mesch and Pactor (2016) effectively summed it up when they stated, “the keys to working effectively with women donors are engagement, building relationships, sharing stories of impact, and regular stewardship” (Mesch & Pactor, 2016, p. 119).

**Volunteering and engagement.** Engagement with an organization before solicitation is a best practice of nonprofits for people of all ages and genders. Liu and Aaker (2008) found in their study in both field and lab experiments of people of all ages, that when individuals were asked to get involved in the organization first, and then later asked to give financially, they gave both more time and more money. They attributed this to positive feelings and empathy to the organization that was built first. Vohs, Mead and Goode (2006) stated that if the opposite happens, when individuals are asked first to give money, they give less of both. Through nine experiments, Vohs, Mead and Goode found that thinking about money brings with it a state of “self-sufficiency,” finding, “Relative to people not reminded of money, people reminded of money reliably performed independent but socially insensitive actions” (Vohs, Mead & Goode, 2006, p. 1156). As it has been proven that higher and deeper engagement leads to giving, studies
have found that women prefer to be more engaged than their male counterparts in order to increase the likelihood and amount of a gift.

Indiana University Center on Philanthropy (2011) found through their study which had 628 high net worth male respondents and 283 high net worth female respondents, that high net worth women were statistically significantly more likely than high net worth men to give to a charity because they volunteered with the organization, 65.7% compared to 49.8%. This same study found that more high net worth women than high net worth men volunteer in general 86.7% for women compared to 77.7% for men, which was found to be statistically significant. Women also volunteered at a higher rate than men when considering all age groups, educational levels, and other major demographics. The researchers also found that high net worth women were also more confident that non-profit institutions (including higher education) can solve domestic or global problems, a statistically significant difference of 50.4% compared to 33.8% (Indiana University Center on Philanthropy, 2011).

**Anonymity.** Giving anonymously, or not calling attention to one’s good deeds, has been passed down culturally for women, and can still be found as an attribute of women today. Shaw-Hardy and Taylor (2010) stated, “Women in the ‘traditional generation’ are more likely to ask for anonymity because it was not considered ladylike in their generation to discuss money and especially not to display it by having their names on buildings. This attitude is changing as women see the necessity of being role models for others” (Shaw-Hardy & Taylor, 2010, p. 11). This is important to note as women as donors may still be more difficult to find, or could be less interested in talking about the impact of their gift or true motivations behind giving.

**Women giving to women and girls.** Giving to women and girls began in the 1970s as a branch of the social-change movement and to decrease the gap in philanthropy between genders
(Brilliant, 2000; Mesch et al., 2016; Rose, 1994). As Mesch, O’Gara, Osili, Pactor, Ackerman, and Bergdoll (2016) explained that women’s funds were created, “in response to the dissatisfaction of women working in more mainstream philanthropic institutions who witnessed the lack of philanthropic dollars directed toward women’s and girls’ organizations and programs (Brilliant, 2000; Rose, 1994)” (Mesch et al, 2016, p. 7). A women’s fund is different than a foundation, as its purpose is: “Women raise the dollars and decide how they’re spent; grants and allocations support programs that assist women and girls in overcoming racial, economic, political, sexual, and social discrimination” (National Network of Women’s Funds as cited in Rose, 1994, p. 230). The National Network of Women’s Funds, now the Women’s Funding Network (WFN), was created in 1985 in order to identify the women’s funding movement and provide advocacy, training and visibility to its members (Brilliant, 2000; Mesch et al., 2016, p. 7).

Today, more than 100 women's funds in over 14 countries make grants to further women's economic security and reproductive health and justice among other causes (WFN, 2019). The little research that exists on women’s funds primarily focuses on culture, organization, and social movement theory instead of motivations (Mesch, et al., 2016, p. 7). When considering which gender prioritizes women’s rights as a social issue, research did find that single women more than single men prioritize women’s rights, as well in couples that the wife decides where philanthropy goes that women are more likely to prioritize women’s rights than a couple that jointly decides, but it does not find how this translates to giving priorities (Mesch, Osili, Ackerman, & Dale, 2015; Mesch et al., 2016).

The first research on the motivations of women giving to women and girls was published in 2016 from the Women’s Philanthropy Institute out of the Indiana University Lilly School for
Philanthropy, where they conducted seven focus groups with 51 participants overall. The research looked at who gives to women’s and girls’ causes and what motivates them to give. While over the past 40 years, giving to women and girls has been a destination for philanthropy, it has not been broken out as a data point to study until this published article. As Mesch et al. (2016) stated that while it has been a focus of philanthropic giving, “no known surveys of philanthropic behavior have specifically categorized giving to women and girls” (Mesch et al., 2016, p. 7). They go on to explain that:

Current national surveys on philanthropic giving, such as the Philanthropy Panel Study in the United States, do not segment giving to women and girls as a distinct category, making the amount and presumed growth of such giving difficult to estimate, particularly among individuals. (p. 5).

Mesch et al. (2016) sought to find who financially supports women’s and girls’ causes, what those donors expressed as their motivations for giving, how those experiences are unique, and why donors do not give to women’s and girl’s causes (Mesch et al., 2016, p. 8). Through their research, they found that women were more likely than their male counterparts to give to women and girls’ causes, as well as give larger amounts (Mesch et al., 2016, p. 11).

The donors that Mesch, et al. (2016) spoke to expressed their motivations in giving to women’s and girls’ causes due to their personal experiences (positive and negative, including discrimination), the belief that, “women’s equality leads to societal progress,” and their belief in the organizational leadership and success of the nonprofit or individual they give to (2016, p. 21). Elaborating on their experiences of being a woman, Mesch et al. found that a woman’s giving to women and girls was, "linked [to] their personal experiences of being a woman; experiencing gaps, disparities and/or discrimination in society; or were motivated to give
because of their children” (Mesch et al., 2016, p. 23). The researchers found that past and present experiences, both positive and negative, affected their decision to give to women’s and girls’ causes. Mesch et al. (2016) also found that personal experiences linked to motivations for giving was through employment, either positively through good gender-based mentorship experiences they had, or negatively through the gender disparities in the workplace, like having few female role models (Mesch et al., 2016, p. 24-25). Reasons the researchers found for why donors did not give to women’s and girls’ causes was due to complexity of the social issues surrounding women, prioritizing one gender over another, and being passionate about political issues often subcategorized under women’s issues, such as LGBTQ issues or reproductive rights (Mesch et al., 2016, p. 25). While this research helped to inform our understanding of donors who give to women and girls, education for women was a category within issues for women and girls, but not higher education specifically.

**Similar Programs**

Women philanthropy groups exist at several higher education institutions across the United States. Some groups exist to recruit other women to give at a certain dollar amount to be included in the organization. Entry can serve as a giving society or offer potential engagement benefits.

The first group of women to come together in philanthropy at a university was the University of Wisconsin Foundation’s Women’s Philanthropy Council (WPC), founded in 1988. The mission of the Women’s Philanthropy Council is, “is to inspire, encourage, and advocate for women to partner with the University of Wisconsin–Madison to make a better world by publicly giving major gifts to areas of their passion and in their own names” (University of Wisconsin Foundation, 2019). Members have given a minimum donation of $50,000 to be a part of the
group, or $100,000 in revocable gifts such as a bequest or revocable trust, and commit to $1500 a year to the university annually. Collectively the WPC has given more than $10 million to University of Wisconsin-Madison. There are currently thirty council members in the WPC, but they have engaged more than one thousand women at WPC events across the country, increased female presence on boards at the University of Wisconsin and increased female attendance at University of Wisconsin Foundation programs. The organization is comprised of council members, regional representatives, lifetime emeritae, founders, an honorary member, and a Chair that serves as the leader of the council. The WPC celebrated their 25th anniversary in 2017 (University of Wisconsin Foundation, 2019). This organization focuses on donor-centered giving and increasing engagement.

Another strong example of this type of organization is Duke University’s Women’s Impact Network (WIN). WIN was established in 2012 alongside Duke’s comprehensive campaign, and is a network for women who have given more than $100,000 in cumulative lifetime giving and are also engaged with the university. There is a more attainable membership for recent graduates, as they now offer a young adult membership if alumnae give $25,000 by their tenth reunion and $50,000 by their fifteenth reunion, encouraging alumnae to give $100,000 by their twentieth reunion. WIN members help Duke to achieve the three goals of strengthening the pipeline for women on Duke’s leadership boards, increasing alumnae giving, and informing the university on how best to cultivate and engage women. Membership benefits include networking with other alumnae leaders, members-only event invitations, and educational opportunities. There are seven alumni who serve on the WIN leadership council, with one student representative (the student government president) and two student scholars. In addition to the leadership council, a steering committee comprised of senior administrators and faculty
members help to identify giving and engagement opportunities that WIN members have interest in supporting. In 2016, WIN leadership council members developed a scholarship endowment fund for undergraduate women leaders, and raised $250,000 to activate the scholarship in 2017 (Duke University, 2017). WIN members have raised $332 million total in scholarships to date. While WIN members will continue to raise money for the scholarship endowment, their priority is to connect women with what they are passionate about at their alma mater, which is a more donor-centered model, as well as an engagement centered model, similar to the University of Wisconsin Foundation’s, WPC.

Northwestern’s Council of One Hundred (C100), founded in 1993, is another women’s philanthropy organization, however it fundraises for one initiative called “Trailblazer Awards,” which award female students funds for summer internship experiences, and they raise between $20,000-$25,000 annually exclusively for this initiative. Although it differs in fundraising from Duke WIN and UWF’s WPC, it is similar in that it focuses on engagement. C100 connects highly successful alumni to current female students for mentorship, while also sponsoring events on career, workplace, and life strategies. Membership is invitation only through a nomination process, and it is led by a fourteen-person leadership council with one staff support (Northwestern University, 2019).

University of Oklahoma’s Women’s Philanthropy Network was founded in 2011, and its mission is to “promote philanthropic education, leadership and advocacy by empowering women to be active participants in the giving process” (Women’s Philanthropy Network, 2019). The goals of this group are to, “empower women as philanthropists and celebrate the increasing number of major gifts from women, [to] incorporate the philosophy of women philanthropists throughout the university, [to] create and develop meaningful opportunities for women to come
together to inspire and motivate philanthropic action at OU, [and to] recognize the leadership capabilities of women philanthropists and advocate for the appointment of women to major University boards.” (Women’s Philanthropy Network, 2019). Staff run the leadership of the group, they raise money for a diverse number of destinations at the University of Oklahoma, and there is no minimum giving amount to be a member.

At the University of California, Los Angeles, Women & Philanthropy at UCLA was established in 1994, celebrating its 25th reunion in 2019. In 2017, there were 322 members, compared to the now 2500 members that have cumulatively given more than $320 million as of 2018 to areas that are most meaningful to them, again reflecting a donor-centric model. The mission of Women & Philanthropy at UCLA is: “to celebrate and inspire women throughout the UCLA community as major donors, leaders, and decision-makers. To encourage philanthropy, leadership, and mentoring of the next generation, Women & Philanthropy at UCLA seeks to: Engage and educate women philanthropists through programmatic activities that highlight the diversity of achievement at UCLA; Broaden and deepen the base of financial support by women at UCLA; Cultivate and mentor women as philanthropists and leaders and provide them with a personal connection to the University and the tools to be successful; Identify and Support programs at UCLA that reflect the varied interests of women; [and] Advocate on behalf of women’s leadership across campus on boards, committees, and the UCLA Foundation” (UCLA, 2019). Membership offers opportunities to, “engage in the life of the University through invitations to dynamic special events featuring UCLA’s leading-edge programs and exciting new academic and medical research; meet top University leaders, professors and philanthropists; connect and create meaningful relationships with other like-minded women who are passionate about UCLA through exclusive social and networking opportunities, and mentor and inspire the
next generation of philanthropic leaders” (UCLA, 2019). Circle level five-year membership is for women who give a gift or pledge at a minimum of $25,000 over a maximum of five years. Lifetime Membership is awarded to those women who make a one-time gift or total giving to UCLA of $250,000. Associate Membership is given to a donor who makes an annual gift of $2,500-$24,999, and offered limited membership benefits. University Leadership Membership is offered to female academic, administrative and athletic University leaders, such as deans, head coaches, student body presidents, and Academic Senate Chair. A non-alumna president currently serves in a leadership role, with a forty-six-person board and a seven-person lifetime honorary board (UCLA, 2019).

A giving circle is a fundraising model designed to recruit women to give to a pool of money that will be given out as discretionary grants. The difference between giving circles and the groups mentioned previously, is that members have a vote on where the money raised should go. Applications for grants are sent to members of the giving circle, and the circle can give all of the money to one initiative, or split it up between many recipients. Some giving circles have pitch competitions as well. Giving circles exist in universities as well as communities. Bearman elaborates on the definition of a giving circle by stating, “no giving circle looks or acts exactly like another. Indeed, the opportunity to shape a group to meet the particular needs of a community and the particular interests and capabilities of donors remains one of the most appealing aspects of a giving circle” (2007, p. 1). Although W&M’s Society of 1918 is not a giving circle, it is important to clarify the difference because the founding women decided not to organize a giving circle model and instead fund alumnae initiatives.

An example of a giving circle is Indiana University’s Women’s Philanthropy Leadership Council (WPLC) started in 2010, which awards more than $150,000 in grants ranging from
$2,500 to $25,000 each year. The WPLC will consider all proposals, but prioritizes programs and initiatives that, “Improve public health; Increase opportunities for diverse and underserved populations; Create global and service-learning experiences for IU students; Support women’s leadership initiatives; Promote and advance STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) disciplines; Provide educational and cultural enrichment to the greater IU community; [and] Develop a culture of philanthropy (Indiana University Foundation, 2019).

Since 2012, they have awarded more than $1 million in grants. There are three levels of membership: Partners give $15,000 over three years, with at least fifty percent designated to the Women’s Philanthropy Leadership Council (WPLC) Fund and receive their e-newsletter and invitations to serve on Women’s Philanthropy event committee; invitations to special events, including WPLC meetings, receptions, and the annual grant finalist presentations; and the opportunity to get involved with Women’s Philanthropy Leadership Council committees; Supporters give $2,500 to $4,999 annually to the WPLC Fund and receive their e-newsletter and invitations to serve on Women’s Philanthropy event committee, and invitations to special events; and Affiliates give $1 to $2,499 annually to any Women’s Philanthropy program and receive their e-newsletter and invitations to serve on committees (Indiana University Foundation, 2019).

Voting rights for grants are extended to the leadership council members only, not all donors. The leadership council is comprised of forty-six active members, one chair, a founding co-chair, and chair emerita, eight supporting members, thirty honorary members, eight partners, and three distinguished members. This group also advises Indiana University Foundation’s programming, geared to connect and engage alumnae with their interests at the university (Indiana University Foundation, 2019).
The University of Kentucky’s Women and Philanthropy Network, established in 2007, uses a giving circle model. Those that donate more than $1,000 annually and are over the age of forty are considered members, and are given full voting rights. Junior members are under forty years of age and give at least $500 annually, and they also receive full voting rights. Membership can also be given in memoriam for $1000 annually with no voting privileges. Membership also affords women the opportunity to network, attend exclusive programs, recognition in publications, and they receive a membership pin. The Women and Philanthropy Network has awarded more than $1.8 million to scholarship recipients, colleges and programs that have submitted grant applications. This organization is led by two co-chairs, thirty-one leadership council members, and five emeritus members (University of Kentucky Philanthropy, 2019).

Another example of a giving circle, but much larger, is the University of Tennessee’s Alliance of Women Philanthropists, established in 1998. This organization has more than 4,526 members nationwide as of January 1, 2019, and has provided more than $606,300 for 67 University of Tennessee programs and research since creating the giving circle in 2007 (Parecco, 2019). Their mission is to “educate, empower, and inspire women to be philanthropic leaders at the University of Tennessee” (University of Tennessee Foundation, 2017). Membership is granted to women who have given $25,000 or more in lifetime giving to the University of Tennessee, however Alliance members that are also contributing members who have given at least $1,000 to the Giving Circle Grants Program will have the opportunity to vote on where the pooled money is allocated. Leadership in this organization is comprised of a seventeen-member executive board, which directs events, membership and the grants program (University of Tennessee Foundation, 2017).
Feminist Theory

While feminist theory has been used in a variety of educational research (Acker, 1987; Blackmore, 2013; Kohli & Burbules, 2013; Lather, 1992; Ropers-Huilman & Winters, 2011; Weiner, 1995; Young & Skrla, 2003), it has yet to be used in research on women philanthropists or women giving to women and girls in higher education institutions. I use feminist theory to better understand the perspectives of the participants generally and their motivations behind supporting the Society of 1918 at W&M in particular. In this section, I first summarize the purposes and main tenets of feminist theory, then describe the unique characteristics of feminist research. I then provide a brief overview of how feminist theory has been used in the field of educational leadership and policy. Next, I explain feminist standpoint theory and describe how this framework was used in this study.

Principles and purposes of feminism and feminist theory. Feminist theory is difficult to summarize as there are varying views on feminist theory, and some feminist theorist are against categories and strict definitions altogether (Code, 2000; Kohli & Burbules, 2013). Broadly, feminist theory seeks to reveal and eradicate the patriarchal society we live in. Allan Johnson (2005) defines patriarchy as a system of male privilege with four core values: “male dominance [means that] positions of authority are generally reserved for men” (p. 5); “male identified [means that] core cultural ideas about what is considered good, desirable, preferable, or normal are associated with how we think about men and masculinity” (p. 6); “male centeredness [means that] the focus of attention is primarily on men and what they do,” (p. 10); and “obsession with control [is] by controlling women and anyone else who might threaten it” (p. 5). As Hassel, Reddinger and Van Sloot (2011) eloquently summarize from Johnson’s
working definition by stating, “one of the main features of patriarchy, and the workings of these four values, is “the oppression of women” (Johnson, 2005 p. 5)” (p.4).

Freedman (2002) gave a concise but comprehensive definition of feminism by stating:

Feminism is a belief that women and men are inherently of equal worth. Because most societies privilege men as a group, social movements are necessary to achieve equality between women and men, with the understanding that gender always intersects with other social hierarchies. (p. 7)

Weiner (1995) explains that the three main dimensions of feminism are political (to improve the conditions and life-chances for girls), critical (a critique of the male forms of knowing), and praxis-oriented (development of the ethics of professional and personal practice) (p 7-8). Feminism can be viewed as both a movement and a theory, but Frye (2000) says that if we do so, we must say there are many feminist theories (p. 195). Naples (2003) summarizes Harding’s (1987) various forms of feminist theories by stating, “Feminist theories emphasize the need to challenge sexism, racism, colonialism, class, and other forms of inequalities in the research process (Harding, 1987)” (Naples, 2003, p. 13). Moreover, using a feminist approach to research aims to create social change, represent human diversity, and develop special relations with the people studied (Reinharz, 1992, p. 240; Naples, 2003, p. 5). Frye said that feminism as a theory is a “system of concepts, propositions and analysis that describe and explain women’s situations and experiences and support recommendations about how to improve them” (p. 195). Maggie Humm (1992) sees the movement and the theory as one in the same, as, “the first idea that is likely to occur in the course of any historical thinking about feminism is that feminism is a social force” (p. 1).
Kohli and Burbules (2013) say that feminism, “has a decidedly political agenda: liberating women” (p. 32). Early feminist philosophers said that, “giving attention to women’s experience demonstrates that gender matters” (Kohli & Burbules, 2013, p. 33), but also what and who are being excluded from research and philosophical discourse, and the reasons behind it (Cole, 1993). Feminist theory works well within the tradition of critical theory, Nielson (1990) says, as they both, “argue that there is no such thing as an objectively neutral or disinterested perspective, that everyone or every group is located socially and historically, and that this context inevitably influences knowledge they produce. Knowledge, in short, is socially constructed” (p. 9). Feminist research ultimately challenges the scientific method of objectivity (Kohli & Burbules, 2013).

Unique characteristics of feminist research. It is important to note again that there are many feminist theories, therefore many approaches to feminist research, but broad themes and concerns do exist (Kohli & Burbules, 2013). Olesen (2005) states, “if there is a dominant theme, it is the question of knowledges. Whose knowledges? Where and how obtained, and by whom; from whom and for what purposes?” (p. 238).

Fonow and Cook (1990) defined five principles in feminist methodology: “acknowledging the pervasive influence of gender; focus on consciousness-raising; rejection of the subject/object separation; examination of ethical concerns; [and] emphasis on empowerment and transformation” (p. 73-39). Feminist research is about lived experiences and perception, and the benefits of qualitative methods are that they allow for more personal and human interactions between the researcher and the participants (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). A feminist approach in qualitative research is vindicated because it gives a voice to the marginalized and silenced (Milner, 2007; Mansfield, Welton & Grogan, 2014). In terms of research styles, sharing how and
why you came to studying a particular research topic takes away objectivity, and is used in feminist approaches to validate the research (Kohli & Burbules, 2013). It also, according to Olesen (2005), “generates new ideas to produce knowledges about oppressive situations for women, for action of further research” (p. 236).

Because of these characteristics of feminist research, it made sense to use for this study in order to: reveal inequalities and issues around ethics the women brought up through interviews; explain the influence of gender when deciding when and where to give their money; and reveal the alumnae’s feelings of empowerment to transform and equalize opportunities for women. Feminist research methods helped to reveal the women’s realities and motivations behind giving and the knowledge they have about their realities as college students and graduates, and the inequalities they feel they have the power to right.

**Feminist theory and educational leadership research.** Acker (1994) said that feminists have seen education as a fertile site for interesting and important research (Acker, p. 18-19; Kohli & Burbules, 2013). While this doesn’t pertain to my particular area of study in education, Kohli and Burbules (2013) says this reflects the, “wider feminist concern with provoking critical reflection and consciousness raising, overlaid with the field of education as an area of special concern to women both as teachers and as parents” (p. 66). Feminist theory gave specific attention to equality, which Weiner (1995) said it offered, “evidence of female disadvantages and gender discrimination in order to enable girls’ and women’s issues to be placed on the educational agenda” (p. 2).

The feminist approach has been used in educational research such as Weiler’s (1988) study of women teachers and administrators bringing their feminist beliefs into the classroom and schools to promote change and equality, Davies (1989) understanding early constructions of

Weiner (1995) explains the transformation of feminism in educational research by stating:

Feminists working in education have certainly moved forward in the last two decades from the position of having to provide evidence of female disadvantages and gender discrimination in order to enable girls’ and women’s issues to be placed on the educational agenda to articulating a value-system and practice of feminist education that allows for greater sexual equality at the same time as acknowledging the differences that separate women. (p. 2-3)

In the 1990’s, women of color and queer theory became more prevalent in feminist research, like that of Annette Henry (1993, 1998) and Cynthia Dillard (2000), so much so that critical race feminism is research in which race and gender are viewed in relation to one another (Kohli & Burbules, 2013, p. 70). Britzman (1995) was one of the first to bring queer theory into the forefront of feminist thinking, pointing out, “the absence of gay and lesbian theorizing in education” (p. 151). DeCastell and Bryson’s (1993) article, “Queer Pedagogy: Praxis Makes Im/Perfect” researched the lived realities of educators that were “out” as queer, to better understand their identities and pedagogical practices, and assumptions of knowledge (Kohli & Burbules, 2013).

Wanda Pillow’s feminist critical policy analysis on teen pregnancy situates itself in macro and micro level policy, and analyzed how, “gender, race and sexuality impact the defining of the problem of teen pregnancy” (2003, p. 152).
**Feminist standpoint theory.** Feminist standpoint theorists claim three main points, “(1) Knowledge is socially situated. (2) Marginalized groups are socially situated in ways that make it more possible for them to be aware of things and ask questions than it is for the non-marginalized. (3) Research, particularly that focused on power relations, should begin with the lives of the marginalized” (Bowell, 2019). Standpoint theorists assert that knowledge begins when standpoints emerge and are occupied, when those that are marginalized become aware of their social situation, oppression, and position of power, and find a voice (Bowell, 2019). Bowell explains that standpoints, “make visible aspects of social relations and of the natural world that are unavailable from dominant perspectives, and in so doing they generate the kinds of questions that will lead to a more complete and true account of those relations” (Bowell, 2019; Harding 1991). Reflective practices are used to employ a standpoint, and Naples (2003) explains that they do this to counter the reproduction of inequalities in ethnographic investigation [in order to] become aware of, and diminish the ways in which, domination and repression are reproduced in the course of research and in the products of their work” (Naples, 2003, p. 37). I decided to use feminist standpoint theory to uncover the motivations behind the women donors to the Society of 1918 at W&M.

**Implications for this study**

I used feminist standpoint theory as my lens for this study, but also pulled from various tenets of feminist theory. Specifically, Harding’s definition that feminist theories emphasize the need to challenge sexism (1987), which is the political motive, as described by Weiner (1995) behind women giving to alumnae initiatives which singles out one gender over another. I also used Frye’s (2000) definition for feminist theory, that it, “describe(s) and explain(s) women’s situations and experiences and support(s) recommendations about how to improve them” (p.
as these women are taking action as a result of their positive and negative experiences. I will draw from Maggie Humm (1992) as I see Society of 1918 as both a movement and a theory, viewing feminism as a “social force” (p. 1).

**Conclusion**

Philanthropic women are a population that has been getting increasingly warranted attention for many years. As the research states, women hold much wealth and are likely to give to education. As state funding decreases, it will be important to understand what motivates important populations of constituents, such as women. Women giving to women and girls has yet to have been studied specifically in higher education, but what we do know about motivations behind giving to women and girls followed three main points: they gave because of their personal experiences (positive and negative, including discrimination), because they believe that giving to women will lead to societal progress, and they gave to a certain destination because they believed that organization or person to be successful (Mesch et al., 2016, p. 21). As women are a marginalized group, I decided to use a feminist standpoint theory lens to interview the women and used reflective practices to uncover and make visible inequalities of power from their experiences or motivations that women shared.

Research shows us how women want to be solicited and stewarded, and if fundraisers understand how to work with women and also where they want to give, making the match for philanthropist and beneficiary can be that much easier and well understood. Looking ahead, the following chapter will detail the methodology that was used to conduct this research study.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The goal of this research was to better understand the contextual factors that contributed to the development of the Society of 1918 at W&M. I also discovered and described the nature of the Society of 1918 at W&M and how donors’ experiences as women informed their perceptions, engagement, and activities. The following research questions were used to guide the inquiry:

1. What contextual (political, historical, social) factors contributed to the development of the Society of 1918 at W&M?

2. What is the nature of the Society of 1918 at W&M?
   a. Organizational structure? Who are the leaders/donors?
   b. Organizational mission? Who do they serve? And why do they serve them?
   c. Organizational activities and initiatives? How do they serve?

3. How do the donors of the Society of 1918 at W&M perceive and experience their engagement with their alma mater generally and the Society of 1918 in particular?

4. What role, if any, do the donors’ lived experiences as women shape their perceptions and experiences around their philanthropic activities at W&M?

The purpose of research question 1, “What contextual (political, historical, social) factors contributed to the development of the Society of 1918?” was to understand what was going on in the country and region during the time the organization was developed. I learned what external forces played a role in this group’s founding, and ultimately its success, informing the question of time and place on which portraiture method so critically leans. This will be discussed in the Research Design section.
The purpose of research question 2, “What is the nature of the Society of 1918 at W&M?” was to gain a deeper understanding of characteristics that are intrinsic to this particular group. I learned the leadership composition of roles and responsibilities of donors and volunteers, as well as the mission, goals and vision of the organization. This research question also helped me to uncover the nature of the relationship between donors in the society, and shared behaviors of members.

The purpose of research question 3, “How do the donors of the Society of 1918 at W&M perceive and experience their engagement with their alma mater generally and the Society of 1918 in particular?” was to understand their feelings on their engagement at W&M while they were a student, while they were an alumna, and then with the society specifically. I found how the activities they were involved in on campus and the experiences they had while they were students and alumnae influenced their decisions about making a gift. It also helped me to understand how members perceived being involved with a women’s giving society that offers engagement opportunities for women, and what their engagement means for the university.

