

Workplace Flexibility and Faculty Success: *What a Chair Needs to Know*



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JUNE 23, 2011

Sponsored by:
Schmidt Labor Research Center
Elsevier Foundation



“There is a structural mismatch of how the workplace is organized and the needs of the current workforce. Now the workforce expects the career path to mimic a life lived.”

Dr. Kathleen Christiansen, Director Alfred P. Sloan Foundation’s Workplace, Work Force and Working Families Program

What is Workplace Flexibility?



Workplace flexibility is a human capital strategy designed to maximize agility, an increasingly important organizational imperative. It frames an inclusive agenda for excellence in how work gets done and how careers are managed. It's the 21st century antidote to the remnants of the Industrial Age mindset that dictated a one-size-fits-all way of working. When properly executed, it enables organizations to be more nimble, healthy and productive; improves lives; and ultimately strengthens the economy.

- Alliance for Work-Life Progress

The good news . . .



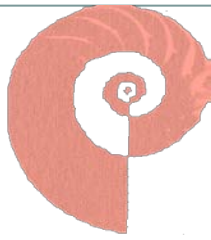
*. . . is that implementing workplace flexibility has **few direct costs**. It is the one work-life initiative that doesn't require a specific investment in dollars, yet its achievement may require an organization to completely **reinvent its culture**. It is a remarkably inexpensive power tool for creating higher levels of **attraction, retention, engagement, productivity** . . . and even **wellness**.*

WorldatWork & Alliance for Work-Life Progress (2008): *Workplace Flexibility: Innovation in Action*

Workplace Flexibility: Changing the Way We Think about Work



- Not an accommodation, but a universal re-design of the role of work in society and social sustainability
- A business *strategy*, not a perk or a favor
- A shift in conceiving work as *input* (face-time, hours logged) to conceiving work as *output* (products, results, accomplishments)
- Workers have legitimate needs and rights to be productive in many areas outside the workplace, and these pursuits should not require explanation or defense.
- Connected to larger issues: wellness, community participation, environmental concerns



Far-Reaching Benefits



TO THE EMPLOYEE

Increased:

- Job Satisfaction
- Intention to Stay
- Job Commitment
- Physical Health
- Emotional Health
- Family Health
- Community & Personal Care Needs
- Time Management
- Energy Savings

Decreased:

- Stress
- Absenteeism
- Presenteeism

TO THE EMPLOYER

Increased:

- Productivity
- Efficiency
- Bottom Line
- Energy Efficiency
- Engagement
- Loyalty
- Morale
- Retention
- Organizational Citizenship Behaviors

Decreased:

- Absenteeism
- Employee Resentment
- Attrition

TO SOCIETY

- Reduced Environmental Impact
- Increased Community Involvement
- Lower Health Care Costs
- Bolsters Economy

What Does it Look Like?



Flex-time and Flex-place

- Flextime: a wide variety of flex scheduling options
- Compressed work-week
- Part-time work
- Telework
- Split appointments
- Job sharing

Organization of Career

- Tenure clock stops
- Phased retirement
- Parental/family leave
- Sabbaticals
- On- and off-ramps

Management of Work Time

- Cross training
- Reserved time
- ROWE
- Lactation programs
- Personal time at work
- Other time off
- Sick banks

Academia Today



- **Ideal Worker Norm**
- **Workplace/Workforce Mismatch**
 - Women (39% ft faculty vs. 10% in 1990)
 - Minorities (17% ft faculty)
 - Dual career couples
 - Aging population – caregiver issues
 - Increasing need for non-linear career paths
- **Shifting Attitudes about Work**
 - Dual-centric attitudes increasing
 - Men's desire for more family involvement



National Center for Educational Statistics 2008-031; NCES 2009-020

Caregiver Bias:

Workplace Flexibility is an Equity Issue



- Average age for receipt of a Ph.D. is 33 for men and 34 for women, placing the earliest tenure year at age 40-41.
- The period of most intensive work to establish an academic career coincides with prime childrearing years.
- Women, still the primary caregivers, are often forced to choose between an all-consuming professional career and having children—a choice that men are not generally forced to make.
- This can be a significant source of inequities in faculty status, promotion, tenure, and salary.
- Ideal worker norm – highly competitive – both men and women who take caregiving leaves receive fewer rewards and lower performance ratings
- More disciplinary endogamy in academia, especially sciences, and especially for women

