Women in Higher Education:

Promoting Success through Workplace Flexibility

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NSF ADVANCE

The National Science Foundation has poured hundreds of millions of dollars into promoting women in academic science and engineering because they know that, despite the apparent outer trappings of gender equity in our institutions and our society, despite good laws, policies, proclamations and polite discourse, and, largely, the absence of overt, blatant workplace sexism, issues remain. That residing beneath those advances are subtle practices, unspoken assumptions, daily interactions, and cultural norms that work quietly to deter women's progress.

These are so much a part of our daily way of thinking and operating that **they fly under the radar,** and to the unpracticed eye, are pretty much **INVISIBLE**. As such, they are **insidious and intractable**, and though each micro in isolation, **add up over time** to significant challenges for women.

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URI ADVANCE Institutional Transformation Project

- 2003-2009
- $4.2 million
- ~ 40 IT schools nationwide, plus many mid-size and smaller ADVANCE grants
- 4 URI initiatives:
  - Recruitment (Faculty Fellows; best search practices training)
  - Retention (Mentoring, Research Funding, Topical Lunches)
  - Work-Life Initiative
  - Department Climate Change

Working Women

- In 2009, 60% of women worked, 73% of whom were in white collar jobs, 27% of whom were in professional occupations (or 57% of total in professional occ.)
- Most mothers are also working (71%). 76% single mothers are working (37% of whom are below poverty line)
- Labor force participation has increased most dramatically for married women
- In the 1960s, in 66% of families, father, but not mother, worked outside home, versus only 18% in 2007
- Working families lose $200 billion annually because of the wage gap (78 cents or $434,000 over 40 years)

(www.payequity.org);
http://advancingwomen.com/awl/awl_wordpress/in-search-of-leaders-gender-factors-in-school-administration/

Women in Education

- Approx. 75% overall teaching force is female; only18% administrators
- Female elementary and middle school teachers earn 14% less, despite comprising 82% of the field
- College/university female professors earn 15% less than men
- Women with bachelors or more will earn $713,000 less over 40 years

Women Ph.D.'s Increasing

- 1998 - 46% White (N= 28,803)
- 1998 - 60% Black (2,067)
- 1998 - 49% Hispanic (N = 1,275)
- 1998 – 40% Asian/Pac. Isl. (N = 2,339)

- 2008 - 56% White (N= 36,390)
- 2008 - 66& Black (N = 3,906)
- 2008 - 57% Hispanic (N = 2,279)
- 2008 – 55% Asian/Pac. Isl. (N = 3,618)

In most basic science departments the proportion of women among junior tenure track faculty is only 50-60% of expected, based on percentage of doctorates.

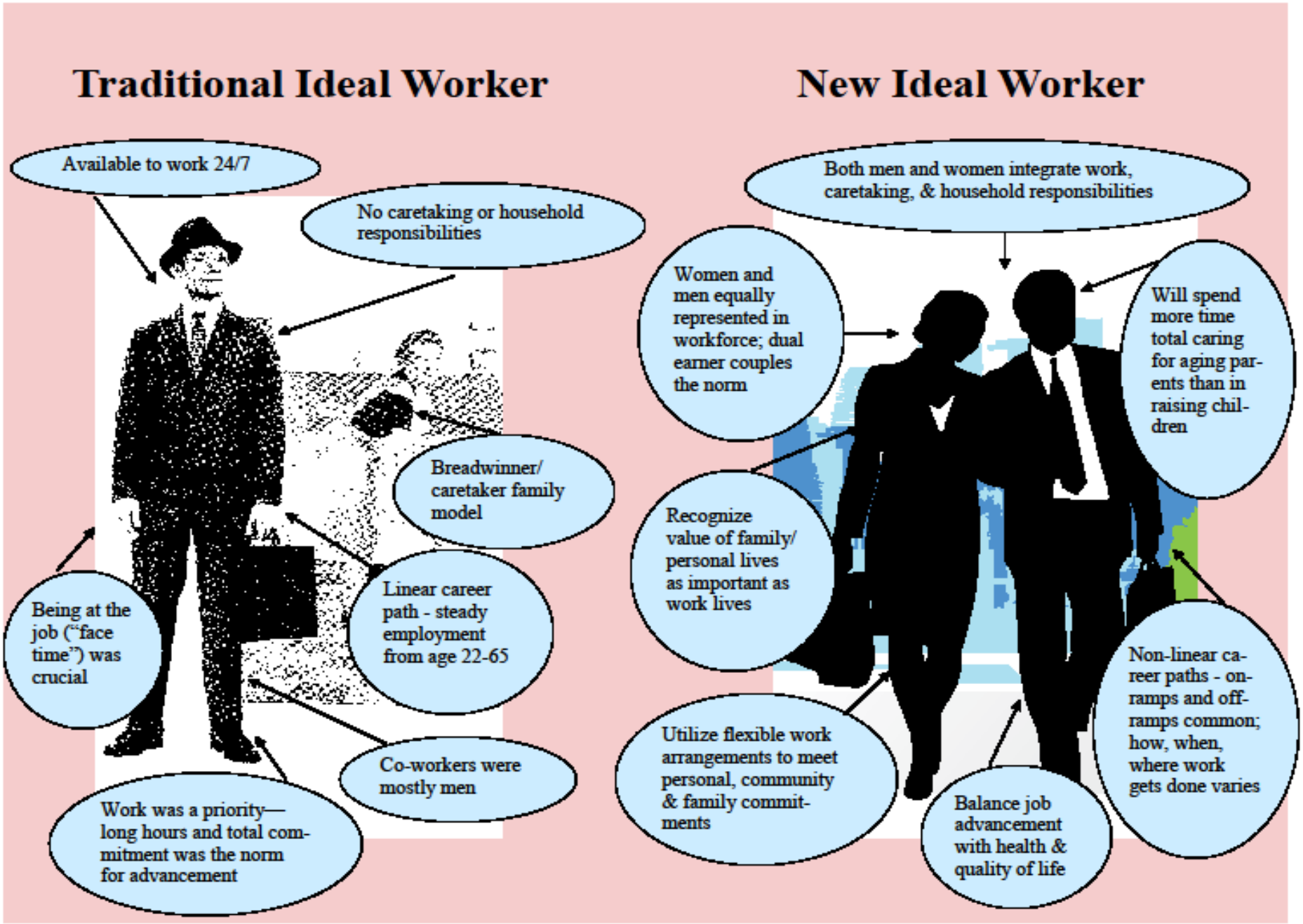
- 11% tenure/tenure track faculty in engineering, 5% full professors
- 18% math and physical sciences, 9% full prof.
- 34% life sciences, 27% full prof.
- 37% social sciences, 22% full prof.
- 32% of medical faculty members,16% of full professors,10% of department chairs, 11% of medical school deans