The purpose of research question 4, “What role, if any, do the donors’ lived experiences as women shape their perceptions and experiences around their philanthropic activities at W&M?” was to learn what experiences shape motivations. Using feminist standpoint theory, I uncover that which is previously unexplored vis-à-vis women and their roles at institutions as both students and alumnae. Experiences were explored both externally and at W&M, but ultimately, I share all experiences that influenced their decision to becoming involved in a unique initiative such as Society of 1918 at W&M.

The Director of Alumnae Initiatives, Dr. Cushman, asked me to include questioning during my interviews surrounding enhancing the program and how the women might visualize
what the giving society could be in the future. She asked me to share that information back with W&M, which I have done and was happy to do in order to help better their program and glean feedback from their donors they might not have otherwise received. Dr. Cushman and I have formed a professional relationship and gained mutual respect for one another as colleagues in the field of development through this process, and I look forward to providing her with the outcomes of this research.

**Research Design**

Those who conduct qualitative research are interested how people make sense of the experiences they have in their world (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Merriam, 2009, p. 13; Van Maanen, 1979). Thus, a qualitative research design made sense when considering the purposes and research questions of this study. Within the broad field of qualitative research, I used portraiture as a specific approach to this study. In addition, feminist standpoint theory was the theoretical framework that guided data collection, analysis, and interpretation. First, I will describe my methodology of portraiture as a type of qualitative ethnographic method. Next, I will explain my theoretical framework as well as data collection and analysis procedures I employed. Lastly, I will close with assumptions I had going into the research.

The overall goal of the research was to understand the motivations of alumnae giving to women and girls in the Society of 1918 at W&M, therefore participants providing context to their realities was important. Feminist research is about lived experiences and perception, and the benefits of qualitative methods are that they also allow for more personal and human interactions between the researcher and the participants (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Marshall and Rossman (2006) describe qualitative research as, “naturalistic, draws on multiple methods that respect the humanity of the participants in the study, focuses on context, is emergent and evolving, and is
fundamentally interpretive” (2006, p. 2). In order to focus on the experiences of the women donors, it was imperative to use qualitative methods, as Merriam (2009) would agree that they offer a deeper meaning making of participants’ experiences.

**Portraiture.** Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) describe portraiture as, “a method of qualitative research that blurs the boundaries of aesthetics and empiricism in an effort to capture the complexity, dynamics, and subtlety of human experience and organizational life” (p. xv). They continue to define it as placed in a specific time, space and culture shaped through conversations between the participant and the researcher, eventually evolving into an image through compelling narrative (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. xv). Portraiture is highly descriptive of the participants, as they state, “Portraitists seek to record and interpret the perspectives and experience of the people they are studying, documenting their voices and their visions -- their authority, knowledge, and wisdom” (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. xv).

Setting of both interviews and observations played an important part in the research, as the portraiture method finds the “psychical, geographical, temporal, historical, cultural and aesthetic” setting crucial to providing context to the human experience and culture of the organization (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 41). Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis explain that the context is used to, “place people and action in time and space and as a resource for understanding what they say and do” (1997, p. 41). Having a deep understanding of context is important because without it, “we have no idea how to decipher or decode an action, a gesture, a conversation, or an exclamation unless we see it embedded in context. Portraitists, then, view human experience as being framed and shaped by the setting” (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 41). Furthermore, Dixon, Chapman and Hill (2005) state that major aspects of
Portraiture research are relationships, contexts, emergent themes, and the aesthetic whole (Dixon et al., 2005; Free, 2009).

Portraiture is different from other ethnographic research as it weaves the researcher’s voice throughout the written document, giving the researcher’s personal reflections from their history, and of the people and setting being analyzed (Davis, 2003; Dixon et al., 2005; Free, 2009, Hackmann, 2002; Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2005). It also uses the researcher’s voice because the researcher interacts heavily with the participants in the setting, as Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis (1997) explain, they enter people’s lives, engage with them, and question their roles and actions actively. Using the researcher’s voice is also different from other methods because it shares what biases and experiences the researcher has coming to the study, and Hackmann (2002) explains the biases and experiences as, “a lens through which the researcher processes and analyses data collected throughout the study” (p. 52).

Of what I knew of the already successful Society of 1918 at W&M, portraiture was a method that would work well with the study, as it focuses on unearthing goodness and highlighting successes, rather than the alternative of finding failures and deficiencies (Lawrence-Lightfoot and Davis, 1997, p.8; Hackmann, 2002, p. 54). Though this method does not offer generalizations outside of the unique study (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1983), Hackmann states that, “this approach particularly is appropriate within the field of educational leadership, since educators arguably can gain more from studying successes than they can from failures” (2002, p. 54).

Portraiture works well with critical theory, as critical theory seeks to expose the repression of voice, privilege and power created by systems and structures (Free, 2009, p. 5; Sullivan, 2005, p. 55), empowering and positioning individuals to challenge inequities and create
change (Sullivan, 2005). Going into the study, my basic understanding of the women of the Society of 1918 was that they were challenging inequalities through their gifts, but detailed portraiture will helped me to find in what ways and why they were doing so.

Portraiture is an arts-based research methodology that can effectively portray the lived experiences of participants within a particular phenomenon. Hackmann (2002) in his research described thirteen studies from educational leadership that commendably used portraiture. Dixon et al. (2005) gave several examples of when portraiture has been used to position the researcher in the study, specifically personal and professional connections to the research. This was crucial to my study, as I connected with the women through my personal and professional experiences with the use of portraiture.

**Site Selection, Population, and Sample**

I chose the site of W&M due to students having a traditional four-year undergraduate experience at a public institution. Most students live on campus; therefore, the student experience would be more likely to be similar than the experiences of students who attend a commuter school or a school with a low 4-year graduation rate, which I found to be the case for all interviewees. I also chose this site because the campus is not urban, therefore students usually participate in experiences on campus versus off campus in the myriad opportunities available in their cities, which I also found to be true in the interviews I conducted. Additionally, choosing this site to study was timely, as they had recently developed a women’s philanthropy group; whereas other universities in the region did not have a focus on women and philanthropy, or women’s giving groups. W&M also celebrated a significant anniversary for women during my research tenure. Finally, this site was convenient, as it was relatively near my residence at the time, which allowed me to conduct site visits and observation in person.
In order to get my research sample, Dr. Cushman, Director of Alumnae Initiatives, sent out a letter of intent describing my research study to the donors to solicit their voluntary participation (Appendix C), with an option to opt out. This request came with a link to a website where they could see what my study was about, interview questions beforehand, my literature review, and a copy of the consent form for them to review.

The population from which the participants were selected were members of W&M’s Society of 1918. There were 280 women that held membership at the time Val Cushman sent her recruitment script via email, and 260 of those members were alumnae of W&M. Membership meant that they have given at least $10,000 towards the endowment for alumnae initiatives through the Society of 1918, or had supported W&M with lifetime giving of over $100,000. Thirteen of those women asked to be excluded from the research. With those exclusions, this left 15 alumnae members from the original 27 founders of the Society, and 245 in the donor member pool to be solicited for an interview. I conducted a simple random sample of the 15 founders and sent requests to participate in one-hour interviews until I yielded five participants (Appendix D). For the general member population of 245, I generated cluster random sampling by class year decade in order to yield diversity in age of participants, and sent requests to participate in one-hour interviews until I yielded five participants (Appendix D). This resulted in having class years represented from the 60s, 70s, 80s, 90s and 2000s.

All participants verbally consented to the informed consent document, and I assured them that their identities would remain confidential. In addition, participants were informed they could quit the study at any time.
Methods

I was the primary and only researcher for this qualitative research study. I utilized interviews, field notes, observations and journaling as my collection tools. I used multiple forms of data collection as a method of triangulation, strengthening credibility and decreasing variability (McMillan, 2008). Triangulation is also encouraged in the portraiture method, as it increases the amount of data collection to be analyzed. Researchers encourage observations, interviews, document review, and specific to portraiture, ‘hanging out’ in and around the research setting (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1986; Mueller & Kendall, 1989; Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997; Hackmann, 2002). I analyzed the environment and programs in which alumnae gave financially, and described them using portraiture.

Triangulation, as defined by McMillan (2008), compares the findings of different techniques and enhances the credibility of qualitative study through observing patterns that are repeated in interviews, documents, field notes, and member checks of the accuracy of the notes, comparing different approaches (p. 296).

The matrix below shows the source of the information I analyzed to answer each of the four research questions:

Table 2: Methods Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question</th>
<th>Data Collection Methods</th>
<th>Population/Sample/Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“What do I want to know?”</td>
<td>“How did I find out?”</td>
<td>“Who did I do it to?” or “Where did I find it?”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1. What contextual (political, historical, social) factors contributed to the development of the Society of 1918 at W&M? | ● Interviews  
● Document review & analysis  
● Website  
● Literature Review  
● Archival Data | ● Website  
● Director of Alumnae Initiatives  
● Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy |
2. What is the nature of the Society of 1918 at W & M?
   a. Organizational structure? Who are the leaders/donors?
   b. Organizational mission? Who do they serve? And why do they serve them?
   c. Organizational activities and initiatives? How do they serve?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviews</th>
<th>Document review &amp; analysis</th>
<th>Website</th>
<th>Participant Observation</th>
<th>Archival Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. How do the donors of the Society of 1918 at W & M perceive and experience their engagement with their alma mater generally and the Society of 1918 in particular?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviews</th>
<th>Document review &amp; analysis</th>
<th>Archival Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. What role, if any, does the donors’ lived experiences as women shape their perceptions and experiences around their philanthropic activities at W&M?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviews</th>
<th>Participant Observation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Interviews.** Prior to interviewing the participants or conducting observations or data collection, I reflected on my own experience, and became more aware of personal prejudices, biases and assumptions, a process Merriam (2009) calls epoche. This process helped me to decipher between my reality and the reality of the women participants. Through this exercise, I was able to recognize and better understand those assumptions to prevent them from having an effect on my findings.

McMillan (2008) describes the purpose for interviews as, “used to gather information that cannot be obtained from field observations, and to verify field observations, [and to] explain the participants’ point of view, how they think and how they interpret and explain their behavior within a given setting” (McMillan, 2008, p. 281).

I conducted brief life-history interviews with the participants, in an effort to learn about their lives and what occurred in their lives that played a part in their development as women (McMillan, 2008). Interviews in this manner provided me with more information than surveys.
could yield about their experiences. All interviews were conducted over video chat and semi-structured, which allowed flexibility, openness and relationship building to occur (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 1997). I predicted alumnae would speak about sensitive experiences while they were students or even alumna, and I found it beneficial to read body language to determine whether it was appropriate to probe further (Merriam, 2009).

I used a pseudonym for each interviewee to protect the privacy of the donors, as well as a tool to build trust and rapport with me, the researcher. To build more privacy, interviews were conducted through an online video interview to maintain confidentiality.

**Observations.** Observations helped me to view naturally occurring behavior over a long period of time in order to obtain a rich understanding of the Society of 1918 (McMillan, 2008). I began as a non-participant observer in order for the group to gain a significant level of comfort with me. Over a period of time, I became closer to a participant observer, as I was interacting more closely with participants. I did not, and could not, however, become a complete member of the group, as I am not a donor to the group (McMillan, 2008).

Observations took place during engagement events that the Society of 1918 hosted, as well as annual meetings. There observations were critical to see donors in their natural setting, surrounded by and engaging with political players, benefactors, peer donors, administrators and fundraisers. A full list of observations can be found in Appendix G. Through observing in this way, I was able to see how alumnae talked amongst each other about their efforts and service. I took brief notes during my observations that later informed my detailed field notes, and served as raw data I analyzed later to answer my research questions (McMillan, 2008). In addition, I employed reflective practices while developing my field notes, but kept them separate from the facts of the observation. McMillan (2008) explains reflection as, “speculations, feelings,
interpretations, ideas, hunches, and impressions – subjective notions related to the research” (McMillan, 2008, p. 280). These reflections included thoughts about emerging themes, patterns and methodological issues, ethical concerns, and my opinions and prejudices (McMillan, 2008).

In order to employ portraiture, detailed field notes proved to be incredibly important to develop a picture of the reality of the women participants.

**Document analysis.** In order to fully understand the organization and mission of the program, I performed document analysis on the Society of 1918 by reviewing their task force report, program proposal, invitations to events, and handbooks for members in leadership positions. I full list of all documents analyzed can be found in Appendix A. Document analysis involved interpreting the meaning behind written documents for qualitative research and data collection (McMillan, 2008; Yanow, 2000). I received this information from the director of the program, Dr. Cushman, and from events and meetings I attended.

**Website.** There was much to learn from the W&M alumnae engagement website, which was electronic information that was accessible to anyone. The website offered opportunities for alumni to give to the alumnae initiatives program, explained the purpose for the alumnae engagement office, listed volunteer opportunities, testimonials, news and upcoming events. I thought the information located on the website would be important to analyze prior to interviews, however no alumnae referenced having learned of the Society of 1918 from the website.

**Quality Standards**

During the interview, I recorded our one hour or more conversations with my cell phone voice recorder. After each interview, I took time to memo in order to track observations I made during the interview that were not in the transcription. I made sure to do the memos within one day so I remembered the observations and feelings I had during the interview. Memos written
quickly will helped me to capture details of the interviewee, including facial expressions after questions or during long pauses, providing deeper information than I would have received over the phone (Merriam, 2009). After each interview, I transcribed within three days of the interview so that I remembered what the participant said in case I could not hear something during the interview.

After transcribing interviews, I loaded them into ATLAS.ti in order to develop codes and organize themes that emerged during the interview and transcription process. Codes are explained by McMillan (2008) as categories to organize data, and he said that it is important for the data to suggest the codes instead of the researcher suggesting the codes (p. 284). I sent transcriptions to each of the participants for them to make any edits or changes necessary, in an effort to represent them honestly and correctly, increasing validity and credibility (McMillian, 2008) (see Appendix J).

**Data Analysis**

As stated in the research design, the findings were examined through a feminist standpoint theory lens. While analyzing all data collection methods, the feminist standpoint theory lens enabled me to be more critical when considering the female experiences and motivations for giving to women and girls. It also allowed me to find patterns and themes throughout each method of interviews, observations, and discourse analysis.

**Assumptions and Limitations**

I had several assumptions coming into this project. First, as a woman, I assumed that some of the women would have lived similar negative experiences that they will want to shield other women from having. I assumed they also would have experienced positive influences they would believe other women should have access to. For example, the literature pointed out that
women research participants shared their personal experiences, including their daughters’ experiences, as motivations for giving. I assumed the women in this group would express similar motivations. This study was also being conducted in a time when women were fighting for justice in gender equality. Although this organization was developed before the surge of the women’s rights movement, I assumed women would discuss that in their motivations for reasons in giving.

In addition to the assumptions mentioned above, there are also limitations to the study. For example, this study does not attempt to discover and describe cause and effect relationships. Neither does this study attempt to generalize all women’s giving at universities for women benefactors. Experiences at colleges and universities are different for different women due to a variety of factors such as the gender make-up of students and administration, location of school, and the decade they studied at the institution. As Mesch, et al. (2016) stated in their conclusion of their findings on why donors give to women and girls, “We anticipate that academics and practitioners will increasingly engage with these questions and continue documenting the pathways, trends, and motivations of giving in this area” (Mesch et al., 2016, p. 37). This study was meant to gain a deeper understanding of women donors who gave to women and girls at a traditional co-educational four-year public higher education institution, but cannot be generalized for all women who give to a similar destination.

Conclusion

As I explained in the previous chapter, I used several data collection methods to answer the four research questions to better understand the motivations behind alumnae donors to W&M. Looking ahead, the following chapters will detail my results, conclusions, discussion and recommendations for future research.
CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

This study explored the contexts, identities, nature, and perceptions of donors to the Society of 1918 at William and Mary (W&M). The findings from the interviews, observations, and document analyses were woven together to illustrate the portrait of this case. Data are presented in aggregate form based on themes and ideas that answer the research questions. In addition, direct quotations from donor interviews and/or observations provide further illustrations of and background to these themes. Ten participants took part in this research study. To protect their privacy, pseudonyms are used for direct quotes. Appendix F. includes the pseudonyms and demographic information for the participants; however, full profiles are provided in text to portray my perceptions, settings, and the nature of our conversations.

Due to the influence of the current political climate, my own experiences during this time as a woman, and the evolving nature of the success of the Society of 1918 at W&M, findings are presented in a manner that allows the reader to follow along in a chronological manner, weaving a 360-degree portrait of the Society.

Contextual Factors and The Beginning

The purpose of this section is to answer the first research question:

RQ#1: What contextual (political, historical, social) factors contributed to the development of the Society of 1918 at W&M?

As stated in Chapter 1, the purpose of the first research question was to increase understanding about W&M and the conversations and decisions that led to the creation of the Society of 1918, as well as to situate the organization during a certain period in history. I begin with a timeline to illustrate linear developments in the Society of 1918. This timeline is useful
when analyzing both research question one and research question four, as interviewees often reference the political climate and social movements when reflecting on their experiences as women. While political milestones emerge during this period, it is not my intent to surmise that these historical instances affecting the country have a cause-effect relationship on the development of the Society of 1918; rather, the intent is to provide a more complete portrait. I illustrate the time and place when solicitations began for the Society as well as share what I learned during my interviews and observations that conveyed the general feelings of women across the country during that time. Portraiture methodology also allowed me to weave my own personal experiences and voice into discussions and the narrative. As a participant-observer, interviewees got to know me personally, and my pregnancy and entrance into motherhood often times emerged in conversations at observations and during interviews. My own experiences as a woman and mother is weaved into the findings of this section, and is outlined in the following timeline for context.

A Timeline.

To begin, see Table 3.

Table 3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Key Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1693</td>
<td>College of William and Mary Founded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>First women admitted to and enrolled at W&amp;M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Women &amp; Philanthropy Task Force at W&amp;M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Director of Alumnae Initiatives position created at W&amp;M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct.</td>
<td>W&amp;M launches “For the Bold” campaign, $1 billion goal with 40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>alumni participation by 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2016</td>
<td>Hillary Clinton - first woman with nomination for major party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 2017</td>
<td>Society of 1918 at W&amp;M created/Endowment agreement signed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 2017</td>
<td>Women’s March in DC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 2017</td>
<td>I meet with Val Cushman to confirm research topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer 2017</td>
<td>First verbal solicitations to join Society from Val</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 2017</td>
<td>First hard copy solicitation for Society of 1918 sent to alumnae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 2017</td>
<td>#metoo Movement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The College of William and Mary was founded in 1693, making it the second oldest institution of higher education in the United States. W&M became coeducational in 1918, over 50 years earlier than the University of Virginia, which admitted students with similar academic prowess as W&M in the state of Virginia. The smartest and most talented women who were top of their class prior to 1970, and even soon after, were choosing to attend W&M, as it was the highest caliber public institution in the region to attend. Barbara, a founder and member of the Society of 1918, explains the talent of her fellow female classmates in the following quote:

So when I applied to college, the University of Virginia was not an option, nor was it for most high performing women, obviously. So W&M was the college in Virginia that a woman who was high performing academically went to, if you could get in, it was hard to get in. And for that reason, and it was not the college of choice for men who were high performing academically, [University of] Virginia was if you wanted to go to a state school. So, there was no question when I was there, that the women were smarter and
more talented than the men, in general, obviously individuals vary, but that was the case. So, I always felt that there was this heritage, if you will, almost, of really super talented and smart women coming out of W&M.

**Development of Women and Philanthropy at W&M.**

In 2012, initial conversations about the interest in research on W&M women began amongst college administration. Women made up the majority of the alumni base, but there was not an inclusive approach to fundraising practices in terms of gender. An imminent date of 2018, which would mark 100 years since women were admitted to the college was fast approaching; yet, there hadn’t been a focus on women in development before this time. Dottie, a Founder of the Society of 1918, describes the first time hearing about the Society and the essence of the time in development at W&M:

Well it really arose, and we were in foundation meetings, and this would have been in 2011 or 2012, as they were doing the pre planning for the current capital campaign. And there was a solicitation training session for foundation members that was literally three white guys sitting in front of the group, talking about how they asked each other for money. And having raised a lot of money [for another women’s group], and being very familiar with raising money with women, I went to the Vice Chair for development [...] and she was talking to the chair of the foundation, I was like, guys, you're really, you're really missing the boat here. I mean, this is, this is not addressing the expansiveness that we need to have in the capital campaign to be successful. And they said, ‘funny, you should mention that.’ [Task Force was brought up...] Because it was just such a glaring oversight in terms of, not only the training, but the whole approach and mindset, cause it was a very, you know, ‘I gave money to your organization, you gotta give money to
mine’, you know, ‘my gift is bigger than your gift’, I mean, a totally guy thing, and it was, it was not a good development of a prospect. It was not modeling good prospect development whatsoever, nor, nor inclusive prospect development. [...] Well, you know, [female donor] is not a shrinking violet. And I'm not either. And so we talked, you know, we first talked about this idea. And then we started talking to Lee Foster and the other women in the development department. And we had clearly struck a nerve because they were like, chomping at the bit to get all over this. I think, just, maybe I’m reading too much into it. There was some built up frustration that this topic possibly had come up in the development department previously and had not gotten the attention that it deserved. Cause they were they were all over it. [...] I think the frustration was that there was not an acknowledgement that perhaps things needed to be done differently to be successful with women. And that the development model was still very old school, old-boy-network driven, maybe biased towards athletics, specifically football, through the Tribe Club, and just was not considering the interest or engagement of 55% of the alumni base. [...] And looking at this data, the concern that we had was that if we didn't address some of these issues ahead of time, when we get to the 2018 celebration, and particularly female students would have figured out some of this data, that indicated that it was not sufficiently an inclusive community and say, they’d ask, ‘What the hell are we celebrating? After all, you know, we haven't, you know, we're not adequately represented in this whole array of things.’

In May 2012, the Task Force on Women and Philanthropy at W&M was established, comprised of alumnae donors, women administrators in the development office. W&M also hired Orr Associates, Inc. to assist in researching W&M’s alumnae populations in order to “gain
an understanding and appreciation of the relationships women currently have with [W&M] and to arrive at best practices for future engagement, broadly and philanthropically” (Orr Associates, 2015, p. 8).

In 2015, the W&M Women and Philanthropy Task Force shared a report and plan on the then current state of W&M women and philanthropy. Coupled with their findings of research on all women and giving that were shared in the previous literature review outlined in Chapter 2, the task force reported the following positive findings: 55% of the student body were women; 52% of the alumni based were women; women gave at a higher participation rate than males (59% compared to 56%); 46% of planned-giving donors were women; and women alumnae attended events at a higher rate than male alumni. The following were negative findings reported: fundraiser portfolios were on average 30% female prospects compared to 53% male and 13% couples; on average women contributed a smaller amount of money than men; 36% of faculty on campus were women; and 37% of leadership board participants were women (Orr Associates, 2015, pp. 6-7). The task force conducted interviews with key stakeholders, focus groups, and an online survey, which reported the following findings: Majority of women (94% of those surveyed) reported having a positive experience as a student; there was support for a Women & Philanthropy Initiative at W&M; the more connected donors were at the college, the higher their giving amount; desire for “varied, tailored engagement opportunities” that also educated them on W&Ms needs; W&M needed to ask women to step into leadership roles; research on W&M women donors mirrored national research findings on women and philanthropy (personal connection, engagement with organization, mission aligns with personal values, and impact of gift) (Orr Associates, 2015, pp. 12-13).
In 2015, only 40 other schools had launched a women’s philanthropy program in the country, due to the comprehensive nature of such a culture shift (Orr Associates, 2015, p. 20). The report recommended (among others) the following that influenced the development of the Society of 1918: the hiring of what would become Director of Alumnae Initiatives; creating an advisory committee comprised of faculty, staff & volunteers; aligning work with 100th anniversary committee; and developing substantive and personalized engagement (Orr Associates, 2015, pp. 20-26). While the task force report recommended “an increase in the number of alumnae volunteer leaders at W&M, both on the College’s Foundation and Alumni Association, and in other leadership roles,” and the mission of the Society of 1918 includes “growing women’s leadership,” it is inherently a sensitive issue for some society members and founders. Although the task force report did find that women are underrepresented in the classroom, as 36% of faculty at W&M are female, the recommendations outlined did not include strategies to balance gender in faculty and administration, and the mission of the organization does not explicitly state this goal. This topic did, however, come up in conversations when talking about initiatives the Society of 1918 should undertake. Dottie, a founder and member of the Society of 1918, describes how this was a topic for discussion in the beginning, and where it landed in terms of finding a place in The Society:

It really kind of circled back to some of the observations we had early in the task force life, where there were all these other issues about women's participation in the life of the college. And the women who were becoming engaged in The Society of 1918 had a lot of energy, right, [they’d say] ‘yea, let's go fix those,’ you know, ‘let's use this as a platform to address women's issues at the college.’ And that's not where we ended up. And I do remember some conversations, you know, at least from my part, saying, ‘we're not really
an agenda-based organization, because you've got to trust the governance process of the college at some point that they're going to use your resources appropriately, so we should not be attaching stipulations regarding the advancement of women at the college to our gifts.’ And there was a little bit of that, I think, going on, in some of the earlier conversations around The Society as the group of women broadened beyond the initial members of the task force.

The Alumnae Initiatives Endowment and the Leadership Circle

The decision around the funds supporting Alumnae Initiatives is a product of the research and practical implementation on the side of W&M. The task force reported that women donors wanted “varied and substantive” engagement opportunities at the college. In order to offer more engagement opportunities for women, a full time staff person was needed, and Val Cushman, the Director of Alumnae Initiatives, was hired. This position would focus not only on the success of the advisory board recommended by the Task Force Report, which would evolve into the Society of 1918, but would help fundraising staff at W&M understand and put into practice more inclusive, gender-balanced fundraising practices. In order for this position and initiatives to be sustainable, W&M alumnae created an endowment for Alumnae Initiatives that would support in perpetuity the engagement of women graduates at W&M. Dottie explains the reason the organization was created, and how engagement, philanthropy and influence drive each other:

Remember, we were created to, to drive philanthropy, by women for the college, and it’s sort of a chicken and egg thing, because the higher the level of women's engagement with the college, the higher level of philanthropy will be, the higher their level of philanthropy, the greater their influence at the college, the greater their influence, the higher their level of engagement. And so I do see a virtuous circle.
In 2016, the W&M development office decided that in order to engage women with the college that had either never been previously engaged or hadn’t been a donor, the fundraising office needed to create the brand “W&M Women,” and host events for all women of W&M to be engaged with the college. During 2016, W&M held 25 staff-led regional “W&M Women” events. Following best practices, it was also decided that an organization would be created for women, by women, to drive engagement and philanthropy of women back to the college. Val Cushman and two female administrators at the college, Sue Warner and Lee Foster, made personal visits and calls to leading women philanthropists to W&M to help this initiative get off the ground and be a part of building of a philanthropy organization. This would become the Leadership Circle.

**Becoming the Society of 1918**

In early 2017, a small advisory group of 24 alumnae and one alumnus, called the Leadership Circle at W&M, helped to formulate what would become the Society of 1918. This group decided what the fundraising organization should look like, and the gift amount it would take for an alumna to gain membership. Much conversation was had around the amount, as many women wanted to be as inclusive as possible. However, it was decided that the threshold for membership would be a gift of $10,000 to the Alumnae Initiatives Endowment, over no more than five years. Membership would be granted to alumnae who had given over $100,000 in her lifetime to W&M as long as she committed to giving $2,000 annually, and lifetime membership without a further commitment was offered to women who historically contributed over $500,000. Later in 2018, a Young Guarde rate would be implemented for graduates of the last decade at a reduced rate of $5,000 over five years, receiving all the same benefits.
After decisions were made about the composition and membership qualifications of the Society of 1918, 23 of the 24 women from the Leadership Circle joined the Society. While many of these 24 had given over $100,000 to W&M, 22 of the 23 gave an additional $10,000 to the endowment in surplus to prior gifts and current commitments. All women in the Leadership Circle were given the opportunity to sit as leaders on what would become the Steering Committee and leadership of the Society of 1918, though not all decided to continue their leadership in addition to their membership but not for lack of interest. Some had been committed since 2012 when the task force began, and wanted other women to have opportunities to lead.