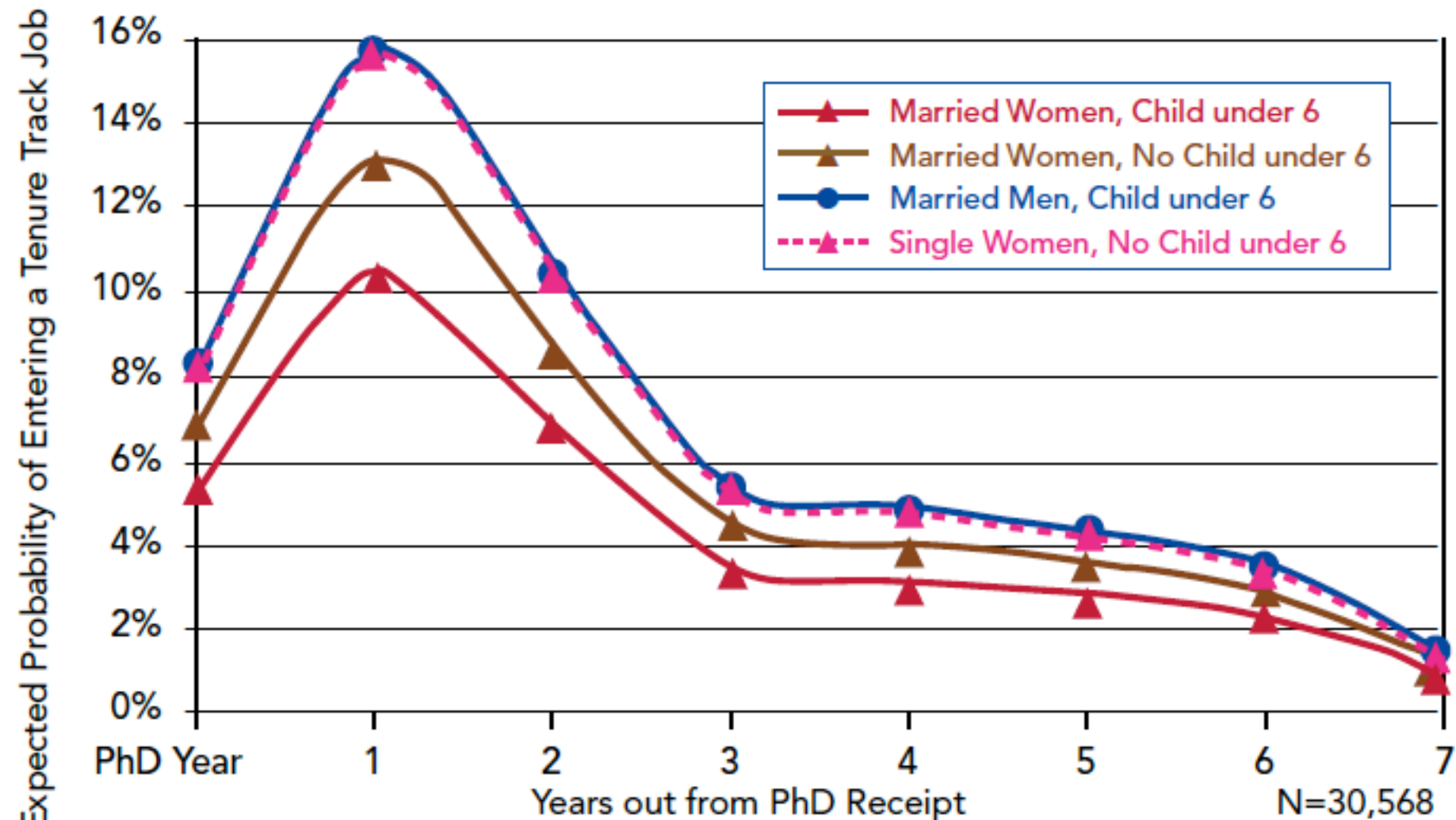
AAUP Balancing Family and Academic Work, <http://www.aaup.org/AAUP/issues/WF/>

Caregiver Bias, cont'd



- Juggling work/family responsibilities compounds other challenges underrepresented faculty face, including the “water-cooler culture” and lack of “fit” in the department (e.g., women/minorities in STEM)
 - Isolation, exclusion, lack in insider information, fewer professional networks, less access to resources, less mentoring, fewer collaborations, chilly work environment, burden of token status, stereotyped work expectations
- Women on highly competitive academic tracks are less likely to marry and have children than men, or women in lower posts (41% vs 69%)
- “Maternal wall” – mothers are 79% less likely to be hired than non-mothers and 100% less likely to be promoted (Correll, Bernard, & Paik, 2007)
- Married mothers 50% less likely to gain faculty positions than married fathers or single women (Mason & Goulden (2004)
- Women are more likely to work part-time, be in non-tenure track positions, and leave academia altogether (estimated turnover cost replacing tenure-track position? \$96,000 - COACHE Open House 2009)
- BIAS AVOIDANCE behaviors abound, in order to avoid negative evaluations

