

# Oral Defense Announcement

## University of Missouri – St. Louis Graduate School

An oral examination in defense of the dissertation for the degree  
Doctor of Business Administration

Sarah Willey

M.A. in Nonprofit Management, December 2015, Washington University in St. Louis  
B.A. in Interdisciplinary Studies, May 2008, Truman State University

### **Ethical Leadership and Moral Foundations Congruence**

Date: July 16, 2024  
Time: 2:00pm – 4:00pm  
Place: 106 Anheuser-Busch Hall

#### **Abstract**

Research has examined follower perceptions of ethical leadership, but rarely accounts for the (mis)alignment between a follower's sense of ethics and morality and that of a leader. This research examined the effects of a leader's expression of each of the five Moral Foundations dimensions on ethical leadership perceptions, moderated by the respondent's preferences for each of these foundations. To address this question, a policy capturing design was used to manipulate leaders' high and low levels of each of the five foundations. The results of multilevel analyses indicate that at least for some dimensions of Moral Foundations, a follower's evaluation of ethical leadership will be higher when their own emphasis on a dimension expressed by that leader is higher. We found no significant difference in evaluations of ethical leadership for followers with low v. high levels of moral identity, and interestingly found that female leaders were generally perceived as more caring than male leaders. This study offers an initial experimental look at the interaction between a follower's and leader's moral baseline and perceptions of ethical leadership; it opens the door for a rich collection of future research.

#### **Defense of Dissertation Committee**

John P. Meriac, Ph.D. (Chairperson)  
Stephanie Merritt, Ph.D.  
Matthew J. Taylor, Ph.D.