**Membership Growth and Current Context**

Although not a byproduct of social influences, (the timeline in Table 3. indicates this initiative began four years prior) women’s issues were being brought to the forefront in the national conversation and running parallel to the public launch of the Society of 1918. Hillary Clinton was announced as the first woman presidential candidate of a major political party in the summer of 2016, and lost in the presidential election that November. A surge of concern for women’s issues took place across the country with the Women’s March on DC taking place in January of 2017, the day after President Trump’s inauguration. An estimated 200,000 participated in that march, with over five million participating in similar marches across the United States. In that same month, the paperwork for the alumnae initiatives endowment at W&M was signed. In February of 2017 I sat down over lunch with Val Cushman to confirm my topic of study around the Society of 1918.

Val Cushman and Lee Foster made calls to major women donors at W&M about membership in the Society of 1918 over the period of three months in early summer of 2017, and the first solicitations for the Society of 1918 hit email inboxes and mailboxes of all W&M
women in August of that same year. The group had a goal of 100 women joining the society, reaching $1 million for the endowment by September of 2018, 100 years after women were admitted into W&M. In October of 2017, the “Me Too” movement swept the country after countless allegations arose against Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein. The #MeToo hashtag started with celebrities recounting their sexual harassment and assault experiences, which spread to all women across social media recounting personal stories of sexual harassment and assault. CBS (2017) reported that within 24 hours, 12 million posts, comments, and reactions were made by over 4.7 million people around the world. It was also reported that 45% of Facebook users had friends who posted about the “Me Too” movement, and was tweeted one million times within 48 hours.

By December of 2017, within 6 months of the first solicitation, the Society of 1918 had already reached their goal of raising $1 million dollars, 9 months ahead of their target. Leadership in the Society of 1918 set a new goal of raising $1.918 million by the Women’s Weekend which would celebrate 100 years of women at W&M in September of 2018. The “Time’s Up” Movement, announced January 1, 2018 in the New York Times, had similar goals of women’s empowerment, but was started by 300 women in Hollywood to “create concrete change, leading to safety and equity in the workplace” (Langone, 2018). This movement reenergized the conversation about women’s inequality in the workplace, as it was prevalent on mainstream media as well as social media. Observations that I conducted at Society of 1918 Steering Committee meetings, W&M Women events and events for donors were conducted primarily between January and March of 2018. By July of 2018, the Society of 1918 reached their goal of $1.918 million.
The Nature of the Society of 1918

The purpose of this section is to answer the second research question:

*RQ#2: What is the nature of the Society of 1918 at W&M? (Organizational structure and mission? Organizational activities and initiatives? Who are the founders and members? How do they serve?)*

As stated in Chapter 1, the purpose of the second research question is to gain a deeper understanding of characteristics that are intrinsic to members of the Society of 1918, providing a deeper understanding of the nature of the relationship between donors and leaders to the society, and shared behaviors between members. The following section will review the organization’s mission and organizational structure, the nature of the events and meetings observed and donors’ perceptions of those events, and characteristic patterns that emerged through interviews and observations with donors and event attendees.

**Organizational Structure, Mission, Vision and Benefits**

The Society of 1918 is led by a thirty-two-person Steering Committee of members who represent broad diversity across the university, as stated in literature they hand out at Society of 1918 events. Though stated that this is the composition of the steering committee, diversity is mainly in geographic representation and majors. Through observations, I found that the steering committee was largely of a similar age demographic of graduates from the classes of the 1970s and 1980s, and mostly Caucasian. However, there was a desire for more diversity in terms of age and race stated in meetings. I found there to be detailed organization and structure to the organization. The following section will outline the structure of the Steering Committee leadership.
**Organizational structure.** The Executive Committee is comprised of the Chair, Vice Chair, four Committee Chairs, and two at-large steering committee members, and their purpose is to provide strategic direction to ensure the Society of 1918’s mission and vision are fulfilled. Members serve on four working committees: Membership, Engagement, Philanthropy and Leadership, as well as ex-officio members, who are six alumni/development staff at W&M, serve on the steering committee.

The Membership Committee consists of the Committee Chair, Committee Vice Chair, and steering committee members, with the purpose of receiving nominations from W&M leadership boards, and presenting a slate of diverse individuals to serve on the Steering Committee. They also exist to identify the Chair, Vice Chair, Committee Chairs, and two at-large members to serve on the Executive Committee. Lastly, they recommend at-large members for working committees.

The Engagement Committee is comprised of the Committee Chair, Committee Vice Chair, and eight society members, and its purpose is to drive efforts to create meaningful opportunities for W&M women to engage with each other and the university.

The Philanthropy Committee is made up of the Committee Chair, Committee Vice Chair, and six society members. This committee’s purpose is to help to increase the pipeline of women donors and their financial support for the university.

Lastly, the Leadership Committee is comprised of a Committee Chair, Committee Vice Chair, and six society members, aiming to create a W&M community that recognizes and honors the capacity of women to lead and identifies and addresses factors that are limiting women. In addition, they help women realize their leadership potential through coaching and development opportunities.
I was fortunate enough to interview a founder, Barbara, who was also a leader on the Steering Committee in March of 2018. This alumna shared with me a decision she made about her role I found to be at the heart of the mission of the organization. Although her term was going to end a year from July of that year, she decided she was going to vacate her position early. Her reasoning was, “I really wanted to get some younger superstars that we’ve identified into the leadership team,” a “chess game” she called it, to open up slots for younger and racially diverse women to move into the executive committee. Wanting to create not only a more diverse and inclusive culture in leadership, she also wanted to offer more women the opportunity to lead. She shared, “I didn’t want some of these younger people also to be discouraged and feel like they had to wait six years or three years even to get into these kinds of roles,” exercising strategic succession planning for the organization, something she hoped the younger women would share with their peers and make the organization that much more appealing to join.

**Mission and Vision.** The stated mission of the organization is, “The Society of 1918 is committed to growing women’s engagement, leadership and philanthropy and to celebrating and honoring the women of William & Mary.” The vision for the organization is: “By 2023, W&M women will achieve a level of impact, influence and generosity commensurate with their representation in the W&M community.” The mission and vision use the terminology, “W&M women,” rather than “alumnae” or “women donors.” The choice to use that language shows its inclusiveness in wanting to engage not only alumnae donors, but also non-engaged alumnae, spouses, non-alumnae parents, and friends of the university. The challenge, however, is that it seems this is up for interpretation, as some women include faculty and administration into this definition. This could mean that “growing women’s leadership” as stated in the mission, could be the leadership of women faculty and administration at the college, and the vision of “W&M
women will achieve a level of influence” could also be interpreted to mean the influence of women faculty and administration. For example, Ellen, a founder of the Society of 1918 shared:

I think one of the guiding principles of the society has been to create parity in administration, not just to encourage philanthropy. And I do like that. And I think that’s timely, maybe even a little bit behind the times rightly, at W&M. So I think having Dr. Rowe [college’s first female president] now, I don’t think the Society directly impacted that but I don’t think the timing could have been better, actually.

Alternatively, another alumna and founder, Izzy, felt strongly that this is not what the Society of 1918 should be doing, as she trusts the process and administration at the college, given their success for 325 years. Dottie, another participant, also stated the importance of trusting the governance of the college. When speaking with Val about this dichotomy of views, she stated that this is sometimes brought up in conversations with the leadership of the Society of 1918. Since there is such a complex process of hiring at the University, she shared that she tries to steer the alumnae to where they can be most influential: sharing open positions at the college with them to encourage their female networks to apply.

**Membership benefits.** While there are several stated benefits to membership on both the website and in print materials, benefits of membership were not quoted when I asked women their motivations for joining, and Val shared with me that benefits are rarely something that is asked about when individuals join. The following are benefits of membership as stated in documents analyzed:

Receive invitations to exclusive complimentary Society of 1918 events; Engage with W&M’s senior leaders for an insider’s view on key university initiatives and issues, and share your perspective; Network with an elite group of W&M women leaders and
philanthropists; Enjoy reduced admission to all W&M Women events, including book
signings, panel discussions, behind-the-scenes tours, exhibitions and much more on
campus and throughout the country. (Society of 1918 Membership Brochure, 2018, p. 2;
Society of 1918 Membership Application, 2019, p.1)

Organizational Events and Meetings

As part of the observations I conducted for this research study, I attended several events
and meetings of the Society of 1918. There were two types of events that I attended: events
branded W&M Women events that were open to all alumni, parents and friends of W&M, and
events that were members-only events for Society of 1918. The meetings I attended were open
only to Steering Committee members of the Society of 1918, and during committee breakout
sessions, I attended the Executive Committee session and the Engagement Committee session.
Acting as participant-observer allowed me to get to know the women in leadership roles in the
Society, but also women that had never attended a W&M Women event and wanted to learn
more about the new initiative.

The following section provides portraits of two observations I made. The first is a
regional W&M Women event I attended in Roanoke, Virginia, and the second is the Society of
1918 Steering Committee meeting on W&M’s campus, both in the early part of 2018. These
portraits were developed using my field notes and journal reflections.

Regional W&M Women Event (Roanoke, VA, January 24, 2018, 5:30 P.M. - 7:30 P.M.). I drove four hours into the heart of the Blue Ridge Mountains to attend my first W&M
Women event, a regional reception in Roanoke, Virginia held at the historic Roanoke Hotel. It
was a clear crisp evening on January 24, so I wrapped my parka tightly around me while I made
my way up the large brick staircase to the entrance of the hotel. Seven-foot-tall W&M Women
branded pull-up-banners greeted me on the way in, and a white linen table with preprinted W&M name tags were ready for guests on arrival. I fumbled for my VCU name tag in my satchel and affixed it to my dress. I decided to wear a conservative long sleeve dress with ruffles on the neck, hoping I wouldn’t stick out too much as an outsider. I arrived before any event attendees, but Val Cushman was already there talking to catering to ensure the final touches were in place.

The room felt intimate and cozy, perfect for 25 registrants, with ornate dark green wallpaper and heavy billowing window dressings. Lit black lanterns were the centerpieces of the clean white linen round tables, reminding me of colonial Williamsburg, a nice memory for graduates, I was sure. Even the chairs were gold; we could have been on campus it was so similar to Williamsburg.

Several marketing pieces were laid about on the table with a few W&M promotional items for guests to take, including: W&M bumper stickers, W&M branded pads of paper, green and gold beaded necklaces, and W&M Women branded cell phone wallets. The marketing pieces on the table encouraged guests to visit a W&M volunteering website, to Save the Date for the W&M Women’s Weekend in September, to register for an upcoming six day tour of the Hudson River Valley designed to celebrate over 100 years of women shaping history in America, and a brochure on the Society of 1918. All of the print materials on the tables were W&M green and gold.

I snapped quick pictures with my iPhone of artifacts I wanted to remember, jotted some field notes in my little blue notebook, and walked to the wine station in the corner. I’d found out I was pregnant the month before, but not showing yet, I felt my belly, ordered a flat water, and hoped no one would judge me. I asked Val how many she expected, and she shared that registration had been small when they invited only women graduates, but had spiked when they
opened it to men, parents and friends of W&M. I didn’t know it at the time, but it would be the only men I would see at a W&M Women or 1918 event outside of staff.

Guests trickled in, sat and introduced themselves to me. Of the three women I shook hands with, one had earned an EdD, one had earned a PhD, and one had earned a JD, all from W&M, and they were all genuinely interested in my research. I fell into a lengthy conversation before the program began with an alumna who was also a parent to two W&M students, and she had written a book on women’s leadership. Of the two dozen attendees, all were Caucasian, and five were male.

The speaker was Samantha Huge, W&M’s first woman athletic director. I overheard someone at my table say under their breath the importance of her, “especially during these times” when talking about the hiring of women leadership at W&M. AD Huge shared an update on W&M athletics and emphasized student athletes were students first. A much older alumna arrived well into the program, and AD Huge greeted her by name, along with several others. It was a small community unlike any other I had ever been exposed to prior - so many knew each other and weren’t classmates at the same time. The only gender-based comments AD Huge made were that 12% of athletic directors at institutions are women, and answering a question about Title IX and sexual harassment.

After AD Huge spoke, Val spoke briefly. She shared that a group of women are called “alumnae”, and invited everyone to slap their knee to remember the pronunciation. She invited attendees to register for the W&M Women’s Weekend and how the 100th anniversary celebration was woven into the fabric of the college all year long. She asked for volunteers to help with the weekend, and quoted research on Women and Philanthropy, specifically that if women are engaged they’re more likely to give, and that women at W&M are more likely to give,
but give less than their male counterparts, plugging the Society of 1918 - “giving by women for women” she said proudly.

Before the formal program ended, Val encouraged everyone to stand in a circle and share where they were from and to share their “path to and through William and Mary”. It was communal and welcoming, and the alumni and parents beamed when sharing their W&M connections and memories. No one asked why I wasn’t drinking. The alumna who had written the book on women’s leadership slid me her business card.

**Society of 1918 Steering Committee Meeting (Williamsburg, VA, March 22, 2018, 3:00 P.M. - 7:00 P.M.).** I felt uneasy pulling up in my Subaru to the W&M Alumni House for the first time in the early spring of 2018. Back in Richmond I would surely get a ticket for parking so close to a campus building without paying a meter. But there were no meters. No signs warning me of my time limit. Just an unassuming yet stately brick house with less than 15 parking spaces in front. I couldn’t tell the difference between historic Williamsburg and campus buildings, as the town flowed seamlessly into academia.

Before heading in I made a phone call to interview a woman for potential in-home daycare for my unborn son, jotting tuition and sick policy notes alongside my field notes in my little blue notebook. Although I was unsure of the daycare situation, I liked her name... Dottie. I decided I would use it as a pseudonym for my dissertation down the line. I then made a note about something I had overheard at events of women juggling multiple priorities and caring for family. Before walking in to observe these women, I felt as if I was beginning to understand the role of motherhood more every day. I pulled the slouching waistband of my maternity pants up above my growing belly, tugged on my blazer, the front buttons now far from each other, and walked up the big brick front steps to my first Society of 1918 Steering Committee meeting.
Alumni staff warmly greeted me as I walked to the main meeting room, and invited me to sit down at the U-shaped table with green linens, as I had arrived prior to most meeting attendees. A script W&M logo was emblazoned on the carpet, and gold chandeliers hung above us. As women began to arrive, they greeted each other with big hugs, eager to catch up. “Ladies and Ladies, I call this meeting to order” said the chair, with 17 alumnae seated around the table and 5 more on the phone.

As they introduced themselves, eight proudly shared they were also W&M parents. All were dressed conservatively, with most wearing blazers and over half wearing turtlenecks, (I was thankful/reassured I had chosen appropriate attire) with W&M Society of 1918 lapel pins. All women present were Caucasian. This was addressed by Val later in the meeting, stating the obvious absence of diversity and the next frontier for recruitment.

They began the meeting by reviewing the mission and vision of the organization, and sharing that the Society had raised $1.86 million as of that day, March 22, 2018, and they were 10 donors shy of their renewed goal of $1.918 million. The goal had been 1 million, but they hit that in 6 months and raised their goal.

The Chair mentioned the desire to start a mentoring network before charging the committees to think differently about ways to engage women, and breaking up into committees. I decided to go stay in my comfort zone and tag along with the Engagement Committee. The chair of this committee didn’t look like the others. She was the youngest by far it seemed, a 1989 grad, and styled herself much different than the rest of the group. She wore a black leather jacket with thick black rimmed glasses and a blond bluntly cropped hairstyle to her shoulders. She spoke softly but confidently.
Topics ranged from making their committee more diverse, to highlighting programming already happening at W&M that women would be interested in, to engaging women beyond events, to stay at home moms and inclusive programming. The desire for a mentoring program emerged again, and the question of inviting men to events was a debate among committee members, though the consensus did lean towards inclusion and not wanting to work in a vacuum. The #metoo movement was mentioned, and the fact that they all had only had male mentors in their lives. There was still confusion around their goals - whether it was only membership numbers - and they had questions around the integration of the Society of 1918 with the Alumni Association and Advancement. It was clear the group was still in the forming stages. All women in this committee were highly respectful of each other’s opinions, listening to each other and never speaking over one another.

The Chair pulled the groups back together for dinner for the final hour of the meeting, before they were to depart and attend a lecture on campus. When the steering committee came back together, each reported out questions they felt would be valuable to ask over dinner for “lively discussion”. The questions that each committee brought back to the larger group were as follows: How do we engage a more diverse audience?; What is our value proposition to the university and to women who participate?; and Should we change criteria for membership to attract more members? They were correct - each of these questions spurred much discussion. In such early stages as an organization, it was clear they all wanted to make the Society as successful as possible, engaging as many women and possible and bringing more money in to W&M.

There was a discussion about how the initial goal of the alumnae initiatives endowment was to bring in money from women, not money from women for women which is how it is now
publicized. When five-year pledges are complete, steering committee members talked about how they will be at a crossroads of whether to continue to solicit for alumnae initiatives or to increase giving across the university. This went unresolved.

The meeting wrapped with a vote. Students asked the Society of 1918 to take a position on changing the words to the alma mater, written in 1904 prior to its coeducation, to have gender inclusive language. The group voted not to take a position, but support further discussion on the matter. With being such a new group, the leaders mentioned they were nervous it would be the first thing someone would hear from the Society of 1918, and it would potentially hurt philanthropy.

The Founders and Members

Through several observations and interviews, I learned much about who the founders and donors are in the Society of 1918. The following section outlines portraits of ten alumnae donors I interviewed in the spring of 2018 using field notes and journal reflections.

Angela - Alumna from the 2000s. Angela met with me over video in the master bedroom of her home. She was a petite Caucasian woman with straight blonde hair. Before we met, I knew she would look relatively young as we were around the same age, but she looked more youthful than myself wearing a casual T-shirt and seemingly far fewer worry lines, however sounded much more mature than I do - speaking with confidence, eloquence and an impressive casual vocabulary. Her fiancé (not a W&M graduate) popped in to check on her before we began, and she spoke very sweetly to him. Later, she disclosed her hope in creating a scholarship to W&M through her registry instead of getting the traditional gifts you get at a wedding.
Angela shared that she was very involved when she was a student through athletics (a walk-on) and student life, a perk she attributed to W&M’s size. She now lives in DC and works at a large popular tech company where there is only one woman in a leadership role between her and the CEO.

She has been a donor since she graduated and has served on several boards since graduation. She attributed becoming involved with W&M after graduation when she got connected to a female mentor in a new city she had just moved to. She attributes her motivation for joining 1918 to the convergence of several important milestones, or what she referred to as a cultural zeitgeist: the centennial of 100 years of women on campus, the appointment of the first female President at W&M, the resurgence of the women’s movement (e.g. March on Washington), and the desire to be a founding member of the Society, which aligns with her personal values.

Barbara - Founder - Alumna of 70s decade. Barbara is an involved Founder in the Society of 1918, seemed genuinely happy to speak to me, and was very interested in the research I was doing; particularly, how it could help the Society moving forward. Barbara, a Caucasian woman, wore a short grey hairstyle and an orange conservative sweater jacket that reminded me of something a respected university leader would wear.

Warm and welcoming, she spoke slowly, confidently and intelligently. It did not take long to realize I did not need to refer to my prepared list of questions in front of me; she obviously had already read the questions I had sent her prior, had a printed copy in front of her, and seamlessly answered a subsequent question as she was wrapping up the previous one. She spoke as if she was sharing a flowing memoir rather than an interview: I rarely needed to insert myself.
In her home, she sat in a cozy but structured arm chair with a large painting behind her. When I asked her to tell me about herself, she shared that she was one of 4 children and moved a lot as a young person with her family. But as interesting as her history growing up seemed to be, she focused on, and spoke at detailed length about, her impressive career as a leader and mentor in the field of consulting. In her career, she was often the first and only woman at the leadership table, which she noted was “wonderful, but you also bear the burden of your class” - illustrating both the positive and negative aspects of her career achievements.

Outside of the occasional attendance at Homecoming and keeping up with her classmates, her deep involvement with W&M came with a personal request from a School Dean for her initial board involvement many years after graduation, and ultimately from the College administration for the Society of 1918. She was motivated to give to the alumnae initiatives endowment through the Society of 1918 by 1) her belief in the high talent and intelligence of W&M alumnae with whom she graduated, 2) her understanding of the research that indicated giving at W&M was skewed by gender, and 3) the belief that W&M women are an untapped asset. Her experience resonated with the research that women need to be solicited differently than men, and she shared that a key motivator for her was leaving a legacy.

Additionally, she attributed her motivations for giving philanthropically to women’s causes to coming of age in the 60’s civil and social rights movements, and her concerns with the current political environment and cultural regression, expansion of women’s rights, and her belief in the need for equality of collegiate women’s athletics.

Catherine - Alumna of the 90s decade. Catherine, a Caucasian woman from the 90s decade of W&M grads, sat curled up, legs crossed, on the floor of her home office when she took the time to video chat with me, while her sons, dog, and husband were busy in other parts of her
home. I felt an instant connection with her breezy personality, like she could have been a sorority sister of mine. She wore her brown hair in a blunt shoulder length cut, and a business casual top.

Catherine spoke with passion, energy, and at a fast clip, which required me to try and keep up with her as she barreled ahead with her thoughts around working moms, the importance of mentorship, and the women’s movement. Inherently likable and clearly successful, she shared how her love of mentoring grew from being a leader among women in her sorority and helping other women see their leadership potential. She is still very close with her friends from William and Mary, so much so that while we were chatting, her phone was being pinged from a group chat they had going on prior to when we hopped on our call.

Catherine’s career has been in consulting in the intelligence community. She wasn’t formally involved with W&M, outside of a career fair and the occasional homecoming programming, until her kids started talking about going to college, which reignited her interest in her alma mater and a desire to get involved.

Her involvement with the Society of 1918 was motivated by her introduction to and appreciation for Val Cushman, the Director of Alumnae Initiatives, and her leadership at the school and vision for the organization. She was also motivated by the opportunity to align her name with supporting the 100th anniversary of women on campus, not only as a role model for her boys, but for her niece as well. She had not given to the school prior to the commitment she made to the Society of 1918.

Dottie - Founder - Alumna of 80s decade. Dottie is a founder of the Society of 1918 and a graduate from the 80s decade. She is a Caucasian woman and has medium length blonde hair. She sat in her home office in a comfortable chair, with one of her dogs sleeping snuggly on her lap. She spoke slowly, with a hint of a southern drawl. I felt as if she was teaching me with every
word she spoke, appreciating the lengths she went to at times to explain historical or situational things to me.

Dottie was involved as a student at W&M in both Greek life and athletics. As the mother of three daughters, she never stopped her career in the financial industry, and has been active as a board member at both W&M and in the community for decades. She started her philanthropy to W&M at a milestone reunion, and her involvement with the Society of 1918 was motivated by several factors: her own knowledge about research on women and philanthropy; her frustration with the perpetual lack of awareness of gender differences in philanthropy directed from W&M administration prior to the formation of the alumnae initiatives, and ultimate creation of the Society of 1918; the role of women at the college being historically “woefully inadequate” matches with a looming 100th anniversary where this would likely be brought to the administration's attention if alumnae didn’t address it sooner.

Ellen - Founder - Alumna of the 80s decade. Ellen is a founder of the Society of 1918, Caucasian, and a graduate of W&M from the decade of the 80s. When we met over video, she was sitting in a hotel room the day after a sailing vacation she had just taken with her family. Her cropped blonde hair was pulled back into a black baseball cap, ready to go on a run on the National Mall as soon as our call would come to a close.

I had met Ellen before at several W&M Women events, which helped our conversation kick off quickly. Soft spoken but with an air of confidence, she shared that she loved her student experience, as she was one of the first students able to build their own interdisciplinary major, and she visited 11 countries in 100 days through the Semester at Sea program. She has dedicated her life to raising her family and nurturing the numerous communities she has been a part of.
through volunteerism and philanthropy, as a trailing spouse who has lived in 15 houses over the course of 30 years of marriage.

After graduation, she did not get reengaged with her alma mater until her daughter enrolled at W&M. She was visited by a fundraiser, and their family decided to give to a scholarship that benefits first generation college students. She was introduced to Val just after the task force had shared its recommendations, and was asked to be a leader with what would become the Society of 1918.

She shared that although it “may seem anachronistic” from her role of supporting her husband’s career at home, she thrives in leadership roles on boards and fostering other women into those roles as well. Her motivations to be involved and give to the Society of 1918 were: the opportunity to build something new; to change a paradigm at W&M that’s been so traditional because of its age and storied past; its timeliness with current social movements and helping women to find their voice; to create parity in administration; and to create a place for women to be heard and trusted, support each other, and forward each other through their networks. Ellen considers this to be the decade of the woman.

**Francis - Alumna of the 60s decade.** Francis met with me over video chat from the dining room of her waterfront farm. Behind her I could see a large Audubon folio print of a pair of hawks. A Caucasian woman, she was full of life, stories, wisdom and eloquence, and she had striking, long, dark red hair. I only knew she was in her 70s due to her graduation year from W&M, otherwise I would never have believed her age. Both of her parents were 100% Irish, her mother an Irish immigrant and her father, who grew up in Montana, was first generation.

Francis and her two sisters attended W&M, and all three were popular on campus, known not only for their intelligence, but also engagement and their outgoing personalities.
Francis was a student leader at W&M, fully engaged in her academic life and active within her sorority. After graduation, Francis received her master’s degree overseas. When she returned her first job was working on the campaign of Hubert Humphrey who was elected as Lyndon Johnson’s Vice President.

Francis married in the late sixties and, after her children were born, she and her husband joined the anti-Vietnam war protests, were supportive of the Civil Rights Movement and were eventually inspired to apply for a Peace Corps staff position. Her husband, served as the Peace Corps Director in Benin, West Africa where the family lived with their two young children for four years. Later, Francis’ career was founding her own business and serving in volunteer and leadership roles in nonprofit organizations. Giving to W&M was generally through her active involvement in her class reunions. She did not get heavily involved until decades after graduation. In 2005, Francis designated W&M as a beneficiary of a Charitable Remainder Trust established by her and her husband.

When Francis received the Society of 1918 solicitation, and the invitation to Women’s Weekend, she and a friend attended. The weekend so inspired her that she joined the Society during the weekend. Her motivations for joining were: the “spectacular” women’s weekend celebrating 100 years of women at W&M, which she felt was not only impressive programming, but was an overdue acknowledgement of the key contribution women had always made to W&M.; the hope that this new engagement of women would be politically helpful to Katherine Rowe, the first female president of W&M, because she would be “drawing from a philanthropic well that hadn’t really been plumbed.”
Francis was able to redirect her existing charitable remainder trust to W&M by designating the Society and thus qualify for membership. Francis is a cancer survivor, entrepreneur, chef, farmer, environmentalist, activist, retiree, alumna and donor.

Gail - Founder - Alumna of the 80s decade. Gail took a break from work to meet with me over video chat, as she sat in her business attire in a glass conference room. Gail is a Caucasian woman with short brown hair, glasses framing her face. While she may have a corporate look without a hair out of place, her gregarious and humorous nature makes you feel as if you are talking to an old family friend.

Valedictorian of her high school, she loved her time studying the arts at W&M. Her freshman year, she met her husband of over 25 years, who had a successful career in banking following his graduation. Gail has had a fulfilling career in the arts, executive coaching, supporting and providing career training for individuals with autism, and even started a nonprofit empowering women in her community.

Gail is a caretaker, providing support to her two kids in their 20s, her elderly parents, and countless what she called her “non-biological kids” that she’s met and mentored along the way. Both her kids went to W&M, and her daughter is engaged to a W&M alumnus. She can’t recall a time she didn’t give philanthropically to W&M, which began with a peer solicitation. She became engaged at the local chapter level when pregnant with her daughter, and since then has served on many boards at the college and she and her husband have endowed several scholarships in addition to her financial commitment to the Society of 1918.