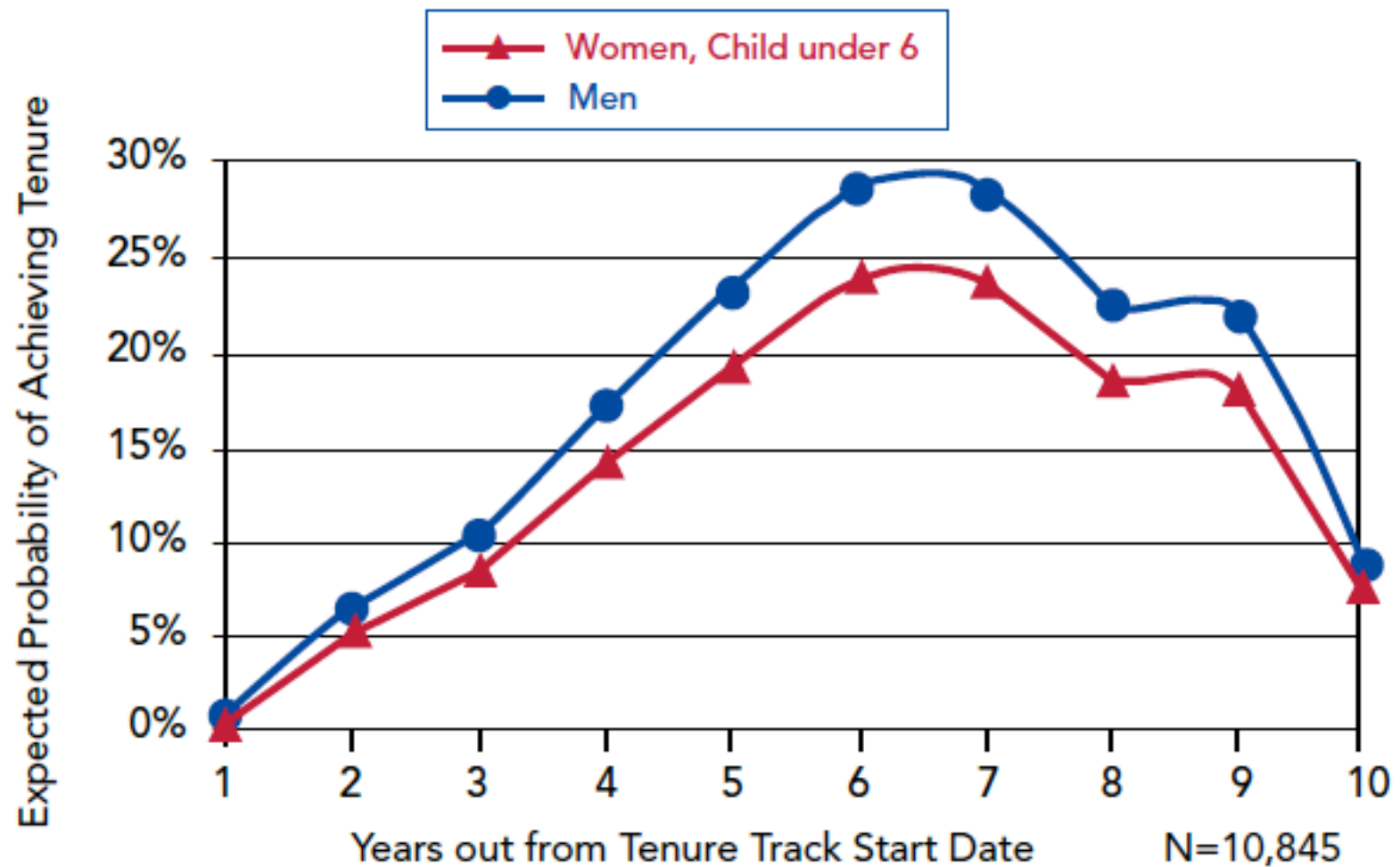
Leaks in the Pipeline: PhD to Tenure Track Position



For each year after the PhD, Married Men with Children under 6 are 50% more likely to enter a tenure track position than are Married Women with Children under 6.

Source: Survey of Doctorate Recipients, Sciences and Humanities, 1981 to 1995. Note: The use of NSF data does not imply NSF endorsement of research methods or conclusions contained in this report.

Leaks in the Pipeline: Tenure Track to Tenure



For each year after securing a tenure track position, Men are 20% more likely to achieve tenure than are Women.

Source: Survey of Doctorate Recipients, Sciences and Humanities, 1981 to 1995. Note: The use of NSF data does not imply NSF endorsement of research methods or conclusions contained in this report.

