Rethinking Work-Life Balance

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FEBRUARY 6, 2013
23% of mothers are out of the workforce, compared to 1% of fathers
Percentage of men and women in poverty by race/ethnicity:

Women in poverty: family composition of household

• Caring economy
  [video](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B87oylDNInc)
• Sequestration: head start cuts
• No sig diff bet single parents and other parents in any outcome variable
• About 43% of URI staff are parents of dependent children; 21% of those are un-partnered women vs. 10% of men
• Workplace – workforce mismatch
• Skilling up the workforce
• Voices in the shadow
  ○ Motherhood and parenting
  ○ Women and work
  ○ Aging
• Parental leave internationally (caring economy)
• Caregiving – by gender, class, race
What do you mean, “rethinking” ???

- How do you define Work-Life Balance?
- Who is responsible for it?
- How can you have more of it?
Defining Work-Life Balance

- Balance
- Integration
- Fit
Work Intrudes into Family . . .
Work-Centrism

“Everybody’s getting together after work to do some more work— you in?”
How is WLB different today than in the past?

- **Workforce is different**
  - Age, gender, dual earner, cultural diversity, working longer and harder

- **Workplace is different**
  - Global economy, faster paced, constant electronic connections, service/information economy

- **Expectations are different**
  - Younger workers expecting more time for family/personal and more work-life supports from employers
  - Older workers expecting to stay in workforce longer

- **Ideal worker norm**
  - Available 24-7, no family responsibilities

- **National and URI initiatives**
What is WLB composed of?

Workplace Flexibility
flexibility in work schedules, hours worked, and/or the place of work

Culture and Community
accessing the offerings and resources of a vibrant and supportive community

Family Care
resources and services to help with care giving responsibilities throughout the life course

Financial Planning & Retirement
resources, advice, and services to help with financial planning and retirement

Time Off
policies and practices that allow and encourage sufficient time off from work, paid and unpaid

Health & Wellness
resources, services, and practices that promote physical and mental health and well-being

Professional Development
resources, advice, and services to enrich and strengthen skills and foster professional growth
Workplace Flexibility - what is it?

- **Flexibility:** *the ability to adjust when, where, and/or how you work to better meet personal/family responsibilities while meeting work obligations*

- Flex time and flex place
- Management of work time
- Organization of career
Workplace Flexibility - why is it important?

- Equity/diversity issue
- Workers’ rights issue
- Business case
- Addressing barriers
  - cost, fear of abuse, difficult to manage, loss in productivity
- Supervisory support ↔ implementation gap
URI Work-Life Staff Survey

- 824 – 44.3%
- 72% female
- 92.8% white, 2.6% African American, 1.8% Asian
- 72.5% married/partnered
- 68% women and 71% men had employed partner
Why do you work part-time?

- Unable to find FT: 10
- I enjoy working PT: 15
- Don't need income: 5
- Enable better balance: 25
- Transitioning out of FT: 5
- WL: 0
Figure 4. Likelihood of elder care responsibilities in next 5 years

- Very Likely/Likely: 376
- Unsure: 123
- Unlikely/Very Unlikely: 286
The more work-life conflict (2.1) experienced:

- more hours worked,
- higher the intention to leave,
- higher sense of overwork,
- higher perceived stress
- less control of work schedule,
- less satisfaction with current work schedule,
- less overall job satisfaction,
- less organizational commitment,
- less supervisory and organizational support
Top 5 most helpful work-life supports for URI employees

- Daily flextime: 4.6
- Regular, scheduled flextime: 4.46
- Sick bank: 4.4
- Compressed work week: 4.35
- Paid parental leave: 4.24

1=strongly disagree
5=strongly agree
Employees with some flexibility (46.8%) report:

- Higher incomes, education, and more supervisory responsibilities
- Greater satisfaction with their work schedule
- Greater sense of control over their work schedules
- Greater satisfaction with their child care arrangements
- Greater job satisfaction
- Greater organizational commitment
- Greater supervisory WL support
- Less sense of overwork
If they were to leave their jobs, employees on a fixed schedule were more likely to leave because:

- To transfer to another job at URI
- Inadequate flex work options/practices
- Work-family conflicts
- Being treated unfairly
- Illness
- Retirement (those on fixed schedules are older)
URI employees say:

- I wish my supervisor didn’t think that flex time is just a fad/waste of time.
- As much as I would love to work a flex schedule, those who are in positions where it is not practical seem to notice who does what when . . . They are always noticing when you come in late but never notice when you are working at home or come in at 5 a.m.
- It’s not worth the backlash from those who don’t have a flexible schedule.
- I found out when going out on maternity leave that my office tried to be supportive. However, leading up to the time I was out and afterward they continually make me feel bad for taking the leave. I also feel like they have postponed a promotion because I used this benefit.
URI employees say:

- I think URI does a great job promoting work-life balance. I also think there is a somewhat antiquated philosophy of some employees/managers that prevents staff from requesting a more flexible work schedule. Personally, I feel that if you do your job well and it is a position that can have the necessary flexibility it is a win-win for employer as well as employee.

- My supervisor is extremely supportive of balancing home/work needs. Not all URI supervisors I’ve dealt with have been as good.

- I am allowed to work as many hours as needed to do my job and have a lot of flexibility in my schedule.
How can you organize your work and life better?

- Know what is available to you – do your homework
- Consider asking your supervisor for some type of flexible work arrangement – do your homework
- Encourage a culture of coverage – support co-workers, be a model and promote a supportive work climate/environment
- [www.uri.edu/worklife](http://www.uri.edu/worklife)
Proposing a flexible work arrangement

- Is your job suitable?
- Is your work style conducive to your proposed arrangement?
- Think through the details.
- Talk with other employees who have participated in an alternative work arrangement.
- Make your business case. What are the cost/benefits?
- Partner with your manager.
- Understand your manager’s style.
- Develop a communication plan.
- Prepare a written proposal that is consistent with your manager’s work style.
  - Address the why, what, where, and how; include a communication plan.
  - Discuss how the manager can evaluate the effectiveness of the arrangement – pilot it.
  - Formalize agreement in writing

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One Wish

What one thing would you like to see change in your workplace that would help you get your work done more effectively and increase your job satisfaction?