Gail was asked to be involved with the development of the Society of 1918, and she shared that her motivations for supporting it are: giving a voice to women students, faculty and alumnae at W&M; informing, engaging, and encouraging alumnae to give back to W&M;
empowering current female students as well as alumnae through philanthropy; and setting the stage that generations from now, women will not only have access to and survive at the college, but will thrive and flourish, and have equal representation in leadership throughout the College which is something she shares she may never see the full impact of.

**Holly - Alumna of the 80s decade.** Holly is a graduate from W&M in the decade of the 80s. It was late March in New York when she met with me over video chat. She is a Caucasian woman and had medium length brown hair, wearing a white sweater in a room with floor to ceiling windows, the sun streaming in. Brilliant and bubbly, she graduated valedictorian of her high school, became an RA on campus at W&M, majored in the sciences, and met her husband who was a student athlete. She spoke fondly of her student experience, and has kept relationships with her classmates.

While a doctoral student at Columbia, she felt as if she was more well-rounded and prepared than most of her classmates who had gone to ivy leagues, which spoke to the high caliber education she believed she received from W&M. During her dissertation work, she got married and had a child, moved to Atlanta, and then after graduation had another child and moved to New York. She has worked part-time as an editor for scientific publications, and has been a tutor for the last 5 years, while she stayed home to raise her kids, a choice she made over becoming a scientist. Her volunteerism in her community spans from supporting inner city youth with mentorship, environmental education and immersion, the local garden club, and historical preservation.

Holly has attended nearly every reunion at W&M, and while her kids did not attend W&M, she influenced her nephew who is a current student. Due to her involvement in her class, she received an email about the Society of 1918 being founded, spoke briefly to her husband
about it, and she joined without hesitation although it was much more money than they had ever
given in the past to anywhere, let alone to W&M, but she felt it “more important.”

Holly’s motivations for joining the society were: the lack of female mentors she had in
the sciences; she couldn’t recall having any female professors in the sciences; the idea of an
organization that would support women no matter what their choices were; the hope that she
might get more involved at W&M even at a distance; and that women would become a part of
every conversation at W&M, not just those the Society were a part of.

**Izzy - Founder - Alumna of the 70s decade.** Izzy is a W&M graduate from the decade
of the 70s, and she met with me over video chat from an art-filled sunroom in her home in the
city. She is a Caucasian woman with brown shoulder length hair, and was sipping from a mug
with a Pantone color swatch on it. She beamed as she shared with genuine pride that oil
painting was a passion she picked up just over a decade ago, and that her grandmother had been
an artist. Her smile only got bigger when she talked about her five grandchildren, whom she
visibly adored.

W&M runs deep in her blood; All of her siblings went to W&M, she married her college
sweetheart, her husband of now over forty years, and she’s the parent of a W&M graduate. Izzy
was involved extracurricularly with the things she loved while on campus, and still takes social
trips with her sorority sisters. Izzy and her husband became active alumni and donors to W&M
about fifteen years after graduation, after a peer solicitation of a fellow grad encouraged them to
make a gift, and since then she’s been on the asking end of her peers to benefit W&M.

Izzy spent her career in education, caring deeply about the quality of public education,
especially Richmond Public Schools, but still found time to serve on various leadership boards
as an alumna. Her motivations for joining the Society of 1918 were: her knowledge of the
decline of state funding; her awareness of the research on women and philanthropy and how women often inherit twice and outlive their husbands; her knowledge on the disparity of giving between men and women graduates at W&M, especially considering the majority of graduates are now women; it was a way to engage women back to W&M to increase philanthropy; and she trusts the institution’s leadership, knowing administration will spend money wisely and carefully.

Izzy isn’t happy with the political agenda she believes the Society is adopting, and wants the group to focus on growing philanthropy from women to support the college at large with the many needs that exist, not to get more women on boards and to support only women at the college.

Jessica - Alumna of the 70s decade. Jessica met with me on video chat over Memorial Day weekend, wearing an oversized t-shirt and sitting casually in her home office. Jessica is a Caucasian woman and graduate of the 70s decade, with shoulder length blonde hair, and had a laid-back easygoing demeanor which made me feel instantly comfortable with her.

Jessica shared that she was raised by a strong-willed mother whom she watched work until the age of 70, partly as a result of her husband/Jessica’s father dying of cancer in his 50s leaving six children still to go through college and weddings. Her parents, but particularly her mother, instilled philanthropy and community service as values in their family.

Jessica met her husband at W&M and got married right after college. She was married 30 years, has been divorced for ten, and was a working mother to two children who are now determined to work in law. Jessica received her MBA at Wharton, worked in the business sector for most of her career, but she has recently been pivoted more to the nonprofit world. She has lived in DC for the past 40 years. She looks back fondly at her time as a student at W&M, where she made lifelong friendships.
Jessica has always donated to W&M since she graduated, because she values the education and experiences she had there. Managing the finances in her family, she made most of the philanthropic decisions, except for what they gave to W&M because it was a commonality they shared. Relationships with women has been paramount for Jessica, especially in the years since her divorce: She visits W&M and attends local and national alumni and alumnae events with girlfriends; it was a motivator for her spending a number of years on a board at the College as an alumna, and one of her classmates and best friends now works in the alumni office which enhanced her interest the Society of 1918. Jessica doubled her annual commitment to W&M in order to join the Society, and is excited about the future of the organization, hoping the funds go to support women students at the college.

Discussion of portraits. Overall, from my perspective, the founders I interviewed were all white women that graduated in the 1970s and 1980s, but those who talked about their culture expressed a genuine desire for diversity and inclusion in leadership and in membership. At public appearances outside of casual virtual interviews, I found the women to be conservative dressers, wearing structured blazers or cardigans. All women I encountered presented as highly intelligent, confident, and eloquent, while also unpretentious and free from ostentation. My anxiety from feeling like I would be an outsider quickly dissolved in every interview, meeting and observation I made, as the women I spoke with were warm, genuine, and down to earth. Though I met a few women at W&M Women events and Society of 1918 events that had received their graduate degrees from W&M, all of the women I interviewed were undergraduate degree holders from W&M. Four of the interviewees went on to study graduate school elsewhere. (This is an important data point, as the undergraduate experience is much different for student and holistic development than the experience of earning a graduate degree.)
Overarching themes that emerged when getting to know the women included that most of them were mothers, with many of their children also W&M students; they were familiar with the research on philanthropy, philanthropy at W&M, and women and philanthropy specifically; they were and are leaders in their careers and in their communities, though often not simultaneously given the time commitment; and that mentoring was of high value in their life and careers.

In the following sections, I share a few more details about these themes.

**Mothers and W&M parents.** When I sat in the Steering Committee meeting in March of 2018, eight of the twenty-two attendees shared they were parents of W&M students or graduates. I knew there was a rich history of legacy at W&M, but it was not until this meeting that I understood the pride that comes with their children also attending W&M, and also became aware of the large number of W&M parents who were leaders in the Society of 1918. This was not the case, however, during my interviews, as only three of the ten interviewees were parents of W&M students or graduates. Eight of the ten interviewees were mothers, and many shared their experiences of motherhood. During my interviews with the five founders of the Society, Dottie, Ellen, Gail and Izzy all shared their experiences being mothers, with Ellen, Gail and Izzy being W&M parents.

Gail shared that “ironically” both of her biological children graduated from W&M, as she shared:

As much as we loved W&M and thought it would be a good fit for our kids, we were sure if we pushed it they would refuse to even consider the school, so we took them to every college but W&M to look. At some point in the college search, independently each said, ‘why are we not looking at W&M?’, and so they both independently chose the college.
Gail also shared that her philanthropy has been influenced by being a mother, as she wants, “for every kid to have the opportunities that what my kids have had. It breaks my heart,” and she went on to say:

There’s a great line from “Hello Dolly”: ‘Money is like manure. It doesn’t do any good unless you spread it around and help things to grow.’ So I've always felt that was what philanthropy was about, that money's like manure, you know, you gotta spread it around and help things grow. And that if we have the capacity to give, then we need to, and we need to empower as many people as possible to be their very best selves, whether that's through an experience at W&M, access to W&M, or other places that we give. But as a woman, as a mother, I think, and I'd say a mother has definitely impacted that as well, the way I see philanthropy.

Ellen became involved with W&M after becoming a W&M parent. Having stayed home to support and raise her family instead of focusing on a career, she shared:

My life as a mother has been the best. They are just the best girls. They are so fun, and so warm hearted, and good citizens of the world, and conscious of what they have and what others don't have. And I'm very proud of them. And I’m proud of our lives together and the choices that we made as a family. And like I said, I don't regret any of my choices. But, I talk about this with my daughters all the time, because they have successful jobs now, and they're about to be married, and of course, children may or may not follow in that path, and then there's that choice to make again. So I don't know, no matter how modern we get, if men will ever understand what that choice involves.
Dottie shared her experience working while raising three daughters, and when asked if having three daughters changed her perspective on being a woman or being involved with the community she responded:

Oh, it certainly reinforced my interest in addressing [women’s] issues. And, by virtue of them attending [all girls’ school] is deepened my engagement with that organization. Yeah, it obviously would have been different had I had three sons.

Society of 1918 members and interviewees Catherine, Francis, Jessica, and Holly shared that they are also mothers, but not of W&M graduates. Jessica took some time off her career while her kids were in middle school, but stayed active in consulting part time, became a fitness trainer, and took classes. She shared:

My son, he teased me, although I’m not sure it was teasing at the time; I think he was feeling badly. He was like, ‘Mom, even when you’re not working you’re working all the time. Why can’t you just be a mom?’ [she laughed].

When Catherine was asked how being a woman shaped her motivations and values, she shared:

Wow. That’s a really deep question. I guess it’s the fact that I’m a mom that’s really shaped that. One, I think because I’m a mom I try to instill a sense of, you know, you’re a role model to your son [Catherine was referring to me as a mother here], I’m a role model to my son, you have that responsibility in terms of defining what that means to be a woman in the workplace, at school, in all of these different environments that your kids see you, I feel a responsibility associated with that […] I think in the workplace, cause I spend a lot of time at work so I think that’s where my head is at, but we [as women] almost have to be better and more. So, like, I want to be better for my kids.
Awareness of research on philanthropy. Throughout my observations and interviews, alumnae were aware and often quoted research and awareness on philanthropy at W&M and on women & philanthropy in general. This is due in part to their high level of engagement on fundraising boards at W&M, and the widespread effort the College made to educate alumnae on the importance and timeliness of women and philanthropy.

Dottie had been involved with fundraising at an all-girls school in her community so she was aware of the different approach in fundraising from women, and referenced that a lot of research on women and philanthropy was from historic data where women inherited money and for the most part didn’t make their own money. Barbara quoted the finding from the task force report that male graduates gave more than female graduates to W&M, and that her own experience of being highly engaged leading to larger gifts mirrored research on women and philanthropy and the importance of engagement. She also quoted the importance of donors building relationships with fundraisers and how women value relationships even more so than men, and how women prefer to give to programmatic initiatives as opposed to “buildings, bricks and mortar.”

Ellen mentioned the importance of stewarding donors in order to retain and renew members after their five-year pledge cycle, and quoted that individuals from lower incomes give a greater percentage of their income. Francis had done peer-peer fundraising for W&M through her 25th reunion and had experience fundraising from women who often did not see a reason to contribute to W&M or insisted on first consulting or getting permission from their husbands, husbands who had not gone to W&M, before making a decision to give. Izzy, very engaged in fundraising, quoted the shrinking state funding appropriations to W&M, and knew the research
that women will inevitably hold wealth in their family through inheritance and the importance of feeling connected to their philanthropic destinations.

Angela quoted the importance of consecutive years of giving in order to acquire a major gift from a donor. Gail shared the challenges for philanthropy for recent graduates given the oppressing student loan debt, and quoted the research on women outliving men and focusing on the impact of their gifts.

While their knowledge of philanthropy, especially their knowledge of women and philanthropy, was surprising to me, it shows how W&M seeks to educate their donors on the importance of philanthropy to W&M as a state institution, and how to best fundraise from their peers.

**Leaders in their communities and in careers.** I found that the women I got to know through interviews were leaders in their careers and in their communities. For those who were working or shared their experiences when they did work, most held leadership or management roles in their professions. Catherine made partner at her firm and served as a mentor to other women in her workplace. Barbara was also a partner at her firm and on the global leadership team for her company, building human capital programs, including a mentorship and coaching program for her firm from the ground up. Jessica has served in financial leadership roles in both the non-profit and for profit sector, including CFO and COO positions. Dottie rose in the ranks to leadership in the financial industry of a major bank. Francis became a successful entrepreneur.

This was not surprising considering the caliber of students that attend W&M and capacity to give to the Society of 1918. While these women were successful in their careers, most were involved in their communities. Barbara served on a charter school’s board in a highly disadvantaged neighborhood, supports women entrepreneurs, and is president of a co-op where
she lives, calling it her, “civic responsibility.” Dottie uses her financial skillset on several community boards. Francis currently serves on an economic development board in her community and is a member of her local garden club, as well as formerly traveling with two young kids to West Africa while her husband served in the Peace Corps. Angela has been involved in her community for issues of women’s rights. Gail and Izzy, both educators, serve their community in and outside of their work. Izzy and her husband serve as honorary co-chairs of a capital campaign for a local nonprofit that serves high-risk children and families, and is active in a fundraising group to support a local high-poverty elementary school.

While Holly and Ellen left their careers to support and grow their family at home, they have both dedicated much of their lives to their community. Holly volunteers with college preparation programs in schools with underprivileged populations, serves as a mentor in her local community school, serves on a non-profit board that improves neighborhoods through sustainable environmental change, a board of a local historical museum, and is president of another community board as well. Ellen, having lived in many communities as a trailing spouse, said her basic operating premise has been to immediately get involved, feel included in that community, and “leave it a little better than [she] found it”. She has served on many community boards, mostly in the arts. The fact that the donors were so involved in their communities was not a surprising finding, as research shows that philanthropic women like to get involved in the destinations they are involved with, and spread their giving around to many places (Andreoni, Brown, & Rischall, 2003). Many of these women support women in their workplaces and in their communities, which I will expand upon in the findings of RQ#4.

Mentorship. During interviews, many women brought up the role that mentorship played in their lives. Barbara mentioned that having been provided and finding good mentors helped
lead to the success of her career, and wants to see how the Society of 1918 can provide professional mentoring for current students and recent graduates. Barbara expanded on her take on mentoring women by sharing:

Women have made huge strides, and it's wonderful, but there are still things that we can do to be helpful. And then the other piece of it is, even if women are doing great, frankly, there are things that I think are supportive of women in general, things like coaching and mentoring. Things like making sure that people have the opportunities to be their best selves, etc. So, it's something that I've tried to do, both subtly and less subtly throughout my life. I think that's part of my mission. My personal mission.

Catherine serves as a mentor for other colleagues and staff at her firm, both in an official and unofficial capacity, which she says started at W&M through her leadership in her sorority. She shared:

I’m a partner at [company], and through that whole experience, the opportunity to champion women and women’s initiatives, it’s just been something I’m passionate about. And so I’ve been very involved in women's initiatives, things like that, as a partner champion, as a mentor to people at the firm, and that kind of thing. And that started at W&M.

Angela became involved with W&M after she met an alumna who became a mentor to her in a new city. She shared:

I got invited to an event at an alumni’s house [in her new city]. And I got to know her, and she really took me under her wing and became a mentor to me […] she nominated me and I joined the board. And I was on that board for six years. And that was really like,
the definitive experience of my 20s. When I look back on that decade, like, being on that board was so, it really molded me.

Angela also sees opportunities for the Society of 1918 to serve in this role as she went on to say:

Like when we had the women's weekend, it was just alumnae, but at some point I'd love to broaden it so that students can be included too, and, you know, maybe it's like a mentor program [between] students and members of the society, things like that.

Jessica shared, without using the word “mentorship,” that, “I guess there’s a part of me that feels like women need more, ‘suring up’ is not the right word, but kind of ‘help’ along the way in some ways.”

Holly, when asked about her reaction to the Society of 1918, she shared:

I just thought it was such a fantastic idea. I can think of not even a handful of women mentors who I had, and it's still difficult for young women in math and science to find female mentors, in part because of the gender imbalance in hiring for tenure track positions, but also because the scientific environment is not always conducive to raising a family. So the idea of putting together an organization that would support women, whatever their choices were, I just really loved it.

Perceptions of Experiences and Engagement

The purpose of this section is to answer the third research question:

*RQ#3: How do the donors of the Society of 1918 at W&M perceive and experience their engagement with their alma mater generally and the Society of 1918 in particular?*

As stated in chapter 1, the purpose of the third research question is to understand how the alumnae I interacted with perceived their experiences at W&M while they were a student, as an alumna, and then with the society specifically. This section and research question illustrates how
activities that alumnae were involved in on campus, and the experiences they had while they were students, donors and alumnae, are or are not an influence on their decisions to make gifts back to W&M. This section also explains the interviewees’ perceptions of being a member of a women’s giving society that offers engagement opportunities for women, and what their engagement means for the university. I will begin this section with their perceived experiences with W&M in general, and follow with their perceived experiences with the Society of 1918.

Participants’ Perceptions of Their Experiences at William & Mary

Overall, findings from this research mirrored findings from the W&M Task Force Report on Women and Philanthropy in 2015, which found from its survey of over 450 alumnae, the majority of respondents (94%) reported a positive student experience. The report also found a correlation between a “very positive” experience at W&M and being a self-reported major donor to W&M (Orr Associates, 2015, p. 12). In addition, I found the donors to be involved while on campus as students, involved since graduation as loyal alumnae, reporting a positive experience through their involvement as alumnae, and they referenced lifelong relationships they made with people at the college when talking about their experiences. The following section will outline these findings.

High levels of student involvement. The majority of interviewees, both founding members and donors, recalled being involved as a student outside of the classroom, whether they were resident advisors in the dormitories, involved in Greek life, leaders in student government, student athletes, or participated in the arts. This supports research that student involvement, linked with student satisfaction, is positively correlated to alumni giving (Spaeth and Greeley, 1970; Mosser, 1993; Gaier, 2005). A quote from Angela shares that alumnae could get involved
easily due to the size and culture of the school. She was involved in many things at W&M including athletics and shared:

I was also a [varsity athlete - sport taken out for anonymity] which was, I think, sort of, like, representative of my W&M experience as a whole, because I did not [play said sport] in high school, growing up. I literally, like, walked on the team. You don't get to like, walk on the varsity team with zero experience [...] And that was a great opportunity that, like, I wouldn’t necessarily have gotten at a bigger school, or any other school.

Similar to Angela but four decades prior, Francis shared while laughing that she was “involved in almost everything,” at W&M, from Greek life, to student government, to class officer, to Mortar Board Honor Society, to Flat Hat (student newspaper).

Greek life was a trend for several alumnae interviewed. While Dottie shared that felt she was not super involved as a student at W&M, she was involved in a sorority and participated collegiate athletics. Izzy said she was involved in Greek Life by sharing: “I was really involved in my sorority which meant I wasn't doing a lot of other things because of the cost.” Jessica was also involved in greek life as a student, as she shared:

I didn’t join a sorority freshman year, but I did sophomore year for a year and then I dropped out of the sorority. But interestingly, many of the women I’m now hanging out with were [in the sorority]. They didn’t ban me [laughing] though I abandoned them.

Jessica went on to share that after leaving the sorority, she was very involved in experiential opportunities with residential life, living in special purpose housing.

Catherine shared her experience being involved in Greek life, sharing:

One [reason W&M was so important to me was] I was in a sorority, and ultimately, I was the president of my sorority. And so, you know, being a leader amongst women and
helping other women to see their leadership potential. I think that goal of mine started
there, and it has carried through my career.

Ellen participated in Semester at Sea, when she was a student, which she shared, “that has
informed a lot of my life since then, that was a very big impact.” Holly was a Resident Assistant
in the residence hall she lived in for two years. Gail, being active in the arts, shared that she was
often involved in theater productions on campus.

**High student satisfaction.** Most of the women I interacted with in both observations at
events and in interviews spoke fondly of their experience as students at W&M, which supports
research in the literature review from Spaeth and Greeley (1970), Mosser (1993), and Gaier
(2005), who found that alumni giving was tied to alumni perception on student satisfaction.
Francis recalled it being a “beautiful place” as well as having, “amazing access to teachers.”
Ellen shared:

> I had a wonderful experience there. I majored in international economics. And I think that
it was among the first years that you could build your own interdisciplinary major. So
that was wonderful. And while I was there, I also participated in Semester at Sea, which
is a global cruise where we visited 11 countries in 100 days. And that has informed a lot
of my life since then, that was a very big impact.

Holly shared that W&M was a perfect fit for her, and that she came to appreciate the
well-rounded education she received as she was more prepared for her doctoral studies than her
peers who went to ivy leagues. She also shared that W&M was, “a place you can grow into
yourself,” never feeling like she could not do something or should not do something, even while
pursuing the sciences as a female. As Angela was very involved in athletics and residential life, I
asked her if she enjoyed her experience, and she responded:
It was a wonderful experience. It was a place that I really thrived, and I had so many different opportunities, that any shortcomings I feel that I had in the experience, I think, made up for by these other like, really rich and rewarding experiences that I got to have.

Catherine shared her fondness of W&M by saying:

That's one of things I loved about W&M is, people just kind of showed up as themselves. Like, I never had the impression that I had to impress anybody, because everybody, you know, got in because they're super smart, and they're talented in some way, shape, or form. And the college recognizes that in people and it kind of brings people together. But aside from that, I never felt like I had to look a certain way or have certain things or, you know, act a certain way, you can just be yourself.

Alumnae engagement. Out of the ten women I interviewed, nine of them had at least been involved in a volunteer capacity at W&M since graduation, and all ten had returned for reunion or homecoming or some kind of programming engaging alumni. Seven of the ten had served on fundraising boards at W&M prior to becoming members of the Society of 1918.

Women talked about coming back to campus for homecoming or reunion like it was expected, as it is obviously a strong part of the culture of W&M alumni. This deep level of engagement shows the high level of loyalty W&M graduates feel for their alma mater, and supports the research that alumni engagement and volunteerism leads to giving (Indiana University Center on Philanthropy, 2011; Liu and Aaker, 2008; Vohs, Mead and Goode, 2006).

Angela talked about her experience being engaged with W&M immediately after graduation. She shared:

I'm very involved with William and Mary, as an alum. I've served on two boards, and I'm on my second board, a leadership board. So I've always been a donor, starting from right
out of school, I was in the fourth century club giving circle. [And then I was nominated to] and I joined the [fundraising] board. And I was on that board for six years. [...] And then after my board tenure ended, I “rolled off” is the term, and I got to know a woman on [a volunteer alumni engagement board]. And once you're sort of in the board circle, like, your name gets floated around. I think I have like “token young alum” next to my name. I think the [volunteer alumni engagement board] was also looking to like, sort of, diversify age on the board. And I still qualified as like “young.” So then I was nominated to that board. And I'm now in my second year of being on the board of directors for the [volunteer alumni engagement board]. So I've been very involved with the college from like a leadership level because I've gotten to serve on these boards. And you get really like a very intimate view of the college, it’s not just like, you know, your student experience, but really helping to like guide, and you're sort of a steward and a caretaker of the college because you're, you know. Well, the [fundraising board I was a part of] is not a fiduciary board, though we worked very closely with the advancement team, and you get to see like, you know, the ins and outs of the college's budget. And I consider that to be a really big responsibility, you know, because of the college has given me so much and I felt it was, you know, it's a lifelong relationship. And it is sort of a duty, we have, as alums, to take care of it and make sure that it exists for future students.

Francis, after moving back from West Africa with her family, became engaged with the college through the class reunion program by sharing, “I've been a very frequent member of reunion committees and an attendee, particularly five year reunions. I was co-chair of my 25th reunion and also served on donor committees […] and I was a donor to those reunions.” Holly also shared her experience coming back to campus through reunions after graduation by saying:
And since we graduated, we’ve gone to nearly every reunion. I still have tons of good friends, and he has good friends, and so there were very few, especially the big reunions, that we've missed. Most times, we took our children also, and we’ve been singing the school song since they were born. I would have loved to see either of them at W&M.

Gail shared her experience with W&M after graduation by saying that she also attended her five year reunion with her husband but she did not consider herself engaged with the College until she moved to a new city, and she expanded on her roles of engagement by sharing:

I was involved with the alumni chapter that in the New Jersey area, just to meet some people, because I didn't know that many folks, and I got approached to help be a founding member of [a fundraising board at the college]. [...] It was the very first board for this [fundraising] board. And I was pregnant with [my daughter], so that means it was 24 years ago that I started serving on my first board at the college. And it was such a phenomenal experience. I met so many wonderful people, I met people from all decades. So for me, what I've loved, I've served on a number of boards at the college. I served on [a fundraising board] for however long you can serve on [that fundraising board] and ended up Chairing it. [...] And left that, and then I was nominated and elected to the [volunteer alumni board], and ended up Chairing that board, and serving on that as many years as you're allowed to be serving on that. Got put on different reunion gift committees, served on the capital campaign committees for both the last two campaigns, and then was asked to serve on [another fundraising board], which I am now serving on, and I'm a vice chair of a committee currently, but I’ve only been on for two years, so I will not be at all surprised if I don't somehow end up on the executive committee there.
And then, that's like a nine year commitment. And now I'm [in a leadership role] with the Society of 1918.

Not all alumnae got involved quickly after graduation. Izzy and her husband, now also deeply involved on fundraising boards and the capital campaign at the college, shared that engagement as an alumna started socially:

Well it first started, well when we were much younger and much busier with family and so forth, primarily we went to football games and college reunions and sorority reunions, fraternity get-togethers and those kinds of things. We weren’t formally involved.

Catherine, when asked about her engagement with W&M since graduation, she shared, “To be honest, I really didn't do anything for a while, to be super candid.” She went on to say that she’s gotten involved on the leadership of the Society of 1918, however, since meeting Val Cushman. Ellen also talked about not being involved until her daughter was a student at W&M by saying, “[Becoming a leader in the Society of 1918] was a really interesting process for me as well, because I had not been engaged with the college. So there was a learning curve in that regard.”

Barbara had not been involved in the college until she was contacted by the dean of a school after seeing her professional success in the news. Barbara shared her growth in engagement by saying:

And up to that point [when I was reached out to by the Dean], I’d been supportive of W&M, but in a very minor way. I had a group of W&M friends, as I mentioned there are about 11 or 12 of us that we get together every year, [...] so I was attached in that sense. I went to homecoming maybe every three years or so. And I gave a little bit of money, but not very much money, ever. I don't even remember, but it was negligible. So when the
dean called me and congratulated me on my promotion and said, ‘Would you be interested in joining [the alumni board for our school]? [...] I was flattered, frankly, that they asked me to do it. I explored it a little bit with them and decided to join the board [...] We fairly quickly started doing really important strategic things. I was very active on that board, both just as a member and also doing special projects, usually in conjunction with one or two other board members. [...] And I also headed up one of the task forces for the new building [...] which was great fun. [...] And it was important, but it was also great fun to do. Because of that level of engagement, and I really do believe, you know, and this will be a theme for the rest of our time, engagement is super important, in my view. Maybe even more important for women than men, but probably for all donors. If you're not engaged, it's really hard, I think, to get substantial gifts from people. And I, you know, it certainly encouraged me in a way that I wouldn't have done otherwise, to give much more substantial gifts to the college, not just the required gifts that I had to give to be part of the board, I certainly met that obligation. [...] So I was on that board for 20-some years, 22 years, I think. And so I'm one of the sponsors of [a student program]. [...] And then, you know, I and a few other people had passed blown past all the tenure laws, which is good news/bad news. I mean, there was a reason they did that clearly. But it's not really good for boards to have their most active members be that long tenured. So I agreed, as did all of us about two years ago to start rolling off that board. So I rolled off the board. [...] So I plan to continue to both be connected to [that school] as well as to be hopefully philanthropically connected. But a few years ago, I was asked while I was still on the [school board] to be part of the task force that you're aware of, to look at women's philanthropy. And I started with that, from the beginning, was an active member. And
once we went through the study phase of that, and discussion phase, I was asked by Val and a couple other people in advancement, if I would be willing to [serve in a leadership role] of the society, and I was very flattered that they asked, and so I’ve been doing that for two years.