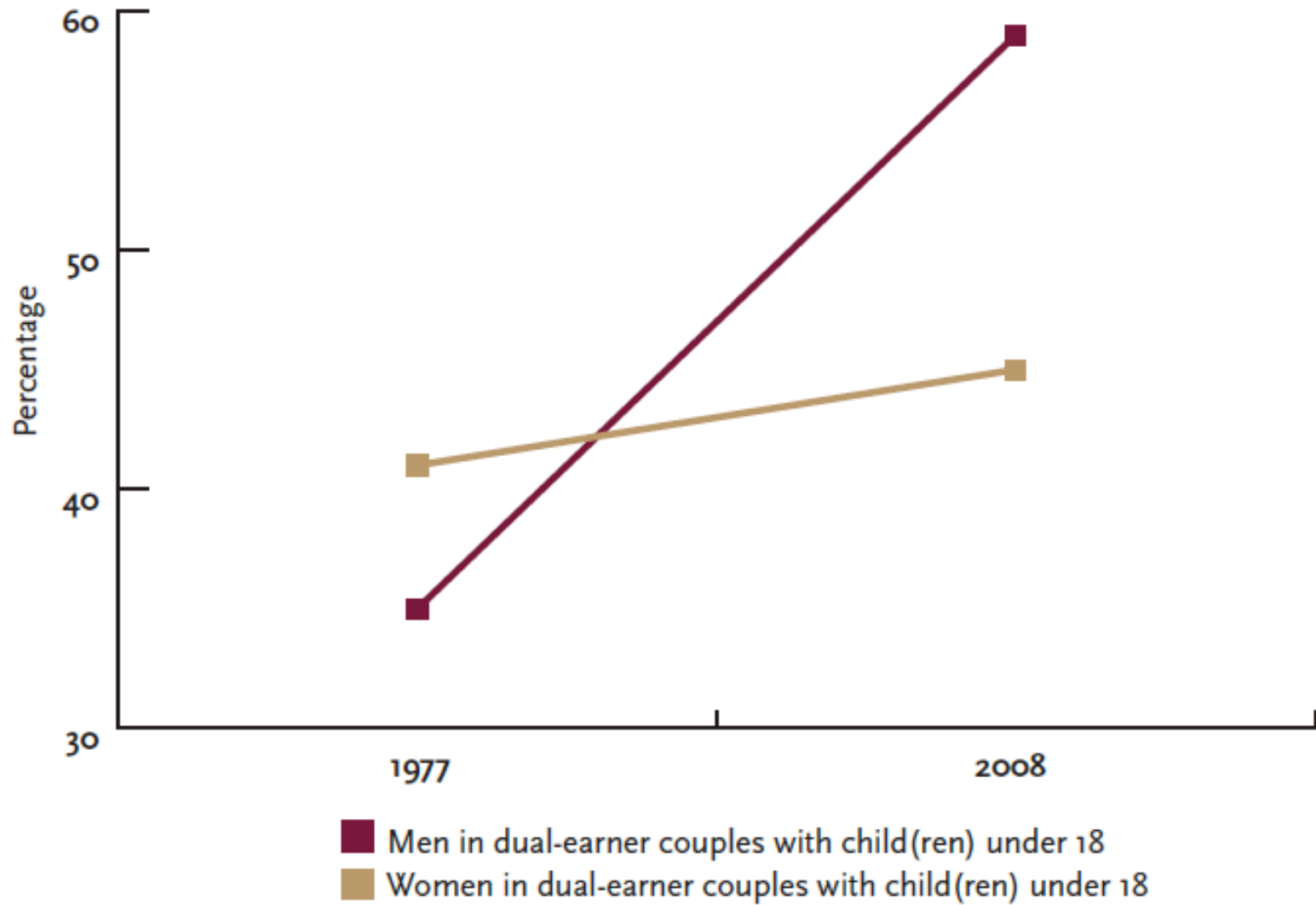
BUT . . .Work-Life Conflict is No Longer a Woman's Issue



- More than 2/3 of working fathers (68%) have experienced negativity or problems with their current employer due to conflicts between their job and duties as a caregiver; 57% report multiple times
- 48% working fathers vs. 31% working mothers spend less than a quarter of the day with their children
- 39% fathers report that demands of current job detract from ability to interact with and support children and family
- 1 in 4 families tag team to manage child care, and tag team to care for elderly relatives
- 70% of all children live in families where all adults are employed

WorldatWork & Alliance for Work-Life Progress (2008): *Workplace Flexibility: Innovation in Action*

