Work-Life at the University of Rhode Island

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Work-Life Challenges are Perhaps Women’s Biggest Barrier Today? Sorry Meg

Family Un-friendly culture
- Maternal wall
- Lack of family-friendly policies and practices

Among 450 female scientists and engineers employed at research universities, more than 70 percent cited the need to balance career and family as the most significant barrier to professional development (Rosser, 2004)

“Urry suspects that raising a family is often the excuse women use when they leave science, when in fact they have been discouraged to the point of giving up.” (Pollack, “Why Are There Still So Few Women in Science” Oct. 3, 2013, NYT)
## Work-Life Solutions – A Career Course Perspective

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*Image courtesy of Advance University of Rhode Island*
ADVANCE and Work-Life at URI, 2003-2009

- Paid Parental Leave Policy (2005)
- Education and Awareness Workshops, Trainings, and Publicity
- Work-Life Mentor Training
- Institutionalized Work-Life Committee
Dual career stats

According to the Clayman Institute on Gender Research 2008 study, “Dual Career Academic Couples:”

• 36% of the American professoriate are part of an academic couple.
• Women faculty are more likely to be in an academic partnership than are men (40 percent versus 34 percent, respectively.)
• 38% of academic couples work in the same department.
• 88% of faculty who successfully negotiated a dual hire at their current institution indicated that the first hire would have refused the position had her or his partner not found appropriate employment.
• The number one reason women refuse an offer is because their academic partners were not offered appropriate employment at the new location.

URI DUAL CAREER POLICY

The University Of Rhode Island acknowledges the importance of supporting dual career partners in attracting and retaining a quality workforce, and its long-range economic benefits to the University, and is committed to offering placement advice and assistance whenever feasible and appropriate.”

- approved January 2008 -

URI DC Guidelines

ADVERTISING

PROVIDING INFORMATION

DEFINITION OF A DUAL CAREER PARTNER

RESPONDING TO A REQUEST FOR DUAL CAREER ASSISTANCE
  ◦ OFF-CAMPUS EMPLOYMENT
  ◦ URI NON-ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT
  ◦ URI ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT

MONITORING & OVERSIGHT

DUAL CAREER ACCOMODATION STRATEGIES
  ◦ EXPEDITED APPLICATION FOR AN OPEN POSITION
  ◦ SPLIT POSITION
  ◦ SHARED APPOINTMENT
  ◦ SOFT MONEY APPOINTMENT
  ◦ VISITING PROFESSOR, LECTURESHP, PER COURSE INSTRUCTION

SEARCH WAIVER REQUEST
What were the challenges?

1. Culture - Fear of nepotism and favoritism → backlash, lawsuits
2. Resources - Expensive
3. Flexibility - Department/college strategic plans upended
4. Perceived Value
   1. Time consuming and complicated
   2. Hires can be risky investments
   3. Heavy vetting required by AA, HR, legal, admin
   4. Leadership changes
Interest in a Dual Career Program

- ADVANCE begins
- Policy adoption
- Hiring Freeze
- Leadership Changes
- ACE Faculty Flexibility Initiative
How long does institutional transformation take? *The $3.5 million question.*

URI is a different place today because of ADVANCE

- URI Equity Council, Diversity Committees in every unit and college
- Assoc. VP Community, Equity, and Diversity position
- Director of Faculty Recruitment & Retention position • Director of Community & Organizational Development position
- URI Faculty Recruitment & Retention Task Force → Strategic plan for R&R based on ADVANCE principles
- Academic Affairs Diversity Task Force → many initiatives
Work-Life a lasting legacy

- Institutionalized Work-Life Committee, work includes:
  - Creation of Family Care Assistance Program (includes faculty travel fund)
  - Pregnant & Parenting Student policy
  - Administrators’ Work-Life workshops
  - Work-life topical lunches, webinars, literature
  - Staff work-life survey, faculty survey to follow 2014

- Schmidt Labor Research Center → focus expanding to gender and work, work-life and workplace flexibility

- Member of American Council on Education 2013-2014 Faculty Flexibility Initiative
  - Dual Career Program named the number one priority

“We’ve lost or are going to lose too many good people.”
URI Provost DeHayes
Work-Life Solutions – “15 by ‘15”??

**EARLY-CAREER**
- Dual Career assistance
- Tenure path flexibility
- Paid family leaves
- Active Service, Modified Duties
- Reduced teaching loads
- Part-time options
- Professional development funds
- Child Care Assistance

**MID-CAREER**
- On-ramps and off-ramps
- Career re-vitalization
- Sandwich and elder care assistance
- Post tenure reviews
- Career shift accommodations
- Leadership opportunities

**LATE-CAREER**
- Elder care assistance
- Phased retirement options
- Continued engagement post-retirement
- Post-career counseling and networking
Evolving DC solutions. . .

Centralized, dedicated funding pools to become a regular budget line item
- Bridge funding, shared funding

Universities must adopt a Career Services approach → hiring a family, not an individual
- Example: Betsy Hillman, Director DC Program, Cornell (retired)
  - Active, personal networking inside and outside institution
  - Client driven approach → extended interview; packet of materials; resume/cv, cover letter, interview coaching
- Example: URI Dual Career ACE Initiative Task Force

De-silo the whole dual career effort regionally, and even nationally - Networking a must
- Example: HERC
- Example: Angela McNerney, Tech Valley Connect, affiliated with RPI in Troy NY region; consortium of businesses committed to R&R of top talent – partner employment, family transition, cultural assimilation
- Example: URI Dual Career Regional Forum – spring 2014
Lessons Learned ➔ Best Strategies

- To every thing there is a season (or: be strategic)
- 500-body problem (or: data, data, data)
- Total immersion – the Viagra Method (or: WL is everywhere)
- It’s the economy, stupid (or: make the business case)