**Trust in leadership of college.** Overall, W&M donors I spoke with had high respect and praise for the fundraisers and administrators they worked with as stewards of their gifts. Research shows that donors are motivated to give when they trust that organizations will use their money appropriately and productively (Konrath, 2016). The Indiana Center on Philanthropy (2011) found that high net worth women were more likely than high net worth men to give to a charity due to its efficiency and communication of impact. I found this to be the case at W&M of the women I interviewed. Ellen shared that W&M did a great job of not throwing over the top parties for donors, as she knows every dollar given should be spent wisely. She also said that she’s vocal about this concept as a donor. Dottie talked about her trust in W&M’s stewardship of her gifts, through sharing her history with W&M and other organizations, by sharing:

I've been involved enough in not-for-profit [organizations], that I think I have some understanding of the discipline that a well-run institution has regarding the allocation of resources. If it's not a well-run institution, that's a different matter. But a well governed institution, and an institution that’s being well led by volunteer professional leaders, I have confidence that they will be able to allocate gifts in an appropriate fashion.

Izzy also had a high amount of trust and respect for administration who have been stewards of her gifts. She shared, “We've gotten to know, I know the treasurer [of W&M] [...] I know he will spend the money carefully. I know what’s given to W&M will be used wisely. I know that I can give money to an institution that has already lived 400 years in the U.S.”
Lifelong relationships. Making connections to people on campus is one way a student can find a sense of belonging, which is positively correlated with student satisfaction, retention and success (Baxter-Magolda, 2001; Maslow, 1954; Strayhorn, 2018). In the case of the women I spoke with during interviews, most of them referenced the lifelong relationships they made with friends they are still close with to this day, and spouses they met at W&M.

Several interview participants mentioned still being close friends with those women, not just speaking fondly of the relationships they had previously at W&M. Barbara recalled not being very engaged with W&M prior to her sitting on a fundraising and governance board in the 90s, other than the occasional homecoming, but was very close with her friends. She shared, “I had a group of W&M friends as I mentioned, there are about 11 or 12 of us, and we get together every year, but many times not in Williamsburg, this year we are actually going to Savannah in a couple weeks. So I was attached in that sense.” Izzy, a graduate from the 70s, was glowing when she shared that she also takes annual trips with her sorority sisters, though she was heartbroken to say, “we lost our first one last year so we are realizing we're getting older and so those trips serve to be a little more special.” While I was on video chat with Catherine, a 90’s graduate, her phone was beeping from a group chat of her girlfriends from school. She elaborated by saying,

I have eight really good friends from college and they’re just, you know, to have like, lifelong friends like that [and] when I talk to other people from other schools I don't know that everyone has that experience in college and I think part of that is because of the size of the school, you know, you really have an opportunity to build those great relationships.

Francis, a 60’s graduate, shared that she was a member of a sorority, “that continues to be a very strong bond, where we hold frequent reunions so we can see each other at least once a
year,” even fifty years after graduation. Gail, who moved a lot when she was younger, shared that her friends from college were her constant community. She said:

Some of my, you know, my closest and dearest friends, truly, longest friends are from the college because I moved so much and there was no such thing as the internet and cell phone. In fact, long distance was really expensive back in the day, I really kept in contact with none of my high school friends. So my college friends are my longest serving friends. And when people talk about they have childhood friends, I don't have any of those. College friends are my childhood friends.

As shared in depth in the alumnae portraits, Jessica’s relationships with her friends were critical to her life after her divorce, as she’s been friends with them since their time at W&M and is still involved with them in the life of the college. She had met her husband at W&M, and said of the men he lived with in college, five or six of them are still really close, sharing that she had attended a wedding the month before where “the crew was all together” for a wedding of one of their friends’ sons. When asked about why she started give to W&M, she shared:

I had really strong connections with the people, which makes me care more about contributing to the school and staying in touch with the school, unlike my graduate degree where I’ve never been to a reunion. I gave them money once, I think. We’ve been giving W&M money since we started working, I think in the 80s, I mean I’ve been a donor for… ever (laughing) [...] we didn’t give a lot in the beginning, we just kind of felt like we both cared a lot about having the friends that we had, and stayed friends [...] it kept us tied to the school to some extent.

Six of the interviewees met their husbands at W&M, five of those six still married. Izzy shared a humorous story about meeting her husband at W&M prior to her enrolling during a
college visit, confirming she wanted to attend the college as she wasn’t sold prior. The two of them are still active together as donors to W&M. Holly’s husband was a college athlete and graduated two years later than she, so she stayed connected to W&M after graduating from visiting him on campus. The both of them still support the sport he was a part of. Gail met her husband freshman year, but they had attended rival high schools out of state and had never met each other. Through my conversations, couples who met each other at W&M supported the school together, but sometimes different destinations at the school depending on their involvement or passions.

**Involvement with the Society of 1918**

Alumnae shared their perceptions of their engagement with the Society of 1918 through interviews, as well as anecdotally through observations at events. Most of the founders had served in a leadership capacity, and therefore had more to share about their experience engaging with the Society. Most of the other donors had attended at least one event, and shared positive feedback about attending those, whether it was a regional W&M Women event or Women’s Weekend. It is important to note, however, that although these events are not exclusive to members of the Society of 1918, interviewees considered their experience with the Society of 1918 to be attending these events. The funds attributed to the Society of 1918 do support alumnae engagement, supporting events like those, so exclusive membership was not what those women spoke of as their engagement. Rather, it was the programs their gifts supported through the endowment, via membership. When I would speak with graduates at Society of 1918 events at W&M, I would often ask, “How has your experience been with the Society of 1918?” or “What motivated you to join the Society of 1918?” and I found women to be surprisingly very honest with me without knowing me at all, only knowing that I was conducting research on the
organization. I often found that their introduction to the organization started with relationships. I also found that the majority of the women were asked to join, although the majority had a history of giving to W&M prior. I found that women I interviewed had a high level of involvement with the organization, giving to the Society of 1918 is personal to them, and it provided some with a sense of belonging. I do include an outlier from interviews and observations about their perceptions of the organization being too politically driven, however it is important to note as it is an organization in very early stages. The following section details the findings through my interviews and observations.

**The importance of relationships.** Relationships were a trend when speaking to alumnae about their experiences with the Society of 1918, both in how they learned and got involved with the organization and their experience with other members of the organization.

Most of the women I spoke with mentioned by name either Val Cushman, Director of Alumnae Initiatives, Lee Foster, recently retired but past Executive Director of Principal Gifts and Foundation Operations, or both. Both have been female development administrators championing women and philanthropy at W&M, and personally asked each of the leadership circle members to get involved with the organization, so it was not a surprising finding. What was notable, however, was the almost personification Val Cushman had with the Society of 1918, as an alumna mentioned when I spoke with them at an event that Val was the “heartbeat” of the organization. When speaking with Catherine, she shared her fondness and appreciation for Val by sharing, “I really just love Val. Val is just such a great leader at the school. The school is so lucky to have her there. And what she's done to organize women is just really impressive. And, you know, I feel fortunate that the college has benefited from her leadership with that.” Catherine went on to say that the vision Val shared for women and philanthropy at W&M was a
motivator for her joining, partly joking but also serious, saying the College should video record Val in order to capture her enthusiasm because it is so compelling. Barbara shared her experiences working with several fundraisers at W&M, stating:

The best advancement officers, and I've worked with some good ones at W&M, are those that understand all of that [referring to her preferences for stewardship], and tailor, provide, they serve up the opportunities that are going to engage you. They find out enough about you and what motivates you that they come to opportunities that are going to engage you [...] it takes an exceptional person, . . . I think Val and Lee Foster are exceptional, I think they both intuitively and by practice, know how to do that extremely well [...] And [Val] deserves [the promotion she’s received]. I mean, she's been fabulous [...] she's, she is a very talented person, she is really good as a team leader as well. I think her staff love her, she gets good people, they work really hard. She's been just a wonderful partner in all of this, it's been a delight. And that matters. I mean, having the right advancement people, I mentioned that earlier, having good advancement people that can do both the little stuff, but also the one on one relationships with larger donors, that can really figure out what's going to turn them on and engage them and then architect that in a way that successful, it's a win win. I think those are really important.

One alumna I interviewed said the following quote could be shared but without pseudonym. This alumna shared that she had considered resigning from leadership of the Society of 1918 in order to give others the opportunity to serve in leadership. But when Val visited her, “talking about relationships turning the tide” she said, Val asked her to take on more of a leadership role and encouraged her not to quit and the importance of her presence in the
leadership group. She agreed to take on a different leadership role, and shared with me, “but I think that shows relationships are key.”

Several women who were involved with the leadership of the organization stated that they valued the relationships with other members of the organization. Many of them did not graduate together, so they wouldn’t have known each other if not for membership in the Society of 1918. Barbara smiled while sharing:

The collegiality factor I’d call it. It is great fun [...] just to be around a bunch of really smart, accomplished women, and there’s a kind of sisterhood there of sorts, if you will, and I think we’ve experienced that as a society. And I think that will continue to be a driver if the society ends up being successful, there will be that level of engagement with each other.

Gail supported these sentiments by sharing her thoughts early on about joining the society by saying:

I thought, brilliant, you know, [...] I just thought, wow, not only that, but I knew most of the women that were involved, and I knew that not only one) it would be a thoughtful, intelligent group, but two) it would have been an opportunity to get to know some of them better as well, and to work with them.”

Gail went on to share that knowing who one of the alumna in leadership was, was a motivator for her joining, because she hadn’t gotten the opportunity to work with her before as she was ten years Gail’s senior.

While relationships were a motivator and a benefit from involvement in the Society for those that I interviewed, it didn’t provide a sense of belonging that wasn’t necessarily there previously. During an observation that I made at a Society of 1918 exclusive event, however, I
did encounter a member who felt that the organization provided her a newfound sense of belonging, specifically to W&M. A 1980’s graduate, she stated, “The first time I felt like I belonged back here was in this room.”

**Asked personally to get involved.** When asked about how they learned about the Society of 1918, the majority of the women I spoke with through interviews had been asked personally to get involved by Val Cushman or another administrator at the university, whether it was one-on-one or through remarks given at an event. Only one of the individuals interviewed joined after a mailing solicitation. Barbara shared her experience of being asked by saying:

> But a few years ago, I was asked while I was still on the [school board] to be part of the task force that you're aware of, to look at women's philanthropy. And I started with that, from the beginning, was an active member. And once we went through the study phase of that, and discussion phase, I was asked by Val and a couple other people in advancement, if I would be willing to [serve in a leadership role] of the society, and I was very flattered that they asked […] Women sometimes have different reasons for giving than men, and need to be cultivated in ways that maybe are different. I certainly did. And I am an example. I had to be asked. I had to be asked to join that board, to become engaged, and to give money. And I don't think that's unusual. And so, so it all made sense to me that we have this asset of these smart, talented, in some cases affluent women who hadn't been fully tapped into yet. And how do we do that for the benefit of the college?

Catherine shared her experience of getting involved with the Society of 1918 through meeting Val after an introduction from a college friend. Catherine shared:

> So I met Val through them, loved Val, and then there were a couple of opportunities where she was trying to get events scheduled [in the city I live], so I helped her with my
connections [through my employer] [...] to get the space. So that’s what I had been helping with. And then Val said, ‘Hey, you know, the Society of 1918, we’d like you to be on the board and help with [this committee] and so I said, ‘OK! Great!’

Gail shared a similar story about getting engaged with the Society of 1918 through an ask with Val Cushman. She shared:

[During] the steering committee portion, where we were determining organizational structure, so: what was the name? how are we going to do this? How are we going to market it to people? what are we trying to raise? all those sorts of things. And so then, when it came to be time for putting together that first leadership structure, Val Cushman and Lee Foster both approached me and said, ‘Would you consider [serving in this leadership role]?’

Angela, not involved in a leadership capacity of the Society of 1918, shared that meeting Val in person was also a reason for her becoming a member. When asked about her reaction to the Society of 1918, she shared:

Well, I think that the strongest memory I have of it, the strongest and earliest memory I have, is being at this event. And it was an alumnae event [in my area]. And we were in like, we were all sitting at roundtables from doing, like, small group discussions, and at the end, Val pitched the society, and she was like, ‘if you want to sign up, here's the form.’ And I signed up. And I was like, oh yea. I love this. Like, I love the idea of being a founding member of it. I love the idea of like, I believe at the time was one hundred women giving $10,000. So, what does that add up to? A million dollars. And I was like, Yeah, yes. And I can do it, like, it fits within my budget, my charitable giving budget, I can do it. And I love that it's earmarked for this specific cause.
Ellen described her experience first hearing about the Society of 1918 from administrators at the college by sharing:

I'm not exactly sure how the conversation started, I believe it was Ann who introduced me to Val and then subsequently [a volunteer alumna leader], and they asked me if I'd like to participate. At that time, it was on the task force. I wasn't involved in the task force from the very beginning, but I was involved before we created the bylaws and established the society officially.

Francis learned about the Society of 1918 through a mailing to her home, but then a conversation with Val and attending an event encouraged her to join as a member. Francis shared:

I think that the first time I heard about it was through the college with some kind of a mailing that they sent out. And I was intrigued by it. I was intrigued that it was specifically focused on women. And I actually called Val right away and said, I asked her whether the charitable remainder trust could help me qualify for it. And she said yes. And so I had that conversation. And then I got distracted, and never really followed up. And then when the [Women’s] Weekend came up, I went with one of my good friends from my class, and we went down together. And so that’s specifically when I joined the society. It was going to be a dinner and I was sort of under the thrall of the weekend, which was so spectacular, and I thought, well this is you know this is really what I want to do. So I made a specific decision then.

**History of giving.** Giving data was not something that was provided to me, however the alumnae I spoke with over interviews shared their giving history to W&M prior to the Society of 1918. Barbara, Dottie, Ellen, Francis, Gail and Izzy were already considered major donors to
W&M, which made sense as all of them but Francis had been tapped to be Leadership Circle members prior to the Society of 1918 forming. Francis, after receiving a solicitation, speaking with Val, and then attending the Women’s Weekend at W&M, directed a portion of her already existing charitable remainder trust for W&M to the Society of 1918. Jessica had always been philanthropic to W&M, but doubled her contribution in order to become a member. Holly also experienced increasing her gift. She had been a donor to W&M through her husband’s athletics relationship, and was a donor to other various destinations outside of W&M, and although it was a much bigger check than she had written as a philanthropic gift to any place, she said, “there was no question whether she was going to do it,” but that they were going to have to change the amounts of money given to organizations as the majority of their giving would be going to W&M over the pledge period. It was Catherine who hadn’t ever given to W&M prior to joining the Society of 1918, as she wasn’t involved with the college until being asked to get involved in the organization.

Angela, the youngest graduate I spoke with through interviews, made her first gift as a senior class pledge, qualified for a giving society through corporate matching, and had given through prior board commitments. She did not need to increase her giving to W&M in order to join the Society of 1918, but rather reallocate the amount of money she was already giving annual to the alumnae initiatives endowment.

One recent graduate and member of the Society of 1918 I spoke with at a members-only event shared that she increased her giving to W&M substantially to be a member. As a recent graduate, she voiced that she felt like she couldn’t proudly share to her classmates that she was a member, as she felt the amount of money she is giving might sound boastful, especially at her
young age. While I only heard this once, it may be an important consideration for peer solicitation of recent graduates.

**Serving in a leadership capacity.** As was intended and designed by administration, four of the five founders I interviewed were highly involved in the organization, serving in a leadership capacity. Catherine and Jessica, though not founders, later became involved in leadership roles with the organization after it was developed. Ellen talked about her experience in the development of the Society of 1918 by saying, “But just watching that brain trust unfold and and kind of dealing with the minutiae of establishing bylaws for a new society, kind of dovetailing it into other existing societies. That was a very interesting experience” and that a motivator for her joining the Society of 1918 would be the opportunity to build something new. Gail recalled helping to build the organizational structure, name the organization, develop a go to market strategy, and fundraising goals through her involvement. Barbara shared that engagement was “super important” to get substantial gifts from people, to which she said, “it certainly encouraged me in a way that I wouldn't have done otherwise, to give much more substantial gifts to the college”. She went on to share the “roll up your sleeves” type of attitude the women in the Society of 1918 had by saying:

And actually, I have to laugh because I, I remember, in the very beginning of the society, and Val is wonderful, she's very flexible, as you probably know having worked with her, but I remember having them [referring to the staff working with the Society of 1918], I could tell they weren't used to having a group of donors be so active in terms of wanting to plan things and do things and do it themselves. They were used to having to kind of pull teeth and do everything. Now, they still do all the “heavy lifting”, I call it, and I have to give them incredible credit, we couldn't pull anything off without them. But, I think
they were pretty shocked. And even in some cases, I remember Lee kind of pushing back a couple times, like “Um, you guys, really, that's not, you don't need to be doing that,” you know, “that's our stuff” kind of thing. So I think it's a new experience for them, to some extent, to have this incredibly talented-activists-wanting-to-get-heavily-involved group of people.

**Concerned with political agenda.** One alumna, Izzy, mentioned her disapproval with the political agenda she perceived the Society of 1918 to be adopting. While this was an outlier in terms of trends that emerged in conversations, it should be considered as this organization is still developing and evolving. While I didn’t speak to anyone else with this concern, Izzy mentioned that she’s spoken with others who feel the same way. Izzy, a founder in the Society of 1918, shared that she believed the mission of the organization was to increase giving from women for the betterment of W&M on the whole, to support both women and men students. She was especially disappointed at the fact that a feminist activist had been a keynote speaker at a Society of 1918 event, as she felt it wasn’t the mission of the organization to have a political agenda. While I had been to several meetings, W&M Women events and Society of 1918 exclusive events, I felt in my observations there was little to no public display of feminist activism, except for this one keynote speaker I happened to also see. Dottie realized the potential of the organization becoming political given the timing of the women’s movement, and the following quote illustrates the complexity surrounding a women’s organization’s impact, even when not outwardly political:

> We definitely caught the wave. I mean we definitely created this thing at the right cultural moment to capture people’s imagination. That was fortuitous. But we need to keep our, we need to remain mission centric, and not have mission creep in terms of what the
organization should and can do, again, because, if there is mission creep we risk becoming less effective. But, you know, let’s look at what’s happened at the college since this work has taken place. A female president and a female director of athletics, you know, you wouldn’t say those happened because of the society, because of the task force and turning into the Society of 1918, but I think we certainly kind of helped lay the groundwork to help make those decisions possible. And, I think, in starting this discussion, which tied into a broader discussion at the college that evolved around the celebration of 1918. And those discussions were not always happy ones for the college. I think, I mean, it raised the level of acknowledgement that these were real issues that needed to be dealt with.

**The Roles of Womanhood & Motivations**

The purpose of this section is to answer the fourth and final research question:

*RQ#4: What role, if any, do the donors’ lived experiences as women shape their perceptions and experiences around their philanthropic activities at W&M?*

As stated in Chapter 1, the purpose of the fourth research question is to illustrate experiences that shaped motivations of donors. Using feminist standpoint theory, I explored what women shared with me in three parts: their experiences as women and the gendered-lens they view the world through; their experiences as a woman at W&M, both as students and alumnae; and then their experiences as women supporting W&M and the Society of 1918. This section will conclude with their hopes for the future of the Society of 1918.

Women I interviewed felt compelled to share with me their experiences as women beyond W&M, which I felt was important to the narrative of this research question as feminist theory is grounded in the women’s lived experiences as a marginalized group. Using feminist
standpoint theory as a theoretical framework, standpoints emerge and are occupied when those that are marginalized become aware of their social situation, oppression, and position of power, and find a voice (Bowell, 2017). Further, standpoints “make visible aspects of social relations and of the natural world that are unavailable from dominant perspectives, and in so doing they generate the kinds of questions that will lead to a more complete and true account of those relations” (Bowell, 2017; Harding 1991). Through women recounting their experiences as women, their perceptions of experiencing oppression because of their gender or not, and choosing whether to be active in supporting women, the following section will outline findings using feminist standpoint theory. As reflective practices are also used to employ a standpoint (Naples, 2003), I will also share my experiences as a woman through this research, as it evolved over the research period.

Referenced in the timeline in Table 3., I outline my experiences and awareness of my own womanhood and standpoints through my doctoral research. As a brief outline, I found out I was pregnant before I defended my prospectus, and was pregnant while I conducted the majority of my observations. I gave birth to my son, my first child, two weeks before Women’s Weekend at W&M where they celebrated the 100th anniversary of women on campus. I was able to watch the Brett Kavanaugh hearings in entirety as I was on maternity leave with a newborn. I went back to work and became a working mom, and two months later, I started my interviews. While women were sharing their reactions to the women’s movement, or challenges of juggling family responsibilities, or inequalities in the workplace, I could empathize and relate with them because of my gender. I believe the women shared certain experiences they had because they felt I could empathize and relate, and my awareness of self was more realized through this research. The following section will first outline how gender mattered in their lives generally, followed by how
gender mattered in their experiences at W&M but as students and alumnae, and finally how gender mattered as a philanthropist to W&M and the Society of 1918.

**Gender Mattered Throughout their Lives**

Every alumna I interacted with through interviews acknowledged that gender mattered in their lifetime no matter the generation they grew up. Findings varied on this topic, from one interviewee recognizing that women’s preferences in philanthropy are different than men’s preferences, to another being a feminist activist and philanthropist. The following subsections will outline experiences interviewees shared where their gender mattered.

**Perception and experiences of gender inequality.** Most women shared personal experiences of inequality relating to their gender, but more often generalized their awareness that women experiences inequalities as a fact. More often than not, experiences of inequality shared were experiences in the workplace, but a few shared other experiences growing up as well. Barbara, growing up in the sixties, wondered if women who didn’t grow up in the same “struggle era” that she did would be motivated to give to women like she was motivated to give, however I found that even the most recent graduate I interviewed was a champion for women as a marginalized gender.

The majority of the women I got to know through interviews did experience their genderedness at some point to be a social challenge, recognizing their social situation in a society that values men over women. Barbara shared, although not identifying as an activist:

- I feel strongly that women, they fought hard to get the rights, they need to protect them.
- And if anything, they need to be expanded. [...] But I think that, I think that it is not inappropriate to think about women as somewhat of an underserved class, still, in many cases.
Angela spoke about barriers she has had to face as a woman, albeit someone living a privileged life, by sharing:

And even as a very privileged female, who, you know, I've wanted for very little in life, but there are still structural barriers, organizational barriers, cultural barriers, societal barriers that I face, and I'm, you know, of all the different lives you could lead as a woman, like, I probably lead like an incredibly privileged life, that if even I'm coming up against these barriers, what's it like for other women that don't have the privilege that I do?

Francis, nearly fifty years Angela’s senior, shared that she experienced sexism in the whole course of her life. Without naming a specific experience, when thinking back on her life as a woman, Francis shared:

My experiences as a woman is that, the barriers have been significant to succeeding and learning to thread through the expectations of society. You know, what does it mean to be smart? What does it mean to be effective? Why is it considered a negative to be opinionated and ambitious for a woman? How to be persuasive as a woman is very different than a man, the way, what kinds of arguments you take, you know, what’s your course of action, so I've just seen it systematically my whole life. And I don't think it's going to go away soon.

Being an intellectual woman also had an impact on a few of the interviewees I interviewed. Jessica shared her experience growing up and being considered a smart girl in Catholic school, saying, “I was one of the smart girls, I wasn't one of the cool girls. [...] And being a smart girl affected me more than being a girl. Because it kind of put a burden, it kind of made me feel a little more of an outsider, [...] But the fact that I was a girl, and smart, made it
hard for me.” Holly shared a story growing up in school that still resonates with her thirty-five years later:

This is such a silly story, but when I was a senior in high school I was chosen by my peers to be the yearbook editor. The teacher who was the yearbook moderator, who was someone I had known most of my life, decided to assign one of the boys as co-editor because she did not think a girl should be an editor by herself. So this is about 35 years ago, and at the time I just thought it was dumb, but it didn’t seem particularly wrong. I knew I was editor and made the final decisions. Looking back it strikes me as really insidious, to insinuate that I wouldn’t be able do it by myself because I was a girl. I don’t think she was even really questioning my abilities, she was questioning how other people would react to a girl as the editor, as if we’d have more credibility if I shared the position with a boy. It seems worse somehow since I could work to improve my skills if necessary but not to change being a 17-year-old girl.

**Juggling multiple priorities.** A recurring theme that emerged when speaking with interviewees, was that they often talked about juggling multiple priorities as women. They would share that due to their gender, they would be juggling their careers, caring for their families (both parents and children), and sometimes school as well. Francis talked about the systematic challenges women face as career-oriented mothers, by stating:

When you raise children, you see how motherhood and caring for children is not considered an important function of women. And meanwhile, this is the next generation that you’re raising. And so there's, all the support systems that should be there that would make it easier are missing. So women have to really figure it out, and if you have resources, you can figure out some of it, but basically, you know, it takes a lot of, it takes
a village to raise a child well, and women are basically instead of being systematically supported by society, they are having to, and they end up feeling bad, they feel bad about themselves, you know, they haven't done enough, and they take it as they're failing, rather than, not seeing that it's a systematic problem in the society.

Jessica also shared challenges of juggling work and home life through her experience of being a working mother. She shared, “I felt like I was one of those women who had to do everything. So I had to find the nannies, and I had to do the, I had to take the cars and I had to make the doctor's appointments, I had to do all the cooking.” Jessica’s recollection of the challenges of being a working mother were still raw. She recalled, “I literally broke down crying at work one time because another nanny had left [...] And I just was like, I can't, I can't do this anymore. I was so upset. I just I was sobbing,” sharing that, “being a woman and having a family and trying to work, it was very challenging.”

Holly’s experience was very similar to my own, and we bonded over our similar experiences and challenges. She shared that she was in her doctoral program seven years, while simultaneously getting married and giving birth to her first child. Gail talked about taking care of her parents who live ten minutes from her, but shared, “it would be different if it was their son living 10 minutes away versus their daughter. There's, there's something about women, that we as a society, we are, and I don't know when those messages start, but we are caretakers.” Gail went on to explain the challenges of trying to take on everything as women, by stating:

What it means to be a woman in this role, that in our society, we are constantly being told, you know, “women, you can have it all,” and we all now know, you can’t. You know, Sheryl Sandberg’s “lean in” is like well, you can, yeah, that's fine of you to lean
in, if you've got certain supports, etc. But, you know, sometimes you're leaning in, sometimes you're leaning out, sometimes you're under the table.

**Experience as a woman during women’s movement.** Several women talked about their experiences as women during women’s movements, both historically and current day. Francis shared her experience growing up through the women's liberation movement of the 60’s and being impacted by. Barbara talked about her perception of the current political climate and prior women’s liberation movements she’s experienced, by stating:

I'm very concerned about the current political environment, and not just here in the U.S., but other places too, where I think there's almost a regression going on. So I feel very strongly. I'm not actually that much of an activist personally, really, but I feel strongly that women need, they fought hard to get the rights, they need to protect them. And if anything, they need to be expanded.

Other women brought up the #metoo movement, in and outside of the workplace. Ellen shared that she was specifically not influenced by the movement, sharing, “I have never felt, if I’m speaking in light of the #metoo movement right now, I have never felt that my being a woman was a weakness or a deterrent.” In contrast, Gail shared:

I was luckily never sexually assaulted or anything like that, but have I experienced #metoo? Oh yeah, oh yeah. You know, just, um, inappropriate touching, inappropriate statements, yea, all of that, and honestly, it was just the way it was. And luckily, I was always a kind of a strong person, I just kind of, would either deflect or brush off, or those sorts of things. Um, it's, it's way past time.