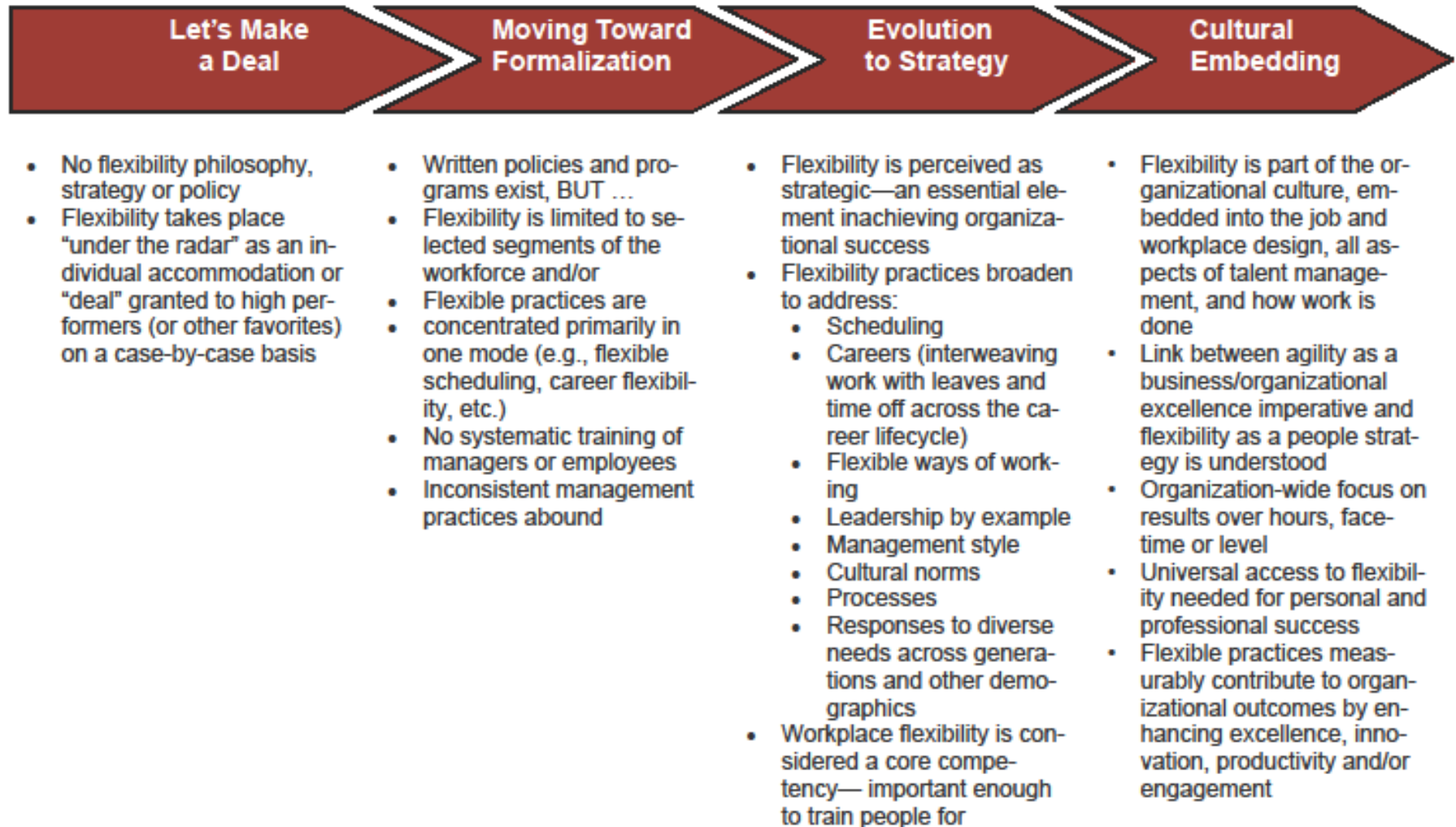
Figure 1: Fathers Now Experience More Work-Life Conflict Than Mothers



(National Study of the Changing Workforce by Galinsky, Aumann, and Bond, 2008)

Silver/Mederer: URI, June 23, 2011

The Flexibility Spectrum



Workplace Flexibility in Academia



Private Sector

Focused primarily on *scheduling flexibility*, e.g.,

- ✦ Compressed work weeks
- ✦ Flex time
- ✦ Job sharing
- ✦ Part-time work
- ✦ Teleworking

