“The Good-Ole-Boy Network”: How Dual Career Partners Navigate the University System—Implications for Policy

Presented by:
Molly Hedrick, M.A. & Barb Silver, Ph.D.

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President’s Commission on the Status of Women

- Violence Prevention
- Social Networking
- Recruiting & Retaining Women of Color
- Chafee Building
- Family Friendly Task Force
- Staff Issues
- Parental Leave
- Dual Career Partners
- Child & Elder Care
- Research Subcommittee
- Policy Subcommittee

Dual Career Research Subcommittee

- Quantitative Results From Climate Survey
- Qualitative Interviews with Faculty and Administrators

* For additional resources/research related to dual career partners in academia check out http://www.provost.umich.edu/programs/dual_career/index.html and http://www.physics.wm.edu/~sher/survey.html

Quantitative Preliminary Results

- Few requests
  - Only 15% of respondents asked URI for assistance in finding job opportunities for a partner.
- Few were satisfied with assistance, more often men
  - Of those respondents that indicated a satisfaction level with the assistance provided by URI, 56% indicated they were not satisfied, whereas 24% indicated that they were satisfied. Males were significantly more satisfied than females with the assistance provided by URI (F(1,75)=4.11, p<.05).
- Women more willing to leave job for partner
  - Significantly more females have considered leaving URI to improve career opportunities for a partner than males (F(1,148)=11.06, p<.01), 43% of female respondents, but only 22% of male respondents have considered or highly considered leaving URI to improve career opportunities for a partner.
Qualitative Interviews: Method

Participants
- N=14
- Based on Dual Career Categories

Measures
- Semi-structured qualitative interviews
- Protocol for faculty*
- Protocol for deans/chairs*

Procedures/Data Analysis
- Phone or face-to-face interviews
- Transcribed and entered into NVivo

*See www.uri.edu/advance for interview protocols

Dual Career Partner Categories
- Academic couple came to university together entered job market together same field
- Academic couple came to university together entered job market together different fields both at URI
- Academic couple came to university together entered job market together different fields different universities
- Academic couple came to university together did not enter job market together
- Academic couple met at university
- 1 partner at the University (academic) 1 partner in the community (non-academic)
- Chairs/Deans
- Gay/Lesbian couples

Qualitative Interviews: Preliminary Results

Informal Individual Procedures for Navigating the System
- “hustling”
- “good-ole-boy network”

Naïveté and Fear of Discrimination Regarding Negotiations
- Female faculty hired 20 years ago: “I didn’t expect much… I thought it would be presumptuous to beg for money… (related to dual career negotiations) it would have been seen as inappropriate, unprofessional and suicidal… I was just happy to get a job”
- Recently hired female faculty: “…there was one particular school that, when I said that (I’m coordinating a job search with my husband) they said ‘let me call you back,’ and called back and said ‘we don’t want to interview you now’…so I stopped telling people, and that’s when I started getting many more job offers and then I wouldn’t raise it until either I was on the interview or maybe until I had an offer”

Interplay of other Climate Issues
- Female 1st hire: “so I was a novice, I knew nothing about what did it mean to be an academic, really because I was working on my PhD, working a full time job, raising two babies, you know, there wasn’t a whole lot of time to really understand the nature of the position… I mean my husband was never home and here I am female faculty, have two kids, trying to go through being an assistant professor, you know, and having no support at home, I had no support, my husband wasn’t around, plus I was angry at him cause, you know, he wasn’t home and it wasn’t his fault, but so I had to do all the household management”

Dignity of Second Hires
- Female 1st hire: “they are a kind of migrant worker—a second class citizen” (referring to partners who become lecturers)
- Female 1st hire, “I will not let him apply for another job here, there is just no way, it’s just too humiliating for him and unfair”

Assumptions about Dual Career Hires
- Male Chair in STEM field: “in my experience it has been tricky to find trailing husbands a position because one has to accommodate a less qualified spouse”
- Female Chair in NONSTEM field: “Searches from one department can lead to ‘exciting opportunities for other departments.’”

Negative Perceptions
- Female faculty: “there was prejudice against a woman who would move for her husband”
- Female: “I never would have taken maternity leave. When the kids were young, I never took a day off, if they were sick or even if I was sick, my husband would always do that, because it’s negatively perceived if a woman takes time off to care for her children, but if a man does it he is very supportive, and loving, and wonderful”
- Female: “women view it as unfair that they get benefits that as a single women or unmarried women they don’t get, or they get a break, they get easier schedules or they don’t have to work as hard, and then men think it’s a distraction”
Triangulation with . . .

- **Quantitative and Qualitative data**
  - many recognize that the dual career issue is a recruitment and retention issue
  - satisfaction does seem to vary by gender
  - many suggested that all faculty and staff should have access to dual career assistance without having to ask

- **Focus group results**
  - focus at the individual level (loan scholar, loan couple, personal qualifications) rather than institutional level (policy, research on discrimination, etc.)
  - assumptions about women
  - women don’t often speak out about their needs
  - importance of mentoring, especially HOW and by whom you are mentored
  - “good ole boy network” and decisions are made “around the men’s coffee area”
  - men worried about “lowering standard”

- **Pro-Change results**
  - male perception that we are already doing everything we can:
    - male chair: “not much we can do about water under the bridge,” “it may be one of these things you just have to live with”

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Policy: How to . . .

- Identify collaborative groups on campus
- Identify key committee members
- Research best practices → draft policy & philosophical framework
- Identify responsible office or person
- Obtain agreement from Deans → present to Administration
- HR and AA support
- Faculty Senate support