**Gender matters in the workplace.** In addition to sharing their experiences affiliated with women’s activism, participants spoke to some of the ways that gender matters in the
workplace. For example, while some women shared that their gender made a positive impact on their work experience, the majority of women shared negative experiences in the workplace. Regardless, gender was of importance when recounting their careers.

Barbara shared that being a woman was both a positive and a negative in her career experience. Highly successful, she was the first woman on certain leadership teams at her company, breaking glass ceilings. Because there were so few women, she realized she stood out among others, however she shared, while both “exhilarating” and “wonderful”, “you bear the burden of your class.” She went on to explain that, “you have to be constantly thinking not only about your job, and your peers, and all the things that you normally think about, but, thinking about ‘how do I represent this class of people that I'm the first of in this role’ in a way that's most productive.” Barbara went on to share that while she never faced legal discrimination, there were a few instances she encountered real discrimination where she felt that, “I maybe was not treated as well as I, well, as everybody should be treated.” When referencing the #metoo movement, she shared:

I never, I had a couple people make passes at me where I had to put an elbow in their ribs. But, I did that. I did that when I was a manager a couple times. I never had a problem afterwards. So, but, if somebody had actually attacked me, or whatever, I would have pursued it, I think I'm a strong enough person, I would have pursued it. So, there's no excuse for any of that kind of stuff. But I do think that, so I was lucky, I didn't have that level of situation.

Dottie also experienced being one of few women in her line of profession, working in finance. She shared that while working in investments, for 28 years she was the only woman on
the investment decision-making team. She shared that she had seen, “both the effectiveness of female leadership and also seen the ways in which it's squelched in the world.”

Jessica shared an experience of her leadership being “squelched” when she recalled being let go from a job because of her gender and how she led. Jessica said:

I was actually fired from [a job] because the guy, the new COO, who came in, I was 50-something, and he was a 30-something year old male. It sounds terrible to say, but I really honestly believe that he just didn't like working with me. Yet, I had always had great reviews, and they'd given me stock, it was a family business, and all this kind of stuff. But I was, I'm not, how do I put this, I'm not very patient. And I am very transparent. I can't… I'm not a poker player. People know when I'm pissed. And so, [laughing] and he didn't like it. So he fired me. And a guy who behaved exactly the same became president of one of the divisions. And I'm 100% convinced that it was a sex-related issue. And that kind of angered me even more.

Angela, a graduate from the 2000s decade, didn’t recall discrimination based on her gender until she entered the workforce. Having grown up in the 90s of “girl power,” it wasn’t until she worked with individuals in different generations that she felt marginalized. Even working at a very progressive company, successful company, Angela shared the lack of female leadership above her. Angela said:

Yea, and then so I didn't really encounter any people that didn't think that way until I got into the workforce. And even, you know, I work at [company], which is a very progressive company in Silicon Valley, like tech startup with a lot of funding. And, but even then, like, there was a time where I looked up the org chart, and there was one woman between, like, me, and the CEO. And there, trust me [laughing], there are a lot of
rungs between me and the CEO. Why is there only one woman? And this is a company that like, has, you know, Employee Resource Groups devoted to women and their allies. [...] Yeah, and yet, even the management of [company] is largely male. And it’s not just male, it is white affluent, heterosexual male. And so really, it's been like, as a young adult in the professional workforce, I think these issues have really crystallized and become very personal to me. And even, you know, when I get, we do like, annual reviews, and I have a straight white affluent male doing my review, and I get feedback. And I think like, how much of this is gendered, how much of this feedback that I'm getting is like his perspective of me, and he'll never understand like, my, how I go through the world as a woman. And like, the challenges that I carry and the burdens that I face.

Catherine, a graduate of the 90s decade, found that in her experience, women were held to a different standard than men when at a certain leadership level. She shared, “we almost have to be better and more.” Catherine went on to say, “there's less tolerance for women to make any moral, ethical, any sort of, you know, mistakes, than there is for, for men. And so I think, because, and I've seen that in my career.”

**The experiences of women who chose not to work outside the home.** Overall, many women shared negative experiences about being a woman in the workforce, but in choosing to not work, women also shared negative experiences of being a stay-at-home mother, and then complex feelings that women experience when making that choice.

Francis spent some time at home and felt discomfort with sharing her choice to stay at home with her children by saying, “I felt it a lot when I had little kids, being isolated, and, you know, when you're, the classic thing of course, at a cocktail party and [someone says] “What do
you do?” “Oh, I take care of children”, well, then, you know, the person would often turn around and walk away. So, that's the way it is.”

Ellen was on the fast track to professional success when she made the choice to stay home with her family full-time and support her husband’s career. While she doesn’t regret the choice she made, she also finds it challenging in social situations when her female peers share their corporate milestones and she can sometimes can feel intimidated, which she goes on to say, “I don’t know if that’s ever a struggle that men ever compare, you know, when they’re together around the table.” Ellen elaborated when talking about her daughters and the choices they will have to make compared to their male counterparts by saying:

I talk about this with my daughters all the time because they have successful jobs now, and they're about to be married, and of course, children may or may not follow in that path. And then there's that choice to make, again, so, I don't know, no matter how modern we get, if men will ever understand what that choice involves.

Holly, having obtained her doctorate, shared her experiences of being a woman who chose to stay home with her family, by talking about her gender as a limitation despite her intellect and academic success. She recalled, “at the time, I had no role models of women doing both, and so it felt like a hard choice - full time scientist or full time mother.” Holly went on to share that choice by saying:

I was an excellent student. I was valedictorian of my high school, I went to W&M; it seemed like my path was to do whatever I wanted, and I couldn’t imagine limitations. I was older before I realized that there are sometimes limitations just because you’re a woman, because of the way other people see you or the things they expect of you, but also because decisions about childbearing can be limiting. I never thought I would be a
stay at home mom, and I was surprised how much I enjoyed it. Although I gave up science research, I continued to work part-time at different jobs, so I was also surprised when I overheard my six-year old daughter say she “wanted to do nothing just like mom.” It made me realize I had to do a better job talking about myself and the things that I was doing that were important to me.

Supporting women outside of W&M & the Society of 1918. The majority of women interviewed also supported women’s programs or initiatives outside of the Society of 1918. This ranged from volunteering with groups, serving on leadership boards, and giving to charities that support women. As mentioned in the Chapter Two Literature Review, “women’s issues” as a category is vast, due to the complexity of the social issues surrounding women. Many causes tend to get lumped into “women’s issues,” such as reproductive rights, LGBTQ issues, human trafficking, and domestic violence. Interviewees also saw supporting women as these types of social issues.

For example, Angela shared, “I do think my gender, like, defines my view on the world. And I, and like, women’s empowerment, and women’s issues are, like, my primary issue. If I were to, like, line up everything I care about, like, that is certainly where my priorities are.” Angela goes on to share that she is very active in local government to decrease domestic violence to women, as well as increasing women’s access to health care. Francis shared that she is a proud supporter of Planned Parenthood, and has provided women with education and resources through her work with the Peace Corps.

Several interviewees supported women through programs in their local communities. Dottie is very involved in her community supporting women by being a member of the Junior League, and serving in leadership roles on the boards of the YWCA and a local all-girls school.
Francis and Gail both founded community organizations that supported women locally. Ellen, serving on many community boards, said she makes it her mission to foster women’s leadership on all boards she’s involved with, whether it supports a women’s initiative or not.

Other interviewees mentioned the role they play in supporting women in their careers. Barbara invests in women’s entrepreneurship. Both Catherine and Barbara supported women through formal and informal mentorship programs at their places of employment. When talking about how important coaching and mentoring has been to her, Barbara shared:

It's something that I've tried to do, both subtly, and less subtly throughout my life. I think that's part of my, that's part of my mission. My personal mission is to do this, I did it at my [work]. And there were times when I had to do it more subtly, so that there wasn't a negative reaction, there were times when I could do it more boldly. But almost everything I did had an underlying thing that I wanted women to certainly at least be treated equally, if not be given a little bit of extra push or help occasionally when it was appropriate, and so that's just kind of in my DNA. And I think it's in a lot of women's DNA.

Coaching and mentoring was a theme not only in how interviewees supported other women, but how the Society of 1918 could support women moving forward.

**Experiences as a Woman at W&M**

Overall, alumnae shared their student experience was positive and enjoyable at W&M. Most of the experiences they shared, their gender did not play a role. For example, Angela shared, “It was a wonderful experience. It was a place that I really thrived.” Catherine also shared her positive experience at W&M by sharing, “That's one of things I loved about W&M is, people just kind of showed up as themselves.” Francis talked about how beautiful campus was, with “amazing access to teachers.” For the women who did speak about their own gendered
experiences at W&M, it was mostly positive. Any remarks women made about their experiences as women were about the lack of female leaders or faculty at W&M, and an awareness around W&M having a history of “ignoring women.” Most women shared positive experiences they had with the Greek life system in female sororities, and the lifelong relationships they made as a result of those organizations, as outlined previously.

For example, Holly shared that overall, her experience as a woman at W&M was very positive, by saying:

I never once felt like I couldn't do something because I was a woman. I was an RA for two years. I was a biology major and no one suggested I should be an English major. I was always treated with respect by my professors. I had, not a lot, but a couple of fantastic female professors, including one of the Deans who was a great teacher on top of her role as administrator. I was surrounded by super bright people, and that made it easy to think deeply and have interesting discussions and challenge myself. It made an impression on me all these years later, and I think it's why I was particularly interested in having my daughter go there, to have that same experience. I think she experienced something similar at UVA; she's a strong woman who can think for herself and make decisions that are right for her.

While Holly shared that the female faculty she did have were excellent, she mentioned there weren’t many. In the sciences, specifically, she didn’t have any female professors. When Francis recalled her time at W&M in the 60s, she couldn’t recall having any female faculty members. While interviewees other than these didn’t talk about a lack of female professors, several referenced knowing that females were underrepresented in both faculty and leadership at W&M.
**Lack of women leaders at W&M.** Several interviewees mentioned the lack of women in leadership at W&M historically. No one mentioned noticing a lack of women leaders at W&M while they were students, other than fewer female faculty members, as outlined previously. The women who shared the lack of female leadership were either highlighting the research that was done on behalf of the Women and Philanthropy Task Force, or the fact that the first female president, Dr. Katherine Rowe, was appointed in 2018.

As noted previously, Ellen mentioned that she felt as though one of the goals of the Society of 1918 was to create “parity in administration.” She went on to say that she thinks, “that’s timely, maybe even a little bit behind the times rightly, at W&M. So I think having [President] Rowe now, I don’t think the Society directly impacted that but I don’t think the timing could have been better, actually.” Angela also shared the same sentiment of a female presidency being overdue, by sharing, “I think it was the perfect time, and probably, you know, long overdue to have a female president of W&M, certainly of the nation.” Francis also touched on President Rowe and the newfound leadership of the college, when she shared:

I thought that politically that because we have a new president after only 325 years of the college, that new woman president, that [the Society of 1918] would probably be very helpful to her because I'm pretty confident that there's very deep sexism that's pretty consistent with a conservative college. And, I thought that her ability to inspire and to sort of delve into this, really I think, largely unnoticed part of the college graduates and focus on it and highlight it, it could be very useful to her as a source of power. That it would, obviously when you're a university president, you have to raise money. But, she was drawing from a well that hadn't really been plumbed. So I'm hopeful. And she's she
strikes me as having a strong vision for a different kind of campus. And I just know that, given my experience, changing things is hard.

Dottie, like several others that were privy to conversations during the task force era, recalled the data that was shared with the alumnae volunteers at the time, saying, “We did some data analysis of the college just looking at the role of women in the college: commencement speakers, alumni, medallion recipients, professors, you know, senior administrators, members of the Board of Visitors, members of the Foundation Board, and, you know, found the whole thing was just woefully inadequate.”

A history of ignoring women. Francis, a graduate from the 60s decade, had a much different experience as a female than the women I interviewed who graduated after her. Since her sisters also graduated from W&M, she had other experiences she should draw from, as well as her own. Her sisters and herself were athletic, but she followed that comment up with, “not that that mattered then.” When I probed about the comment, she went on to share, “Women’s sports are such a huge thing now. We did not even have women’s sports [...] There were no women’s teams. [...] it was the only time in my life I didn’t do sports.” When sharing about her and her sister’s experience, she went on to share:

My older sister [...] She really is not a fan of the college. The college was segregated when we were there. It was obviously sexist, it was, it was obviously racist. And even though she excelled, she doesn't, she doesn't have a loyalty to the college. And my younger sister came, my younger sister and I really had a very different experience [...] and you don't know, you don't know all these things, because you weren’t there, but basically, all those things: the civil rights movement, Vietnam War, women's lib came [during those years]. When I was a senior and in Mortar Board we wrote about, we
wanted to integrate the theater [...] and they said, ‘Oh, dear, this is the way people like it. This is the way it is’, you know, they didn't literally pat us on our heads, but that's pretty much what they did. And so we were, I was aware of those things, but it was way at the beginning of the activism.

When Francis attended the Women’s Weekend celebrating the 100 years of women on campus, she did share that what intrigued her to attend was, “the conception of it as a woman's event, which would be really catching up on a very long time when W&M didn't pay enough attention to women.” All women who shared their experiences about the Women’s Weekend event gave glowing reviews.

**Experiences as Women Giving to both W&M and Society of 1918**

Some women shared personal experiences about giving to both W&M and the Society of 1918, and how their gender interacted with their experience of being a donor. In some interviews, standpoints emerged, where women were aware of their position of power as a female, and the Society of 1918 was giving a voice to not only them, but all women donors. This section will outline findings from women about both their experiences being a woman donor to W&M.

**Women’s movement.** The women’s movements, both in the 60s and in 2016 to present day, proved to be influential in terms of motivating alumnae to give to W&M, as well as the Society of 1918. Barbara correlated her motivations for wanting to donate to women at W&M through her bequest to growing up in the 60s. Laughing, she recalled, “when I was going through kind of, my options, particularly for bequest giving, I said, ‘you know, I really want it all to go to women,’” later sharing that it stemmed from, “coming of age in the 60s, it’s very impressed upon me that we have to fight really hard for many things, and we still do.”
Ellen shared that for her, one of the driving forces behind becoming involved with the Society of 1918 was due to this period of history and cultural relevance. She said, when talking about why she got involved with the Society:

I love creating new things, and finding opportunities to change the paradigm, especially as time moves so quickly now. And so, you know, I think this is sort of the decade of the woman, maybe even since the 70s, where women have really kind of found their voice again. And so it seemed to make sense in that regard. Maybe I also liked the contrast of, you know, William and Mary, having been such a traditional type place just because of its age and its storied past, that it felt like it was time to, to let women have their own voice.

Through Ellen’s reflections on W&M focusing on women’s engagement and philanthropy during a time in history where social movements around women are also happening, she shares that women are finding their voice in the country and also at W&M, which demonstrates feminist standpoint theory. While not reflecting on her own giving, Dottie also felt that the timing of the Society of 1918 with the most recent women’s movement had an impact on women donors to W&M, as she shared, “We definitely we caught the wave. I mean, we definitely created this thing at the right cultural moment to capture people's imagination. That was fortuitous.”

Through several observations that I made during W&M Women events and Society of 1918 events, I found that there was a feminist and social movement undercurrent present. While I found staff-driven programming to not have a political agenda, when I spoke with women attendees about their motivations for attending events or joining the Society of 1918, they would share at length how motivated they were by the women’s movement happening in the country, and how they were personally affected at some point in their lives by #metoo or sexism. Given
the social conversation of the country at the time, you could not turn on the radio or television without hearing stories of women recounting their experiences, seeing activist marches around the globe, or hearing praise about women running for political office. While alumnae openly shared with me the oppression or injustices they faced, experiences were never directed at their time at W&M, rather their personal experiences throughout their lives. It often felt as though women had bottled up animosity towards the oppression they faced, and they could for an evening connect over their frustration at an event in a safe place: their alma mater with other women with whom they had similar experiences. From conversations with multiple women, it became apparent that W&M alumnae connected with what was happening socially with the women’s movement, were loyal to W&M, and wanted to attend and give because of the intersection of those two passions.

Francis spoke about how she felt as a woman when she attended the Women’s Weekend and joined the Society of 1918. She shared:

The programming was very dynamic, the concept of “Mary Talks” was so clever. And it turned out to be very fascinating. The panels were excellent, the fact that, women, you know, I could feel the energy of the women there. I mean, they there was a kind of like, ‘Oh, yeah,’ I mean, ‘we've got a voice here, and people are paying attention.’

When talking more about the Women’s Weekend and the feminist undercurrent Francis also experienced, she shared:

That first weekend, 1918, what became, you know, was sort of a sub rosa, well, not sub rosa, but um, sort of, there was a base conversation about that, when was it? It was Fall. So already #metoo was very much in evidence, and ongoing, and so forth. And so there was this kind of “ah-ha” moment. Well, I wouldn't call it “Ah-ha”, but sort a sense of
being part of something that was finally being recognized. The, just, systematic sexism and what, whatever role different women felt in that process. So, I think that, that it was the common conversation, with women of all different age groups.

Through interviews, two of the more recent graduates, Catherine and Angela, went into detail about how the current political and social climate for women was a significant motivator for them joining the Society of 1918. Catherine, a graduate of the 90s, shared how it was even more culturally relevant for her to join the Society of 1918 at that time, by sharing:

It’d be interesting if Val had asked me in a year, when we didn’t have this #metoo going on, if I would have felt as strongly, because there is, I feel like at work with the stuff that I do [working with women], we are in this powerful moment where I think if you’re afforded the opportunity to be a woman leader and help women out, you really need to step up. Not that that wasn’t there before, but now it’s almost like, before it was like an activity, and now it’s a calling [...] Like, we are in this moment, and what can I do to help with this moment?”

Catherine’s quote also ties into the notion that joining the Society of 1918 was an action she took as doing her part in moving the needle for women.

Angela also shared Catherine’s feelings on the cultural relevance, and the notion that joining the Society of 1918 was her activist action, by sharing:

But I think it was just part of this, like, cultural Zeitgeist. Like, this was like a year of like, focusing on women and the women's movement, and just what's going on in politics, what's going on culturally, what's going on, you know, with, like, justice for women who have been, like, sexually assaulted. And I think there's just so many things happening in, you know, our society, in our culture right now that I was like, this is
something that is definitely going to take off, and we can all get, like, behind. So I, you
know, the year, 1918 [...] yeah, so we had been waiting, like, so eager for the year 1918
to roll around because it was the hundredth, the centennial of women on campus as
students, and [having] our first female president, and it aligns like culturally with like, the
larger women's movement was like, time's up, and #metoo, and being fresh off, like,
Hillary Clinton's campaign and run. And I was like, This is such a major moment.
Gail, a leader in the organization and a founder, eloquently captured how women were
feeling at the time, and shared what she felt the Society of 1918 could do for women who were
motivated by the women’s movement, by saying:

And I think that the Society of 1918 has a role in helping women, not only share their
stories, and tap into that zeitgeist if you will, but help, maybe help to appropriately
channel some of that anger and frustration and rage into positive impact, as opposed to,
you know, I think we're going through right now a very, very angry phase, and a lot of
men are kind of going, ‘I don’t understand, I mean, what where does this all come from?’
It's like, it's decades, centuries of, [she audibly shudders], you know and so whenever that
happens there's going to be this huge eruption. I think, as it goes on, and hopefully we
can, people truly understand that this is not appropriate, you cannot behave this way. That
we can then begin to put in programs and, and opportunities etc. so that the Society of
1918 can hopefully be ways to help, ‘how do we move forward?’ because right now
we're just in this massive... To me, it's a lot like back in apartheid, which of course, you
know, there's varying degrees of the #metoo movement, women that have been abused,
etc, my God, I can't even comprehend. But during the apartheid movement, they had this
whole sort of reconciliation process where they had all these big courts, and they literally
would come, people would come and tell their stories and basically be apologized to in some ways. And I think right now that's what we're going through in our society right now, is that women saying, ‘I want to be heard, I need my story told.’ And so what Society of 1918’s role, I think is now, is: Okay, these stories are out there. Now what do we do with that? What do we do with that to make something positive moving forward.

**Women as donors before the Society of 1918.** Most women didn’t share gender-related experiences about giving to W&M, as many of them had very positive experiences as donors, however two women touched on being a woman donor prior to the women and philanthropy initiative at W&M. Dottie, as shared in the findings of RQ1, was aware that W&M wasn’t soliciting and stewarding donors in an inclusive way, given her experience and knowledge with other women’s fundraising groups in the community. Her awareness and voice of the issue was part of the reason for the task force initiative commencing. Gail, a founder and leader in the organization, had been involved with W&M for a very long time, with her husband who was also a graduate. While talking about how she wanted the organization to be comprised, she shared her feelings of wanting the leadership to be only women, because of experiences she had as a donor on boards at W&M. She shared:

One of the big discussions was, did we allow men to be members? And I didn't realize I had really strong opinions about that. I wouldn't have thought I did, if somebody had asked me, but, I had a visceral reaction to having men as members. I didn't want it.

Having been on so many organizations, so many boards at the college, where I was one of the few women in the room and being like, a younger woman, and many times in leadership situations. I, you know, I'm in my 50s now, but when I started serving on boards here, I was 30 years old, 31, or 32. I often felt like I was gonna be seated at the
kids table. You go to the meetings, and there was the folks who are definitely the ones who were in lead, and then you were poo-pooed because, you know, I was young. And I was a woman. So I really felt strongly that the Society of 1918 needed to be of women and for women [...] I found it more, like in the social situations [...] there was no question who was at the big kid table, and who was at the little kid table. And it’s not money. It wasn’t the monies you are giving, you know, the monies we were giving put us in the room. But it was the level of influence and how you were received that puts you at the, you know [...] I felt at times, you know, as I got more known at the college and my reputation has grown at the college, I think people, I think, overall respect and find me very credible. But even then, at the very beginning, I felt as a woman that I had to work harder. But I kept ending up in the leadership positions on these various boards, etc. Quite often having followed the, you know, the older white guy.

**Support for President Rowe.** Several women spoke about the influence Dr. Katherine Rowe had on their joining the Society, as well as the support the Society of 1918 received from her and others when she became the first woman president of W&M. As outlined in Table 3., in February of 2018, President Rowe was announced, which was the same week I passed my prospectus defense. Val Cushman attended my prospectus, and she and I connected afterwards about how excited we were that Dr. Rowe was announced and what this would mean for the Society of 1918. Val shared she had something up her sleeve for the event I would be attending in March. One month after, on March 23, 2018 at the “All Aboard” event for Society of 1918 members, Dr. Katherine Rowe surprised the membership by kicking off the meeting with a welcome, one of, if not her first public appearance prior to her swearing in in July of that same year. The room of women buzzed and jumped to their feet in applause as she strolled in the room.
wearing a bold red dress, waving. She opened her welcome with, “It’s an amazing time to be a W&M woman, and to become a W&M woman.”

Women in interviews shared their excitement around Dr. Rowe and the Society of 1918. Barbara shared:

We are so fortuitous here to have Dr. Katherine Rowe, because for the first time in 326 years we have a woman president. Rah rah, rah! And by the way, the task force and the Society [of 1918] had some influence on that, although as [was shared with us], she was the hands down favorite of everybody on the committee. First choice. It was great she was a woman, but she probably would have been chosen regardless, and I think that's important. But I think at least we got them really thinking, if you will, that a woman would be nice. So, and Dr. Rowe, you probably know, has been super supportive. Not only did she immediately become a member, and has been at every one of our events, etc. But, she gave a membership to her daughter, I think, to her daughter and her mother, etc. And she's just a booster for us. And she recognizes, because I've spent some time with her, I really like her, she realizes that this is a mutually beneficial thing to her, too, as a new president coming into a much more pressured fundraising role than she was as a provost, she recognizes that we can be helpful to her and she's very enthusiastic about our mission, obviously, etc. So it's, it's a mutually, I think, beneficial relationship.

While Ellen felt Dr. Rowe was a positive impact on the Society of 1918, she didn’t feel the Society “directly impacted” her appointment, but that the, “timing could not have been better.” Francis, as quoted before, felt that the Society of 1918 would be helpful to Dr. Rowe, as she shared, “I thought that politically that because we have a new president after only 325 years of the college, that new woman president that [the Society of 1918] would probably be very
helpful to her.” Gail went on to share how Dr. Rowe genderedness impacts the Society of 1918 and brings a different energy to donors of the Society of 1918. She shared:

With the new president, this is a really interesting time, that the Society of 1918 was begun, conceived of, and created before a female president was brought on board. So that's an interesting energy right now, and different than if the search committee had hired a man of some kind, it would be very interesting. She has been incredibly supportive of 1918 and has already joined it, her daughter's joined it, her mother's joined it. So that changes it, you know, you were talking about earlier about, What does it mean to be a woman and a mother? And how does that adjust your values? If there was a male new college president, he might be going, ‘You go girls! I'm so excited. And yes, please raise lots of money. And, we can make good things happen.’ It's different. She is a woman and gets that in a way. So, right there, that changed the conversation.

**Relationships with women.** Relationships was not only a theme that emerged when women interviewees spoke about their experiences at W&M as students and alumnae, but it was also a theme when talking about their experience giving to and being a part of the Society of 1918. Often characterized as a sisterhood, women donors were motivated to give because of the connections they made and the connections they were making for other women. Ellen shared her sentiments about the Society of 1918 when she shared, “I feel like we need to model the best women can be as a sisterhood. Supporting each other, you know, forwarding each other, using our networks and our influences to take each other forward.” She went on to say, “I’m not a person who likes to sit and examine all the ways we were failed. You know, because, I know those are important, that’s important context, but everybody comes to the table with a different
context. So, I would like to see the Society be the type of place where women can feel heard and they can feel a real sense of trust.”

Gail also felt that relationships were a driver for women becoming involved in the Society of 1918, by saying, “women want to be together, there's just this tremendous hunger for it.” She even shared that her sister, a non-graduate, joined, saying, “[my sister] became a member. And she really loves and values that sisterhood, in a way that is not a sorority. We are a sorority, but it’s not, it’s a very philanthropic, impact based, leadership way.” Gail went on to give her perception of the difference between male relationships and female relationships by saying:

And it’s interesting, and maybe I'm being too general with this, but I think a lot of guys come together at a sporting situation, or go out to a bar or whatever. Women hunger for some kind of connection, they really want connection. And it's not enough just to be sitting next to somebody at a sports event or sitting next to somebody at, you know, a large gathering. They want to share their stories, they want to talk and connect. And so, how does the Society of 1918 help promote that? And that I think we're going to have to wrestle with.

Many women, as mentioned previously, talked about the connections and relationships they made as leaders in the organization, relationships they would not have had the opportunity to make if the Society of 1918 did not exist.

The Future of 1918

As mentioned in the methods section, Val Cushman asked me to ask the women I spoke with about the future of the Society of 1918 and how they could see it enhanced. Findings on this topic varied greatly, even within the leadership of the organization. Enhancements included
future programming and initiatives, future fundraising and renewal strategies, and the inclusion of students and diversifying their membership and leadership. Some women felt as if the Society of 1918 should open doors for women to be more influential at the college, while others disagreed. All women interviewed wanted more women to give to W&M and feel included. The first section outlines enhancements the founders wish to see to the Society of 1918, followed by the members.