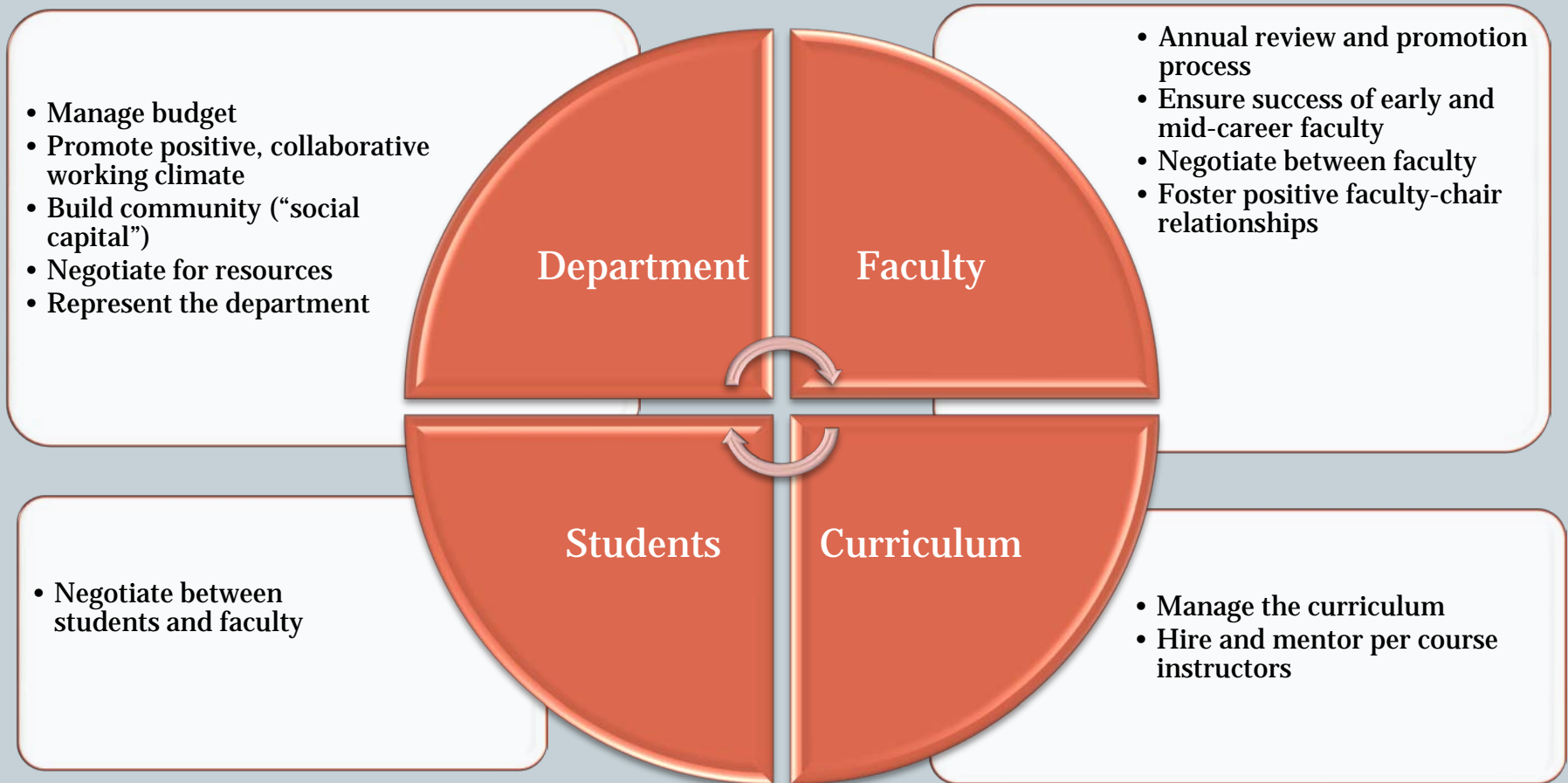
Academia

Focused primarily on *career flexibility*, e.g.,

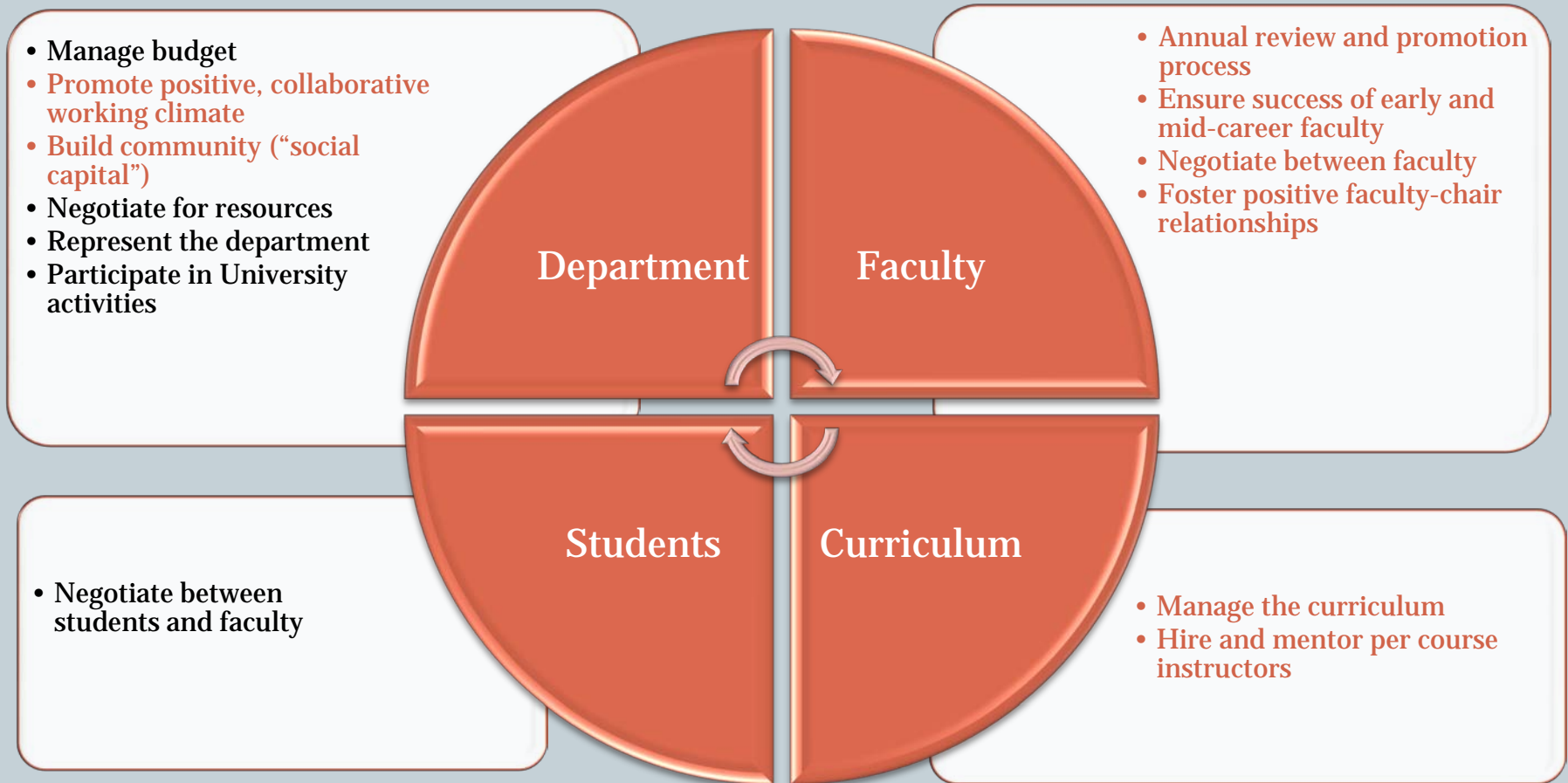
- ✦ Tenure-clock stops
- ✦ Longer-term leaves of absence
- ✦ Temporary reductions in workload with no loss of professional status for childbirth or family responsibilities
- ✦ Transitional part-time work after major life events
- ✦ Part-time assignments that allow for continued affiliation throughout child-bearing and child-rearing years

WorldatWork & Alliance for Work-Life Progress (2008): *Workplace Flexibility: Innovation in Action*

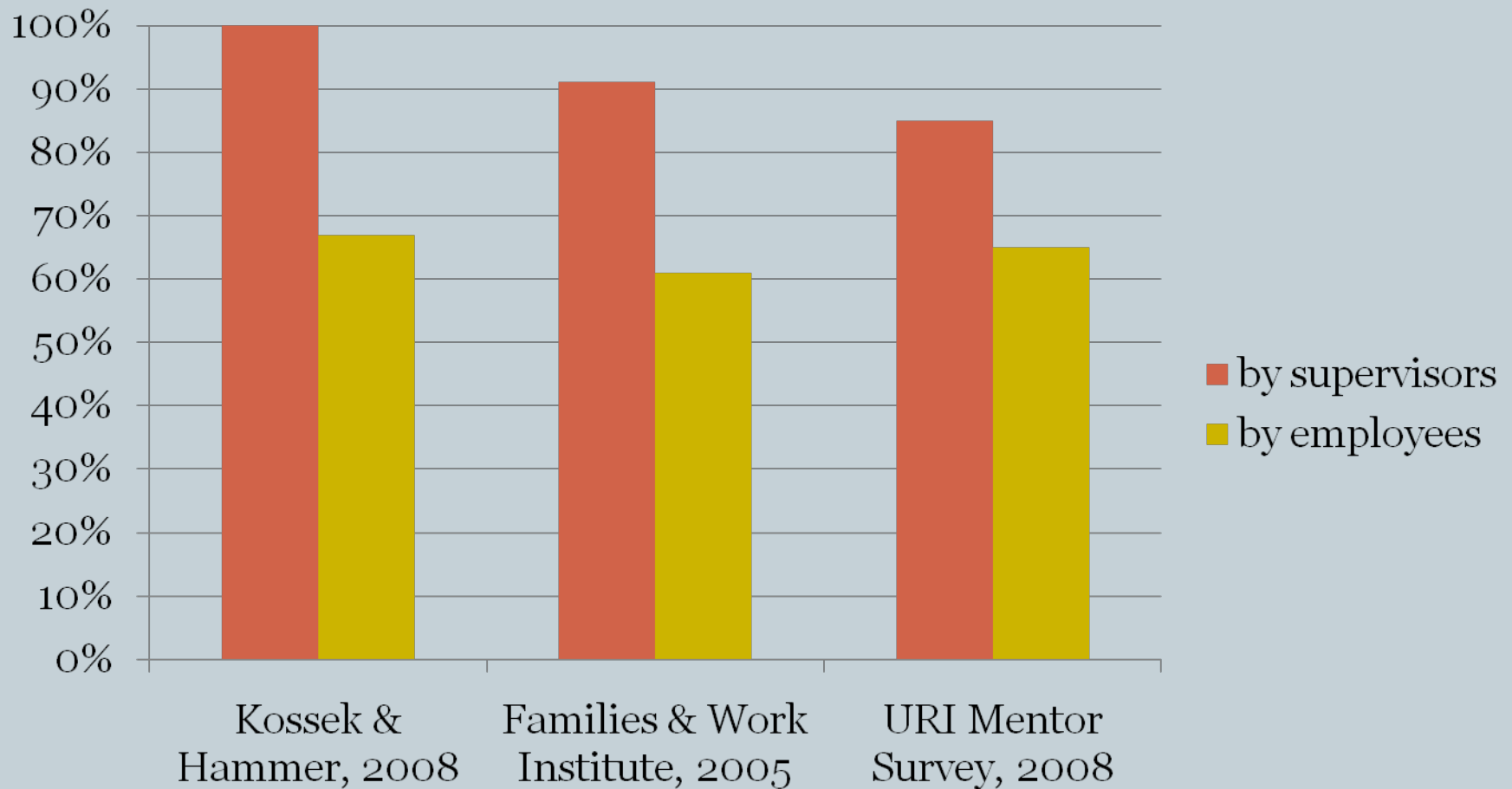
What Does It Take to Be a Good Chair?