**Founders.**

Most of the founders focused on growing the organization as an enhancement they would like to see in the organization. Barbara, when asked about enhancements that could be made to the Society of 1918, focused on the growth of the organization in order to reach their goals, as well as future programming. She shared:

I think we've done the establishment period, I feel like we're done with that. We're now into what I call, kind of, growth and building our membership, building our philanthropy efforts. But also, thinking creatively about where we go from here, because we have that $4 million goal, we're not there yet. We're close. And I don't, I'm afraid, because things kind of know, they go in cycles. And I think we're a little bit, not a dead zone, but we need to get more members, find new members, etc., to get to the four million. I'm confident we'll do it. [...] But also, I do think there are the areas I hope we will be exploring is how can we use this great talent for much more mentoring of students, more recent alums that need career mentoring, even faculty, frankly, how can we do that? Number two, how can we do a much more robust job on engagement of our women alums? Where are those opportunities? How do we develop them? How do we pursue them?
Ellen shared that she wanted to grow the organization as well, but by being inclusive. She shared that through “captive audiences” such as alumnae who are now W&M parents, as well as, non-alumni parents of W&M students. She went on to say:

Whereas we may have had discussions about the exclusivity of the monetary element, for some people, $10,000 is nothing. And especially when you break if down into $2,000 a year. But that ability to feel invited and included is priceless.

Ellen also mentioned the importance of stewarding current members:

We need to keep a big eye on renewals. For charter members we are two years into membership. And in a five year pledge cycle, it's going to be no time before we really need to start thinking about how we retain those people and have a [focus on] renewal and retention. And we cannot just be so hard charging on membership expansion that we forget to steward our current members.

Dottie also focused on growth of the organization in her response to her wishes for enhancements, but shared that: “the trick it to remain mission centric, as it becomes larger and there are more points of view that come into this, we gotta keep returning to what our mission is.” Izzy also focused on remaining mission centric when asked about her ideas on enhancements to the organization, as she shared that the organization was started to “grow philanthropy from women for the college.”

Gail, as a leader in the organization, focused on the future of the organization and the impact it would and should make. Gail shared:

We are at an interesting point in the organization, because we've created it, and established it, and now we gotta figure out what we do with it. […] What's interesting is we spent the first part of this whole thing, [wondering] was there a need, you know, could
we address this need, and would there be an interest? And then now, we've obviously seen that, yes, there's a very large interest. But now we're wrestling with, okay, we've done it. But to continue being relevant and valid and powerful, what do we need to do with it to make sure that this is something that is not just a wow, a one-off where we raised $4 million for, you know, the hundredth anniversary of co-education of women, and we all go, Hey! Rah! We're all members of Society of 1918! Versus, you know, 15, 20, 50 years from now, this organization is doing incredibly impactful things at the college, and possibly beyond, for women.

**Members.**

Members who were not founders of the organization were focused on the programmatic elements to the organization rather than the growth, except for Catherine who now serves in a leadership capacity and is more exposed to the importance of growing membership. Catherine shared that she would be willing to be a part of creating a business model for the future of the organization, as well as creating “requirements” for board members to recruit members by “scrubbing” the total population of potential donors.

Members focused mostly on programmatic enhancements when discussing the future of the Society of 1918. When Angela was asked about enhancements she would like to see made to the Society of 1918, Angela shared:

I would like it to have a scholarship element. And I don't know, like, I haven’t read like bylaws or anything [in regards] to the money. I don't know if we could ever revise it so there is a scholarship element, but I think, like, alumnae initiatives are important, but I also think it's incredibly important for women to take care and think of
the future generation of women and providing those opportunities and not just keeping
the money within ourselves.

Angela also went on to share that she hopes the communication of the group can encourage allies
to participate as well, as she shared:

So I would love for the messaging to start being more inclusive, because, like, you know,
we're, women are never going to change the paradigm and the organizational structures
and the barriers, if we're only talking to ourselves. We need to be talking to the people
who form those barriers, create those barriers, have access beyond those barriers, and can
help break those walls from the inside. Because if we're only talking to ourselves, we're
not gonna be able to change things.

Holly spoke about attending a local W&M Women event when sharing what she would
like to see enhanced in the Society of 1918:

I was really pleased to see a small local event, and I think they did an amazing job
coming right off the Women's Weekend with sort of a vague plan of how they wanted it
to go. I've been really impressed about how many events they've been able to put
together. I would like to see that continue because opportunities for Society members to
interact encourage continued interest. I think the conversations about women are really
important, but I'd like to eventually see them integrated into every event, not just those
focused on women. Now it feels like, “it's a Women's Weekend” or “it's Women's
History Month.” As if there are specific times the experience of women should be
brought into the conversation. I'd like to see that no matter what the event or the focus of
the event, one of the discussions is always about women.
When Jessica was asked what enhancements should be made to the Society of 1918, she also focused on regional programming:

I think it would be really great if we could figure out a way to engage the women who are contributing, without having everything be in Williamsburg. And I think that's one of the things that will be a challenge, has always been a challenge, right? Because some people like to go back to Williamsburg, and some people don't. And then, [the College] had alumni weekends in other cities the last few years. So we've had one in New York and one in Chicago; those were great. And so it may be that we have to either move our meetings around or do regional meetings, or take part in those [alumni] weekends, and have a separate agenda, like an extra half day or something just for the women in the Society of 1918 just to convene because it would be good. I really think it's great to have a steering committee, because you have to have somebody to make decisions and move ahead. But you've got to get input from people. And if people aren't willing to travel to Williamsburg, we have to find other ways to get people to get together.

When asked about what enhancements should be made to the Society of 1918, Francis shared that programming for her demographic would be of interest:

I don't have a comprehensive view, but I looked at the program for this coming weekend in March. And I think it's an interesting program, but as an elder it is not of particular interest to me. So, I think that, for someone in their late 70s, what I'm looking for, is sort of, tackling big philosophical issues. I don't know that the Society of 1918 is designed to do that. And if the goals, fundraising and engagement, probably the priority should be to focus on a younger cohort and getting them engaged and spreading the notion of women as philanthropists. Except for the fact that a lot of wealth is in, you know, older women
have a lot of wealth. [An area of interest for me] for example, when we went to [another school’s alumni program], the classes were open, so you could go into classrooms, and hear these professors. [...] And it was so fascinating [...] and it was completely full. [...] So maybe one way would be to maybe just give star professors who are effective lecturers a platform.

Catherine also focused on programming for her demographic when speaking about the enhancements that should be made to the Society of 1918, albeit difficult to implement and be successful:

I will say this, but I will also say that I’m probably part of the problem, so I couldn’t do anything to affect this. So, I feel as though [programming] is geared towards people that are kind of, you know, retired or close to retirement, you know, whatever, on that spectrum. And I feel like there's not as much content geared towards folks that are like, in my demographic. That being said, I haven’t been suggesting anything, and I haven't done anything to fix it. [...] And I don't quite know what the answer is. Because I think we're always going to have this challenge. We're always to have this challenge of how do you engage people who are really burning both ends of the stick in terms of, yeah, you're trying to make it up the ladder of work, they've got small kids, there's only so many hours in a day. And, you know, even if you're super passionate about the college, like, there's only so many hours in the day. So I don't know how we crack that nut. [...] And I think, some of the board members, do we have the right succession planning in place to have people stepping into those roles? And, and in doing that, representing multiple demographics?
I shared the full list of findings with Val and the Steering Committee of the Society of 1918 in September of 2019, and have included all of my notes on enhancements in Appendix J.
CHAPTER FIVE

IMPLICATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND FINAL CONCLUSIONS

The findings from the interviews, observations and document analyses shed light on best practices for institutions interested in developing a comprehensive women and philanthropy program, one that goes beyond just a fundraising organization with giving thresholds. This chapter begins by outlining strategies learned from the findings of this study that any institution can consider and implement in order to grow philanthropy from women. The chapter also outlines limitations to the current study’s findings. Finally, the chapter shares my conclusions on women and philanthropy in higher education, especially giving back to women.

Implications for Practice

The following section outlines strategies to consider if institutions are considering women and philanthropy programs and giving back to women. It is important to note that the findings in this study are defined by the specific context and nature of W&M as both a place to study as a woman, and a place to be involved with after graduation, both in engagement and giving. There are, however, strategies that emerged through the study that could be considered best practices from a successful women’s giving program at an institution. This section will be outlined similarly to Chapter 4, with recommendations and reactions given to each research question, respectively.

Considerations for starting a women and philanthropy organization. W&M set the stage for creating a comprehensive women and philanthropy organization over the course of several years. Due to the comprehensive nature of their strategy, there are many takeaways for schools considering a similar approach. The following subsections outline reactions and findings to learning about the contextual factors leading to the Society of 1918.
Research on alumni population. The W&M Office of Advancement invested in external consultants, Orr Associates, Inc., led by Kathleen Loehr who is a leading expert on women and philanthropy, to conduct research on the topic prior to launching a women and philanthropy initiative at the college. While hiring consultants is both time consuming and costly, findings from this research provided critical data on alumnae at W&M: women’s giving and engagement, perceptions, campus leadership composition, and student satisfaction rates. Research of this magnitude is often too time consuming for full-time employees to attempt, as they conducted interviews, focus groups, and an online survey. Additionally, findings from an external consultant can carry added significance to administration when report recommendations are resource-heavy. If outside counsel is not an option for development offices, research on the alumnae donor population would be critical to considering future success of any women and philanthropy initiative.

A surprising finding throughout the study was how aware alumnae were about philanthropy research, both at W&M as well as national research on giving and women and philanthropy. Alumnae often quoted W&M giving data, as they had been involved on fundraising boards and were privy to financial information about the college. Women who were on the Task Force for Women and Philanthropy at W&M were well-versed on the research from the Orr Associates report. Not only did women speak about it in interviews, but I often found Val and administrators at events quoting the research that exists on women and philanthropy. I found that women at W&M were more heavily influenced due to their awareness of the research that exists on the topic.

Hiring (relationships and trust are key). Findings from this study indicate that 1) many of the women in influential leadership roles with the Society of 1918 were asked by staff to
serve; 2) many of the women referenced positive relationships they had with current staff at W&M and believing in their vision; and 3) women trusted their money would be used with the donor’s intent in mind, or that they trusted leadership at the college. These three findings are in line with research on women and philanthropy about relationship building (Conway-Welch, 2003; Mesch and Pactor, 2016; Tannen, 1991), and trust in leadership (Konrath, 2016).

Development offices that are exploring a women’s giving organization should highly consider investing in the appropriate hire for this function in the office. An important function in fundraising, especially with women, is relationship building, however a growing concern in the fundraising industry is staff turnover. Investing in a high quality fundraiser who was also a volunteer manager proved to be valuable at W&M. Institutions should consider hiring a fundraiser who is not only loyal to the institution and capable of being retained, but is also an expert in relationship building.

Financial resources. In the current study, W&M invested significant resources in order to launch a successful women and philanthropy program, not only in the hiring of outside counsel for research and the staff to support the program as mentioned above, but also to support programming for alumnae engagement on campus and nationwide. Leadership at W&M understood that funding priorities evolve in higher education, therefore an endowment was created in order to support women and philanthropy in perpetuity. This endowment, though started in 2017, did not begin spinning off investments until 2019, and does not fully cover the expenses of the program. Research shows that women and philanthropy is an investment that will pay off significantly, but that it can take more time than the solicitation of men. Other women and philanthropy programs at institutions have dissolved due to lack of resources, staff turnover or shifting priorities, therefore an endowment is a consideration for best practices.
Considerations for structuring a women and philanthropy program. I found the Society of 1918 to have a comprehensive structure, mission, and vision as a fundraising organization. I also found that W&M implemented inclusive fundraising practices division-wide, and offered opportunities for alumnae to get engaged without committing to the Society of 1918. The following subsections outline reactions and findings to the research done on learning the nature of the women and philanthropy initiative at W&M.

A standalone program in addition to inclusive fundraising practices. W&M implemented a mixed methods approach to their women and philanthropy program by both investing in a stand-alone women’s fundraising organization, as well as implementing inclusive fundraising practices across the Development Office. Research shows this to be the most successful and sustainable practice.

Val, as the Director of the Alumnae Initiatives program, was hired to not only develop and sustain what would become the Society of 1918, but also to educate the entire development staff at W&M on research and best practices on women and philanthropy, including wives in conversations when speaking with an alumnus, and balancing the gender composition in their portfolios. Development offices should also consider implementing both a women’s giving organization as well as practicing inclusive prospect development in order to be successful with women’s philanthropy.

Giving threshold but with inclusive engagement opportunities. The current study illustrates that women could join the Society at a $10,000 giving level, however there were other opportunities developed at W&M with this initiative that women could be involved with that I was able to observe. W&M Women events are programs for and about women at W&M, and are held on campus and around the country. Alumnae do not have to be members in order to attend
these events, however, the Society of 1918 is marketed at W&M Women events as a way to give back to the alumnae initiative endowment.

Several women I interviewed and observed at events had attended these programs prior to joining the Society of 1918. These findings add to the literature that while giving societies tend to be exclusive given their gift threshold, research shows that women prefer to be involved with the organizations to which they give (Indiana University Center on Philanthropy, 2011; Seiler, 2016; Vohs, Mead & Goode, 2006). Colleges and universities can learn from W&M as open engagement at events that are not exclusive offers opportunities for women to learn about and support the college, educate women about giving opportunities, and can build a pipeline not only to the giving society but also to any priority at the college.

**Clear mission and vision for the organization.** Research on women’s fundraising organizations in higher education does not exist, therefore the following finding adds to the literature on women and philanthropy, specifically with women giving to women. Like the complexity that exists around giving to women and girls on surveys nationally, complexity is alive and well at institutions when giving to alumnae initiatives. Universities and colleges will want to be clear about where funding is going if the destination is something like alumnae or women’s initiatives.

Women interviewed were confused about the mission of the organization, specifically whether the organization existed solely to fundraise from women, to advance alumnae, or to advance all women at the college, no matter their connection. Title IX can be very confusing to alumni and donors, and doing research beforehand in order to be clear in marketing about what funding can and cannot support will be paramount in creating a sustainable organization that women can rally around in perpetuity. The Society of 1918 is also in beginning stages and is still
finding their purpose as an organization, which was evident given the vast array of responses to the question around enhancements they wished to see. As this is the first known women’s fundraising organization in higher education that gives back to women’s initiatives, this organization has the opportunity to be a model for other institutions considering this strategy.

**Considering donors’ perceptions of their experiences.** Through brief life-history interviews, women shared their experiences with W&M both as students and alumnae. The donors I interviewed were engaged in the life of the college while they were students, and have since been engaged with W&M since graduation, therefore there was often much they could share about their experiences with W&M. The following subsections outlines reactions and recommendations surrounding alumnae donors perceptions on their experience and engagement at W&M.

**Satisfaction and involvement.** Alumnae interviewed were both involved as students and highly satisfied with their student experience, adding to the literature that alumni are more likely to give if they were involved and satisfied with their student experience (Spaeth and Greeley, 1970; Mosser, 1993; Gaier, 2005). This also supports findings from the Orr Associates research done on alumnae, provided in the Task Force Report on Women and Philanthropy at W&M. Alumnae interviewed shared that they were engaged with the college and several were highly involved prior to joining the Society of 1918, adding to the literature that women are likely to give if they are engaged in an organization (Indiana University Center on Philanthropy, 2011).

What I found surprising was that women interviewed felt they were not highly involved as students, even though they were Resident Assistants and involved in Greek Life at W&M. At other colleges and universities, this involvement would be considered “highly engaged,” but at W&M it was considered relatively engaged due the high involvement culture at the college.
Additionally, some women said they had not been involved since graduation, but when reflecting back, they shared they actually had been to homecoming and reunions as alumnae. This also would be considered “engaged” with other colleges and universities, but alumnae felt they weren’t involved relative to other alumni who were very engaged.

Trust should be built. Through conversations with alumnae, I found that donors trusted the leadership at the college, which added to the existing literature that trust in an organization is a motivator for a donor (Konrath, 2016), and even more so for women (Indiana University Center on Philanthropy, 2011). I found that relationships with and trust of administrators were important to the donors I spoke with, but I also found that the history and reputation of W&M influenced the level of trust in W&M. This finding further reiterates the importance of stewardship of donors, which includes both communicating with the donor about the impact of their gift as well as communication on how the organization is doing financially and programmatically. It was my understanding through interviews with alumnae that the W&M fundraising staff had been stewarding their donors well. Development offices should consider strong stewardship practices if implementing a women and philanthropy program and their institutions, as findings support the importance of this practice.

Practice asking. When alumnae reflected on their experiences first becoming involved with both W&M and the Society of 1918, many of them shared that they were personally asked to become involved. In a random sample of donors, I was impressed how many alumnae I spoke with had met Val Cushman in person and were asked by her and other administrators to join, participate, and lead. These findings support the research that donors are more likely to give after being directly asked to get engaged, and then make a gift (Konrath, 2016; Liu and Aaker, 2008; Vohs, Mead and Goode, 2006).
**Relationships and sisterhood.** A theme that emerged across the findings from several research questions was the role of relationships. When I learned why some women became donors to the Society of 1918, some said it because of the relationships they built with Val Cushman and Lee Foster, while others said it was because of the opportunity to build relationships with fellow members through leadership and networking. When women talked about their experiences as students at W&M, they talked about the lifelong friendships they made, and the marriages that followed relationships with fellow W&M classmates. When women talked about their experiences as alumnae, they focused on returning to reunions and events with friends from school, and the incredible women they met through leadership opportunities on fundraising boards. Several women referenced a collegial “sisterhood” in their description of their perception of the Society of 1918.

The theme of relationships in this study supports the literature that building relationships is an important element in the cultivation process for women (Conway-Welch, 2003; Mesch and Pactor, 2016; Tannen, 1991). What this study adds to the literature is the important role relationships between donors play in a women’s fundraising organization. The Society of 1918 provides a unique opportunity for women to meet and work with other women that had similar undergraduate experiences. Building relationships with other women donors, not just administration, was a motivator for joining for the alumnae that were interviewed.

**Consider the role of womanhood.** The following section outlines reactions and recommendations surrounding the role of gender in women’s lived experiences and their experience at W&M. When interviewees were asked if their gender shaped their motivations and values, many alumnae shared experiences of being a woman, both positive and negative, outside of their relationship with W&M, such as being mothers or in the workplace. These examples,
although not tied to W&M, were often reasons women got involved in the Society of 1918. The following subsections will outline recommendations from these findings.

**Considering feminism and exercising listening.** This study found that the timeliness of the women’s movement in 2017 and beyond proved to be influential in the success of the Society of 1918 at W&M. Regardless of the timing of a women’s movement, interviewees were impacted and motivated by them, whether it happened in the 1960s during the civil rights era, in the 1990s with the “girl power” era, or the most recent Me Too and Time’s Up Movements. While the Society of 1918 doesn’t have explicit feminist objectives stated in its mission, I found that women were motivated to join the Society of 1918 and engage in W&M Women events based on the relevance due to the social and political climate.

While this exact timeline for solicitation cannot be replicated in conjunction with the women’s movement that has happened previously, feminist standpoint theory can be exercised when working with women donors. Fundraising professionals should consider exercising good open-ended questioning and listening skills to their alumnae and donors, as they may have negative experiences they are interested in sharing as either female students or alumnae, and may be interested in finding their voice and making change, influenced by philanthropy, at that college or university.

**Gender identity and inclusivity.** Although this concept did not emerge in the current study, colleges and universities should consider the evolving nature of gender identity when developing an organization that can seem exclusive to one gender. Interviewees in the current study did mention the important role that men can play as allies to women, and a few spoke about the desire to be inclusive to male donors and their concerns about discussing gender issues in a vacuum. Institutions should consider what the role of men can and should be when
developing and women’s philanthropy organization, and also should take into consideration the evolving nature of gender identity fluidity.

**Missing voices.** Globally, philanthropists influence change depending on their personal passions and generosity. A democratic process is absent in the case of a philanthropist deciding who to heal, who to educate, what problems to solve and what ceilings to shatter. Alumnae who are leaders of the Society of 1918 are all women who have the capacity to give at the $10,000 level. Influential voices at the table then about the future of the organization in terms of programming and impact are all women who have money to give.

Outside of W&M Women events that are inclusive to all women despite their giving level, there are voices left out about how philanthropic dollars should be spent and who will be involved and impacted. Women who do not have the capacity to give are left out of important conversations that could influence all women at the college. It would be interesting what might be different if these missing voices were taking into consideration in both the Society of 1918 as well as other women’s philanthropy organizations.

**Women’s lived experiences.** Alumnae who were interviewed often shared at length their experiences, both positive and negative, as a woman. They did not, for the most part, share their experience at W&M in terms of gender. One woman shared a negative experience as a female donor prior to the Society of 1918, while a few others mentioned that W&M had a history of ignoring women. A few others mentioned a lack of female faculty and mentors. Overall, women’s experiences as students and alumnae were positive, and their gender often didn’t seem to matter. Gender-based experiences that women did share, however were primarily during raising a family and in the workplace. While women were not directly connecting gender-based experiences with W&M, alumnae were interested in creating programming through the Society
of 1918 to support female students and other alumnae through those gender-based life challenges they experienced. These findings support that women were engaged in philanthropy through the Society of 1918 through feminist action, interested in finding their voice and making change.

**Implications for Future Research**

The current study provided an overview of a successful women’s philanthropy organization that gives back to alumnae. Future research in the following areas would be helpful to practitioners considering women’s philanthropy or philanthropy of other historically marginalized populations in higher education.

While this study looked at women’s motivations for joining the Society of 1918, it would be valuable to examine why alumnae from W&M decided not to join the Society of 1918. Outside of capacity to give, further research on this topic would optimize W&M’s approach to soliciting their alumnae, as well as provide other institutions further insight into whether the alumnae endowment approach is something they should consider. An additional factor to consider is that the overwhelming majority of women I observed, and all of the women I interviewed, were Caucasian. Future research could explore if there is a reason why women of diverse backgrounds are not joining the Society of 1918 or attending W&M women events as often as their Caucasian counterparts. Similarly, of those that shared their sexual preference, all of the women I interviewed and observed were heterosexual. It would also be valuable to explore if LGBTQ alumnae are interested in joining the Society, and if anyone in the LGBTQ community feels excluded from gender-based organizations such as the Society of 1918, and why.

Additionally, this research project looked specifically at a women’s giving organization that gives back to women. While research exists on women and philanthropy in general, there is
a lack of research on women giving back to their alma maters. Future research on women giving to giving circles in higher education that do not benefit women specifically would be interesting to understand for colleges not interested in W&M’s approach.

Mentorship was a theme that appeared through many conversations with interviewees, whether it was how they got involved at W&M as an alumna, their experiences in the workforce, or their hopes for the Society of 1918. I assumed correctly, as outlined in my assumptions, that women would share experiences with mentoring, both positive experiences and the absence of experiences. Future research could be considered on the role of mentorship and fundraising for women donors.

An additional consideration for future research that would add to the current body of knowledge around women and philanthropy would be to examine the differences between women who earn their own money and are philanthropic, versus women who are philanthropic with money they inherit or did not personally earn. Historically, research on women and philanthropy has considered women who inherit money twice, and influence their husband’s giving habits. In recent decades, as women have become more independent, led successful careers, and made their own money, it would be valuable to determine if there are any differences in giving when this factor is taken into consideration.

Lastly, due to the immense success of the Society of 1918, there have since been several giving groups formed at W&M beyond women, including African-American, LatinX and LGBTQ alumni. This study could be replicated in many ways to learn from those groups as well, as even less research exists on these populations.
Limitations

The current study has several limitations that should be considered when discussing findings. One important limitation to note is the use of the qualitative methodology. Although a qualitative methodology was chosen in order to best answer the research questions, qualitative research does not lend itself to direct causation. Qualitative research does allow for rich description; however, findings cannot be generalized to wider populations with the same assurance that a quantitative approach can. An additional limitation to consider is the lack of research on giving to women and girls in higher education, and even more so the absence of research on women giving back to women at their alma maters, therefore this study is exploratory in nature. While this research is unique, findings can offer development professionals insights into women giving to higher education at similar institutions. Finally, alumnae at W&M report having high satisfaction as students and as alumni, and many of the women I interviewed and spoke with were already involved at W&M prior to the Society of 1918. Colleges and universities that do not have similar alumni populations may not experience the same success, as W&M had a higher probability of being successful given these important factors.

Final Conclusions

While women and philanthropy with a mixed methods approach seems like a common sense solution to an institution seeking ways to be more inclusive to their prospect development, grow their donor base and alumni engagement, and to increase total dollars raised, the current research study illustrates that a comprehensive approach, while successful, is resource heavy and time consuming. In order to be successful and sustaining, a women and philanthropy program cannot be turnkey and executed haphazardly. However, the findings from this study and the
strategies outlined previously can be beneficial for institutions seeking to implement a successful women and philanthropy program.

Women have been a marginalized group historically in the United States, with most institutions not enrolling women until varied points within the last seventy years, therefore many coed colleges and universities may have similar alumnae populations, with comparable experiences for female students and alumnae. While the W&M experience may be unique in some ways, there are transferable experiences to comparable traditional colleges and universities. Findings from the current study determine that the decision to make the Society of 1918 a giving destination that gives back to alumnae initiatives struck a nerve with women for whom their gender made a difference.