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Self Perception Bias: Assessments of Positive Efforts by Supervisors



What Do Faculty Need?

1. *Formal Policies and Programs*



- Flexibility & broadening of hiring protocols and standards
- Flexibility about what faculty do (split positions, teaching professorships, etc.)
- Dual career hiring assistance
- Paid parental leave
- Full-time, modified duties
- Temporary part-time, reduced workload options
- Opt-out tenure clock stops
- Sick leave usable for family members
- Child/elder care assistance/subsidies
- Transitional support programs
- Tenure and promotion review that recognizes adjustments
- On-ramps and off-ramps
- Phased retirement

What Do Faculty Need?

2. *A Supportive Informal Work Culture*



- Know the Culture – is it warm? Open? Family-friendly?
- Promote a Culture of Coverage
- Discourage Bias Avoidance Behaviors
- Provide Mentors who are aware of WL issues
- Broaden awareness – do you know what is available to you? Why not?
- Reward flexibility initiatives

What Do Faculty Need?

3. *Supervisory Support*



- Compelling and abundant research links supervisory support for flexible work arrangements to myriad positive outcomes
- How
 - Listen – don't question
 - Be responsive and proactive
 - Be flexible and creative in designing solutions
- Strengthen work-life policies and practices in your department
- View them as strategies and rights, as recruitment and retention tools, not as special accommodations or favors
- Communicate them openly and often – *be a role model*
- Encourage a “culture of coverage” in your department – *what goes around comes around*
- Ensure new faculty have mentors who are comfortable helping with work-life challenges

Supervisory support: some positive (+) and negative (-) examples:



- asking about employee's family (+)
- scheduling late-day meetings (-)
- disseminating new WL policy info (+)
- added workload after a leave (-)
- promotion denial because of flexwork (-)
- helping to solve a work-life challenge (+)
- Embracing ideal worker norm (face-time) (-)

Workplace Flexibility as a Recruitment Tool



- Job seekers rate workplace flexibility and the ability to balance work and personal lives just below pay and benefits as the top priority in job characteristics.
- In tough economic times, offering a workplace culture that is supportive of work-life integration needs is an important way to attract top talent.
- All top universities are doing this.
- Be proactive in communicating the URI and department work-life initiatives that are available during the search process, including dual career hiring assistance.
- Broaden criteria when considering applicants during search, taking into consideration non-standard career paths due to caretaking or other life circumstances.
- Anyone can fall prey to heavily ingrained, unconscious attitudes - be wary of implicit bias against caregivers

Confront the Barriers



- **Myth 1: It is expensive**
- **Myth 2: Policies will be abused**
- **Myth 3: It is too difficult to supervise**
- **Myth 4: It is unfair to other employees and will cause resentment**
- **Myth 5: It will result in a loss in productivity**



About the University

Campuses

Academics

Research & Outreach

Athletics &

Work-Life Home

Culture &
Community

Family Care

Workplace
Flexibility

Taking Time Off

Health &
Wellness

Professional
Development

Financial
Planning &
Retirement

Having
Workplace
Problems?

Supervisor
Resources

Work-Life A-Z

Work-Life Resources at URI

Today, the intersection of work, family, and life responsibilities provides challenges for many workers. Personal and family responsibilities, including children and aging parents, are impacting the work lives of an increasingly diverse workforce. Research shows that workplaces thrive and remain competitive when they respect and are responsive to the complex life and family needs of their workers. URI is committed to providing a workplace that respects the needs of its employees.

[Tell Me More About Work-Life](#)

[Philosophical Framework](#)

[The URI Work-Life Committee](#)

[History & Accomplishments](#)

[What About Me?](#)

The nautilus was chosen as the symbol of the efforts of the URI Work-Life Committee to promote professional growth while maintaining equilibrium, harmony and balance in the lives of members of the URI community. The chambered nautilus grow outward from its center in perfect mathematical proportions. We see this spiral form throughout the natural world, expressing balance, regeneration, growth, and evolution. The key to this pattern lies in the relationship of the parts (the individual chambers) to their center, the still point at the very core of the spiral. This core sustains and renews us, enabling us to maintain our equilibrium and balance amidst all of life's challenges. (adopted from Annie Harrison Designs: <http://www.sacredwatersculpture.com/index.html>)



NEWS & EVENTS

**Workplace Flexibility
Administrators' Breakfast,**
December 16, 2010,
8:30-10:00 a.m., MU Atrium
I. RSVP to
work-life@etal.uri.edu



FALL 2010 BROWN BAG LUNCHES

Nov. 5: *Student Parents' Group*, 12:00 pm, MU354

Nov. 17: *Caring for the Caregiver*, 12:00 pm, MU354

Dec. 8: *Caring for the Caregiver II*, 12:00 pm, MU354



NEW PRIVACY ROOM
FOR NURSING MOTHERS
OPENING THIS WINTER
IN THE URI LIBRARY!