This chapter provided implications for practice, future research, and conclusions to consider given the findings from the current study. If women continue to out-enroll and outperform their male counterparts in higher education, alumnae populations will continue to grow. The dated prospect development practices in advancement offices will grow increasingly challenging for fundraisers if inclusive practices are not explored and implemented. This study provides an example of inclusive practices that women have deemed successful at W&M.
References


Mesch, D. J. (2010). *Women give 2010: New research about women and giving*. Indianapolis, IN: Women’s Philanthropy Institute, Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University.


https://advancement.wm.edu/volunteer-leadership/society-of-1918/join/index.php


AMY CATHERINE GRAY BECK  
acbeck@vcu.edu - Richmond, VA 23227

EDUCATION

Doctor of Philosophy, Education, Educational Leadership Track  
Virginia Commonwealth University, Richmond, Virginia

Master of Education in Higher Education, Student Affairs  
Clemson University, Clemson, South Carolina

Bachelor of Arts in English  
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech), Blacksburg, Virginia

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Executive Director, Outreach and Engagement, Alumni Relations, VCU  
May 2017 – present

- Serve as strategy lead and supervision of the areas of Alumni Career Programs, Regional Engagement, Affinity Programs, Lifelong Learning, and Student and Young Alumni Engagement and Philanthropy, supervising 7 staff members and serving as proxy for Associate Vice President
- Part of leadership team that transitioned Alumni Relations from dues-based membership to all-inclusive membership
- Managed VCU Alumni Board of Governors, including Outreach and Engagement Committee, Membership Committee, and all communication for board logistics for one year

Interim Senior Director, Outreach and Engagement, Alumni Relations, VCU  
2015-2017

- Developed and served as the primary university alumni relations liaison to alumni constituent organizations and university units associated with the constituent organizations, such as academic units, athletics, geographic regions, and specific underrepresented populations
- Manage all aspects of VCU Athletics sponsorship agreement, including traveling to, creating and managing alumni events for the men’s basketball games and tournaments
- Oversee all value-added services for alumni including career services, admissions support, athletics support, and volunteer engagement
- Supervised 3 full-time staff and 2 part-time staff

Director of Student and Young Alumni Engagement, Alumni Relations, VCU  
2012 – 2015

- Grew STAT (Students Today, Alumni Tomorrow) membership from 450 members in FY 2013 to 1300 members in FY 14, a 190% increase in membership and nearly $13,000 increase in membership revenue (exceeding FY14 goal by 500 members), resulting in STAT winning 5 regional awards and 2 national awards in 2014, and 3 regional awards in 2015
- Recruited volunteers to create RVA GOLD (Richmond VA Graduates of the Last Decade) chapter in 2012 that hosted 15 basketball watch parties per season, networking and service events, and has collected nearly $30,000 in sponsorship in FY15
- Managed major alumni engagement events such as Homecoming, Class Ring Tradition, coordinating Grad Fair for 7000 graduates, A10 tournament logistics, home athletic events, Ram Spirit Walk tradition for 2500 new students, Career Center Liaison to VCU Alumni, and planning and executing Bon Voyage, a graduation gala for 1000 graduating students and alumni volunteers
- Created and managed all marketing campaigns for new graduates and young alumni surrounding membership and event engagement
- Co-chair of VCU’s RAM CAMP, a first-year leadership experience for 250 freshmen. Wrote curriculum for leadership activities, trained student staff and developed week-long schedule
- Won “Spirit Award” for Development and Alumni Relations in 2013
Admission Counselor, Office of Admission, University of Richmond 2010 – 2012

- Created “Spider Key Society” - the overarching organization for all student employees and volunteers through Office of Admission (over 200 students) and created website for the organization; grew application number by 112% in FY11 and through community engagement increased diversity in applicant pool
- Managed the development of an on-campus yield experience through information sessions and special tours for admitted students. Managed process of hiring consultant for on-campus experience.
- Traveled to and managed all aspects of applicant recruitment and enrollment in 7 states
- Hired, trained, supervised and mentored 5 interns, 7 Student Office Assistants and 150 Tour Guides
- Created activities for the social cohesion of accepted students and current students at Yield Events

Assistant, New Student Programs, Virginia Commonwealth University June – July 2010

- Assisted in the direction of parent programs during summer orientation and facilitated sessions
- Developed relationships with parents and families to encourage university engagement

Graduate Assistant, New Student & Sophomore Programs, Clemson University 2008 – 2010

- Facilitated the logistics of Orientation for more than 10,000 parents and new students
- Trained and supervised 114 Welcome Leaders for 3 day Extended Fall Orientation experience
- Served as the onsite resource and responder in residence hall during all 12 overnight orientation programs for 4,400 students and 30 student staff members
- Coordinated all aspects of the Orientation Ambassador Program, including recruitment, interviewing, selection, training, co-teaching EDC 390 course, and supervision of 30 students

ADDITIONAL RELATED EXPERIENCE

Alumni Relations, Intern, Clemson University 2009
Office of Development, Student Affairs Development, Intern, Clemson University 2009
Summer Swarm Orientation, Intern, Savannah College of Art and Design 2009
On-Site Coordinator, LeaderShape® Institute, Practicum, Clemson University 2009

SERVICE TO THE PROFESSION

Vice President, Educational Leadership Doctoral Student Association, School of Education, VCU, 2014-2015
Parents Council Taskforce, Virginia Commonwealth University, 2013-Present
Martin Luther King Jr. Week, Virginia Commonwealth University, 2013-Present
Host, CASE ASAP Virginia State Conference, Virginia Commonwealth University, 2013
President, Chi Sigma Alpha: Student Affairs Honor Society, Clemson University 2009-2010
Advisor, National Society of Collegiate Scholars, Clemson 2008- 2010
Advisor, Kappa Delta Sorority, Clemson 2008- 2010
Women’s Leadership Conference Planning Committee, Clemson 2010
Marketing Co-Chair Director of Student Development Screening Committee, Clemson 2010
Student Affairs Graduate Selections Planning Committee, Clemson 2009 & 2010
PUBLICATIONS & PRESENTATIONS


Gray, A. & Stewart, E. (February 2009). Huddle up!: Communicating with your team. Presented at High School Leadership Conference at Clemson University. Clemson, SC.

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIP

Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP), 2014-present
Association of Higher Education Parent/Family Program Professionals (AHEPPP), 2014-present
Council for the Advancement & Support of Education (CASE), 2012-present
Ally, SafeZone, 2009- present
ODK Leadership Society, 2009- present
National Coalition Building Institute (NCBI), 2008- present
National Orientation Director's Association (NODA), 2008-2010

HONORARY MEMBERSHIP

Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society, 2009- 2010
Chi Sigma Alpha, Honors Society, 2010 President, 2009- 2010

SCHOLARSHIPS, HONORS & AWARDS

National Society of Collegiate Scholars Distinguished Member, VCU 2014
Development and Alumni Relations Spirit Award, VCU 2013
Most Spirited University, CASE Affiliated Student Advancement Program Regional Conference, 2013
1st Place & Best Overall, Case Study, Southern Region Orientation Workshop 2010
C Graduate Student Award of Excellence, Clemson 2010
Advisor Award, National Society of Collegiate Scholars, Clemson 2010
Walter T. Cox Graduate Student Achievement Award, Clemson 2009
Outstanding Graduate Student Award, Southern Region Orientation Workshop 2009
Appendix A

Summary of study’s documents and artifacts

- W&M Women & Society of 1918 event listing from November, 2015 - present
- 1918 print solicitation for mailing and printed envelopes
- 1918 print membership brochure used at events and marketing
- William & Mary Foundation Alumnae Initiatives Update; February, 2019
- Society of 1918:
  - Bylaws
  - Mission, Vision, Goals, Membership Criteria, Membership Benefits and Leadership Structure
  - Value Proposition
- Thriving Tribe NPS evaluations
- W&M Women & Society of 1919 event programs
- Society of 1918 branded giveaway items
- Websites
  - 100 years of women: https://www.wm.edu/sites/100yearsofwomen/
  - Society of 1918: https://advancement.wm.edu/volunteer-leadership/society-of-1918/about/index.php
  - For the Bold Campaign: https://forthebold.wm.edu/
Appendix B

Semi-structured protocol for qualitative interviews.

1. Can you tell me a little bit about yourself, your relationship with William & Mary, as well as your relationship with the Society of 1918 (in that order)?

2. Why did you choose to give to your alma mater?

3. Why did you choose to give to women’s initiatives specifically?

4. What was your decision making process?

5. Did your experiences as a woman shape your motivations and values? If so, how?

6. How do you see the Society of 1918 being enhanced in the future?
Dear Society of 1918 Member:

Happy Wednesday! According to Punxsutawney Phil, spring is on the way soon and it sure does feel like it in Williamsburg today! I write with two quick updates:

First, a Ph.D. student from VCU, Amy Gray Beck, has identified the Society of 1918 as an outstanding case study for her dissertation focused on the impact of women’s philanthropy. She plans to interview 10 members of the Society for 1 hour each over the phone to provide data for her analysis. She will be taking a random sample of the Society membership for her study and the comments shared with her will be confidential. On Monday, February 11, I will be sending her a list of all members of the Society from which she will randomly select 10 women. Amy will then reach out to the 10 women selected. Please let me know by Monday if you would like to be excluded from the list that I send to her from which to draw names. We are excited for her work to inform ours and the greater knowledge base around women’s philanthropy.

Second, don’t forget to register for the upcoming Thriving Tribe event. We have had a great response and those who attend will be shaping the future of the Society of 1918. All the “cool” women are coming, so don’t miss out!

Val

Valorie J. Cushman, Ph.D.
Sr. Dir. Engagement & Inclusion Initiatives
ycushman@wm.edu
(757) 221-1622 (O)
(540) 432-7778 (M)
Appendix D
Recruitment script from Amy Gray Beck

**Address Line:** Individually emailed participants
**Subject Line:** 1918 Founder/Member - Request to interview as participant in dissertation research
**Message:**

Dear [Name], Founder/member of the Society of 1918,

My name is Amy Gray Beck and I am a doctoral candidate at Virginia Commonwealth University. For my dissertation, I am studying the Society of 1918 at William & Mary to understand the motivations behind why women give to other women within higher education. I hope my research will inform other women’s philanthropy organizations in higher education.

As a donor and member of the Society of 1918, I would like to invite you to participate in a virtual interview via a video conference call. You were chosen at random to participate in this study. If you are interested and available, please respond affirmatively to my email address at acbeck@vcu.edu by [date], and we will find a time that works best for you. I will also send you a copy of the interview questions and consent form in advance if you are willing to interview. I estimate the interview will last around an hour. Participation is voluntary and confidential.

This study was approved by the VCU IRB on December 17, 2018, and is supported by Dr. Valerie Cushman, Sr. Director of Alumni Engagement and Inclusion Initiatives, at William & Mary. To learn more about the study, please visit www.dissertationparticipation.com.

Thank you for your consideration,

Amy Gray Beck
VCU Doctoral Student
acbeck@vcu.edu
Appendix E

Consent form and in-person script

RESEARCH SUBJECT INFORMATION AND ADULT CONSENT FORM

TITLE: Why Women Give to Women: A Portrait of Gender-Based Philanthropy at a Public College in Virginia

VCU IRB NO.: HM20012796

INVESTIGATOR(S): Katherine Mansfield, UNCG Associate Professor & Research Supervisor; Amy Gray Beck, VCU Doctoral Candidate

This consent form may contain words that you do not understand. Please ask me to explain any words that you do not clearly understand. You may review this consent form or discuss with family or friends before making your decision.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY
The purpose of this study is to understand the contextual factors that contributed to the development of the Society of 1918 at William & Mary, as well as whether donors’ experiences as women may have informed their perceptions, engagement, and activities, and if so, how. You are being asked to participate because you are a donor and member of the Society of 1918. Your participation in interviews will contribute to a better understanding of why women give to women in higher education.

DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AND YOUR INVOLVEMENT
If you decide to be in this research study, you will be asked to verbally consent after you have reviewed this form, and had all your questions answered and understand what will happen to you. In this study, you will be asked to participate in an interview that will last approximately one hour. The interviews will be audio recorded to help me remember what you say. Once transcribed and a pseudonym is given for you, the audio recordings will be destroyed.

RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS
Risks of being in the study are highly unlikely, and if so are minimal and expected to be no greater than everyday life. However, participants may become uncomfortable sharing their perspectives and opinions. Thus, participants can decline to answer any question as well as withdraw from the study at any time. During data collection, analysis, and write up, the data will be stored on the personal laptop of the student-trainee which is password protected, as well as on a flash drive that will be locked in a drawer in the Principal Investigator's office. Audio recordings of interviews will be recorded on cellular device, but transferred immediately to laptop and flash drive. Breach of data is highly unlikely but could happen. Once the dissertation is defended, all materials will be stored in a password protected Google Drive Folder. Participants can choose not to participate or withdraw at any time because of these risks.
BENEFITS TO YOU AND OTHERS
You will not get any direct benefit from this study, but the information learned from people in this study may help William & Mary on how to enhance their program, as well as other institutions interested in building on enhancing their women’s philanthropy program to support women.

ALTERNATIVES
The alternative is to not participate in this study.

COSTS
There are no costs for participating in this study other than the time you will spend in the interviews.

CONFIDENTIALITY
Data is being collected only for research purposes. Your data will be identified by pseudonyms, not names. Printed data will be stored in a locked research area. All electronic data storage will be password protected. The data collected, along with the key that identifies individuals’ names and pseudonyms, will be stored in a locked cabinet in the researcher’s locked office. The interviews will be audio recorded, but no names will be recorded. Recordings of interviews will be deleted and destroyed immediately following transcription. Transcriptions will only use pseudonyms. Access to all data will be limited to investigators listed above. Information from the study and the consent form may be examined by Virginia Commonwealth University. Findings from this study may be presented at meetings or published in papers, but your name will never be used in these presentations or papers. Findings and recommendations made as a result of this study will be presented to Virginia Commonwealth University upon completion. However, individual participants’ identities will not be disclosed. In the future, identifiers will be removed from the information you provide in this study, and after that removal, the information could be used for other research studies by this study team or another researcher without asking you for additional consent.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL
You do not have to participate in this study. If you choose to participate, you may stop at any time without any penalty. You may also choose not to answer particular questions that are asked in the interview.

QUESTIONS
In the future, you may have questions about your participation in this study. If you have any questions, complaints, or concerns about the research, contact: Dr. Katherine Mansfield at kicmansfield@gmail.com or (210) 722-3428, or student researcher Amy Gray Beck at acbeck@vcu.edu or 804-586-5202.

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact:
Office for Research Integrity and Ethics
Virginia Commonwealth University
800 East Leigh Street, Suite 3000
P.O. Box 980568
Richmond, VA 23298
Telephone: 804-827-2157

Additional information about participation in research studies can be found at http://www.research.vcu.edu/human_research/volunteers.htm

CONSENT
Do you consent to participate in this research interview?

________ YES – CONDUCT INTERVIEW→ (Document the participant's consent, along with the date, any witnesses, and the name of the person conducting consent in the study’s records)

________ NO – Thank you for your time.
Appendix F

Participant pseudonym and demographic summaries of Society of 1918 members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Founder or Solicited</th>
<th>Class year decade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Angela</td>
<td>Solicited</td>
<td>2000s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barbara</td>
<td>Founder</td>
<td>1970s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catherine</td>
<td>Solicited</td>
<td>1990s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dottie</td>
<td>Founder</td>
<td>1980s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellen</td>
<td>Founder</td>
<td>1980s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Francis</td>
<td>Solicited</td>
<td>1960s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gail</td>
<td>Founder</td>
<td>1980s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holly</td>
<td>Solicited</td>
<td>1980s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Izzy</td>
<td>Founder</td>
<td>1970s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessica</td>
<td>Solicited</td>
<td>1970s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Appendix G

List of observations conducted

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jan 24, 2018</td>
<td>EVENT: “W&amp;M Women Roanoke - Meet &amp; Greet with Samantha K. Huge” at Hotel Roanoke</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb 28, 2018</td>
<td>EVENT: “W&amp;M Women at the Muscarelle Museum” at W&amp;M campus in Williamsburg, VA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 22, 2018</td>
<td>MEETING: 1918 Steering Committee Mtg at Alumni House on W&amp;M campus in Williamsburg, VA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 23, 2018</td>
<td>MEETING: 1918 Exec Committee Meeting on W&amp;M campus in Williamsburg, VA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 23, 2018</td>
<td>EVENT: “All Aboard” on W&amp;M campus in Williamsburg, VA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 29, 2019</td>
<td>EVENT: “Thriving Tribe” on W&amp;M campus in Williamsburg, VA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix H

Signed W&M Volunteer Confidentiality Statement

University Advancement volunteers offer significant outreach to reconnect alumni, individuals, and organizations to increase contributions and participation for William & Mary. All information disseminated to volunteers, whether in oral form or magnetic or print media, which has been gathered and compiled by the Office of University Advancement and its related staff is confidential.

The information distributed is intended to be used solely to further the fundraising mission of William & Mary (the University), the College of William and Mary Foundation, and other institutionally related foundations, and cannot be used for personal, commercial or any other reasons. Under no circumstances should any information be copied, distributed, or verbally communicated to anyone unless approved by the Office of University Advancement.

At the end of the volunteer term, the individual will either return to the University or destroy all confidential records that have been collected.

Responsibility: The granting of access privileges to advancement information carries with it an implicit bond of trust that you will:

- Not share information about individuals and organizations with unauthorized individuals
- Not use the advancement information for personal gain or to facilitate the personal gain of others
- Store data and information under secure conditions
- Make every reasonable effort to maintain privacy and security of information at all times
- Dispose of all information in all media in a secure fashion

Certification:

I, Amy Gray Beck, acknowledge that in the course of my volunteer activities I may have access to documents, data, or other information, some or all of which may be confidential and/or privileged whether or not labeled or identified as “confidential.”

Except as required by my activities, I shall never, either during or after my volunteer time with William & Mary, directly or indirectly use, publish, disseminate or otherwise disclose to any third party, or use for personal gain any information acquired in the course of my activities without the prior written consent of William & Mary.

I have read, understand and agree to comply and follow the above guidelines.

Amy Gray Beck

Name

Signature

Board

Date

Updated 02/08/2017
Appendix I

Timeline of major events

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Key Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1693</td>
<td>College of William and Mary Founded</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1918</td>
<td>First women admitted to and enrolled at W&amp;M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>Women &amp; Philanthropy Task Force at W&amp;M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Director of Alumnae Initiatives position created at W&amp;M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>W&amp;M launches “For the Bold” campaign, $1 billion goal with 40% alumni participation by 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2016</td>
<td>Hillary Clinton - first woman with nomination for major party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 2017</td>
<td>Society of 1918 at W&amp;M created/Endowment agreement signed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 2017</td>
<td>Women’s March in DC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 2017</td>
<td>I meet with Val Cushman to confirm research topic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer 2017</td>
<td>First verbal solicitations to join Society from Val</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 2017</td>
<td>First hard copy solicitation for Society of 1918 sent to alumnae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oct. 2017</td>
<td>#metoo Movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dec. 2017</td>
<td>Society reaches $1 mil. goal in 6 months, sets new goal of 1.918 mil.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 2018</td>
<td>Time’s Up Movement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan.-March</td>
<td>I conduct observations at Society meetings and events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>Society reaches $1.918 million goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>I find out I am pregnant with first child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 2018</td>
<td>I pass prospectus defense</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb. 2018</td>
<td>W&amp;M announces first female president, Dr. Katherine Rowe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2018</td>
<td>Dr. Rowe is sworn in as President of W&amp;M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 6, ‘18</td>
<td>I give birth to my son</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept.</td>
<td>W&amp;M celebrates 100 years of Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sept.</td>
<td>Brett Kavanaugh hearings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov.</td>
<td>First bylaws adopted by Society of 1918</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan. 2019</td>
<td>I return to work full-time as working mom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar.-May</td>
<td>I conduct 10 interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mar.</td>
<td>Event observation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>Society reaches $4 million goal with 430 members</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix J

Future of the Society of 1918

The following is the list of the ideas women interviewees had when asked the question, “How do you see the Society of 1918 being enhanced in the future?” This list was shared with Val Cushman at W&M, and the Steering Committee of the Society of 1918.

- Host more W&M Women events on the road.
- Conversations at W&M about women should not just be set aside for the Society of 1918. Make sure it's a part of every conversation and thread through the fabric of the college.
- More of a focus programmatically on women and family (caretaking of both children and parents).
- Programs should be inclusive of older generations, and tackling big philosophical issues.
- Should spread notion of women as philanthropists.
- Engage by providing value, such as open classes with star professors or popular lectures.
- Include women while they are students.
- Should be a place where women can feel heard and feel a sense of trust.
- Next goal should be to focus on women and philanthropy through programming and engagement. Look at target markets, and be more inclusive of younger graduates to get them engaged early.
- Bridge gap between generations, so there are no more silos.
- The society should open doors for women to influence the college.
- Need alumnae with strategic planning experience to be involved with the next strategic plan for 1918. Need for business model for growth and sustainability.
- Need diverse demographics. Ask ourselves: Do we look like the college looks now?
- Does not feel like feedback is taken/considered.
- Need a ten-year plan with legitimate goals assigned to committee members/ should have metrics for membership committee (and other committees).
- Should get more feedback from students that are seniors.
- Need for succession planning that should represent multiple demographics.
- Need to scrub total population of women rather than relying on word of mouth for this next phase.
- Plan for the 105th anniversary.
- There needs to be more programming for mid-level women (late 30s early 40s) – who have only so many hours in the day.
- Wants scholarship/programming to take care of the future of women
- Communication should be that donors can be women or allies of women.
Appendix K

Member Checks

Copy of text sent to each interviewee:

Amy Gray Beck <acbeck@vcu.edu> Sat, Sep 14, 2019 at 11:05 AM
To: [REDACTED]

I hope you are well! It has been a while since I met with you about your experience with W&M and the Society of 1918.

I've been asked to present to the Society of 1918 leadership (as you may know) about my initial findings (pre-defense of course)! This presentation is taking place on Sept 26th. To help paint a picture of my conversation with the interviewees, I'll be handing out a packet of alumnae profiles. I want the reader to feel as if they can envision my conversation and time with the alumna, get a clear picture of the person I am speaking with, but it is still anonymous to a group that could be intimately aware of the donors to their group. Let me know what you think of what I drafted below. After I get approval/edits back from you, I will be sharing with Val to make sure she cannot decode who it is I am speaking of.

If you wouldn't mind reviewing the below profile I've drafted of you and our brief time together and get any edits back to me no later than Sept 24th, I would be very grateful. I won't share this profile without your approval. You can edit/change/revise/add/delete anything you would like for accuracy and/or comfort. I apologize in advance for anything that is incorrect -this is what this process is for and thank you in advance! :) For the actual defense and paper (December), I may ask you to edit/approve a more lengthy profile.

Things that are important that I disclose in this pre-dissertation defense presentation are: brevity/bite size/but deep enough, portrait of you, what you look like (as anonymous but honest as possible), your surroundings (I am using portraiture as a method which is why this is important), a general feeling of our conversation from my perceptions, high level student/alumni/donor experience (as anonymous as possible), and briefly, your motivations for joining Society of 1918. For the presentation and defense, I will run by you any quotes I use from our conversation (for this it may be just one quote or none, but could be many for the actual defense) before I share them.

Your pseudonym is _______
(profile redacted)

I can't thank you enough.

Amy
Amy Gray Beck
Responses:

**Angela:**

From: __________________
Date: October 23, 2019 at 11:39:03 PM EDT
To: Amy Gray Beck <acbeck@vcu.edu>
Subject: Re: Nov. 4 deadline for graduation. THANK YOU! :)

Hi Amy,

Thanks for your kind words! __________________

Thanks for sharing your recap with me. This might not be an important detail, but I took our call from my master bedroom, not a spare room, since that is where my desk is :-) and I am happy to report that there are now two women in roles between the CEO and me! At the time we spoke, there was one.

Good luck with everything!

________________________________________________________________________________

**Barbara:**

Sun, Sep 15, 2019 at 10:12 AM
To: Amy Gray Beck <acbeck@vcu.edu>

Amy, I am looking forward to your presentation. I have reviewed the material you sent and would suggest the a few changes for clarity and accuracy. I have attached a word document with tracking - thought that might be more helpful. A couple general thoughts here:

Amy, with respect to shortening, I am not sure if you really need those introductory sentences about the setting, my personal appearance, etc. Your call but I think the second half of your piece is most relevant to your topic.
I am fine with being identified - and anyone who has been involved in the Society would probably identify me given just the physical and career details.
If you have any questions about my comments or suggested edits, just let me know.

(Mobile)
From: Amy Gray Beck <acbeck@vcu.edu>
Sent: Saturday, September 14, 2019 1:22 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: Your feedback requested! Alumna profile - by Sept. 24th

Amy Gray Beck <acbeck@vcu.edu> Sun, Sep 15, 2019 at 11:17 AM
To: [REDACTED]

Thank you so much for your quick response! I’ve made the changes you requested - they’re perfect and make a lot of sense. I knew you were asked by an academic dean, but for anonymity I was trying to generalize as much as possible. However, if you're comfortable with what you wrote and members potentially identifying you, then I'm happy to use the edits made! I appreciate your time and help.

Sincerely,
Amy

[REDACTED] Sun, Sep 15, 2019 at 11:25 AM
To: Amy Gray Beck <acbeck@vcu.edu>
Thanks, Amy, I am fine with it

Catherine:

Re: Your feedback requested! Alumna profile - by Sept. 24th
3 messages

[REDACTED] Sat, Sep 14, 2019 at 2:14 PM
To: Amy Gray Beck <acbeck@vcu.edu>

Oh Amy this is so nice! The only thing I would ask to change is the part of the sentence that says [REDACTED]
What do you think?

Huge congratulations - can’t wait to read it!! Hope all is well with you and your family

Amy Gray Beck <acbeck@vcu.edu> Sat, Sep 14, 2019 at 2:27 PM
To: [redacted]

Absolutely! How's this as an edit?

Thank you! While nice it's 100% sincere. :)

Thank for you for everything!
Amy

Sat, Sep 14, 2019 at 6:57 PM
To: Amy Gray Beck <acbeck@vcu.edu>

Perfect- thank you!

Dottie:

Mon, Sep 23, 2019 at 5:25 PM
To: Amy Gray Beck <acbeck@vcu.edu>
Apologies for being so slow! See below, only a few minor tweaks. Seriously though – “Dottie”?! ☹️

Ellen:

Mon, Sep 16, 2019 at 9:43 AM
To: Amy Gray Beck <acbeck@vcu.edu>
Hi Amy,
So nice to hear from you!! A challenge, indeed! I am sitting in the airport in [redacted]. At first glance, the profile looks good. But I would like to take a bit more time and help you condense it. I will take a careful look and get my edits to you in advance of your deadline.

Many thanks for your loving approach to this research. What a pleasure it has been to watch it unfold.

XO,

Sent from my iPhone

Amy Gray Beck <acbeck@vcu.edu> Mon, Sep 16, 2019 at 10:37 AM

To: [redacted]

Thank you for your quick response! WOW - [redacted]! Travel safely back home - I hope you enjoyed your trip!

Since I've gotten responses back from others, they've said they don't mind being potentially identifiable, at least to the Society. If you'd like to maintain complete anonymity, feel free to take out anything that you feel would reveal who you are. But, if you don't mind being potentially identified, we don't need to change anything - not even the length, if you're okay with it. Others have been lengthy as well and that's fine!

Take all the time you need - I only need changes back to me by the 24th to share with the group! Talk soon.

Best wishes & safe travels,
Amy

[Quoted text hidden]

Francis:
Thanks for sending I will work on it today.

Amy,

Thanks for your kind words. So appreciated.

I am attaching both the marked up and my final 9/16 draft. I made changes and a few corrections and generally tried to shorten and tighten up your draft. I hope you are not sensitive about significant edits. I am comfortable with the process and in fact have typically welcomed the opportunity to collaborate with others in improving my own versions. Just so you know, my edits were done in this spirit. Re more edits to a longer bio version for your December defense, I am glad to edit/approve a longer profile.

I think it is exciting that you will have a chance to present your initial findings to the Society’s leadership in September. This is excellent and should give you not only nice exposure but also a lot of useful feedback. Hope it goes swimmingly.

Re my anonymity, I think it is something of a lost cause. As you noted mine is hardly a standard resume and I expect that Val will be able to decode who I am. Not sure who else might also be able to do the same. That does not bother me. I am proud to be a Society member.

Best of luck on the 26th,
I apologize that you had to remind me – but I’m glad you did. I’ve embedded my updated version with my edits in RED. See you Thursday!

Thanks so much,

Amy Gray Beck <acbeck@vcu.edu> Mon, Sep 23, 2019 at 2:59 PM
To: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
Beautiful! Thank you so much! And no worries - I know you are incredibly busy!
Looking forward to seeing you then!
Amy

Holly:

Tue, Sep 17, 2019 at 2:39 PM
To: Amy Gray Beck <acbeck@vcu.edu>
Hi Amy, it's so nice to hear from you, and I'm glad your work is going well! I don't see anything wrong with the profile - I don't remember our whole conversation, but it seems accurate to me. xxxxx might be a little strong - xxxxxxxxxxxxx. I'd be happy to look at a longer version/quotes as you get closer to your dissertation. Good luck!

Amy Gray Beck <acbeck@vcu.edu> Tue, Sep 17, 2019 at 9:05 PM
To: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
Great! See below for my change, and thank you for being willing to help moving forward!

If there aren't any issues with the change I'll move forward as is! Thank you SO much!
-Amy

Izzy:

Mon, Sep 16, 2019 at 10:01 AM
To: Amy Gray Beck <acbeck@vcu.edu>
Amy,
Would you write my obituary? I sound much more interesting and fun than I am. 😊

I am clearly identifiable and that’s okay. I’m old enough to own my opinion.

I wasn’t really [password] I just did the things I loved.

We didn’t start giving back “almost immediately.” It was probably 15 years after graduation.

I don’t think I have earned the designation [password] I would think it fair to say that I care deeply about the quality of public education, especially Richmond Public Schools.

Thanks for your work on this project.

Best regards,

Sent from my iPad

Amy Gray Beck <acbeck@vcu.edu> Mon, Sep 16, 2019 at 10:29 AM
To: [password]

Thank you for your quick response and edits! And don't be silly - I really enjoyed our time together and I'm glad that came through in my writing!

I've made the changes you requested. Below will be the final version (for the presentation) unless you have any more changes! Thank you again!

(profile redacted)

[password]  Mon, Sep 16, 2019 at 3:20 PM
To: Amy Gray Beck <acbeck@vcu.edu>
Thank you. Yes, it’s fine and I like my new name!

Jessica:

[password] Fri, Sep 20, 2019 at 10:26 PM
To: Amy Gray Beck <acbeck@vcu.edu>
see edits below. I will see you at Society of 1918 next week I assume!