Why Don't They Enter or Stay?

- Subtle work cultures supporting traditional gender norms
- Inability to balance work, life, and family

Work-Life in the Academy

- Often 60-80+ hour work weeks
- Path to tenure coincides with parent track
- Women on highly competitive academic tracks are less likely to marry and have children than men or women in lower posts
- Women more likely to be working part-time, as instructors, and to leave at associate level
- More disciplinary endogamy (both partners in same discipline) in academia, especially sciences
- Water-cooler culture and lack of “fit” for some
- Ideal worker norm – highly competitive – both men and women who take caregiving leaves receive fewer rewards and lower performance ratings


Traditional Ideal Worker
Available to work 24/7
No caretaking or household responsibilities
Breadwinner/ caretaker family model
Being at the job ("face time") was crucial
Linear career path - steady employment from age 22-65
Co-workers were mostly men
Work was a priority—long hours and total commitment was the norm for advancement
New Ideal Worker
Both men and women integrate work, caretaking, & household responsibilities
Women and men equally represented in workforce; dual earner couples the norm
Will spend more time total caring for aging parents than in raising children
Recognize value of family/ personal lives as important as work lives
Non-linear career paths - on-ramps and off-ramps common; how, when, where work gets done varies
Utilize flexible work arrangements to meet personal, community & family commitments
Balance job advancement with health & quality of life

A Cultural Contradiction

- Ideal Worker Norm assumptions
- Institution of work versus the institution of family
  - No longer mutually exclusive
  - Both are vital and interdependent
  - Both are linked to economic vitality
- A structural, societal issue, not a personal accommodation
  - Next generation of workers
  - Example: the “opt-out revolution” myth
  - Example: National breastfeeding movement

The Maternal Wall & the Motherhood Penalty

- Vast majority of caregiving of children and aging adults still done by women
- Married mothers 50% less likely to gain faculty positions than married fathers or single women (Mason & Goulden (2004)
- Research shows that mothers 79% less likely to be hired (PTA on resume only difference), 100% less likely to be promoted, offered $11,000 less in salary and held to higher performance and punctuality standards than non-mothers. (Correll, Bernard, & Paik, 2007)
- In 2010, the Center for WorkLife Law at Hastings College in California documented a 400% increase in lawsuits involving family responsibilities discrimination in the past decade - 2,100 cases (Joan Williams, One Sick Child Away from Being Fired)

The Workplace Flexibility Movement

- Beyond salary and benefits, workplace flexibility ranked most important to employees today
- Federal initiatives (telecommuting)
- Dept. Labor Women's Bureau Workplace Flexibility Forum and National Dialogues
- Corporate responsibility → policy shifts
- Academia slowly responding
- Work-Life Centers, Offices, Specialists
- Organizations proliferating: WFI, Sloan Centers, CUWFA, Corporate Voices, etc.

Work-Life Home
Culture & Community
Family Care
Workplace Flexibility
Taking Time Off
Health & Wellness
Professional Development
Financial Planning & Retirement

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 inperfect

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

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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

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A 3-Level Model for Change

- **Institutional** – top down – formal policies, initiatives, and resources
- **Interactional** – where the rubber meets the road – subtle interpersonal dynamics, entrenched practices, implicit bias
- **Individual** – bottom up – grass roots, volunteer efforts, education and awareness on an individual level

Institutional

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

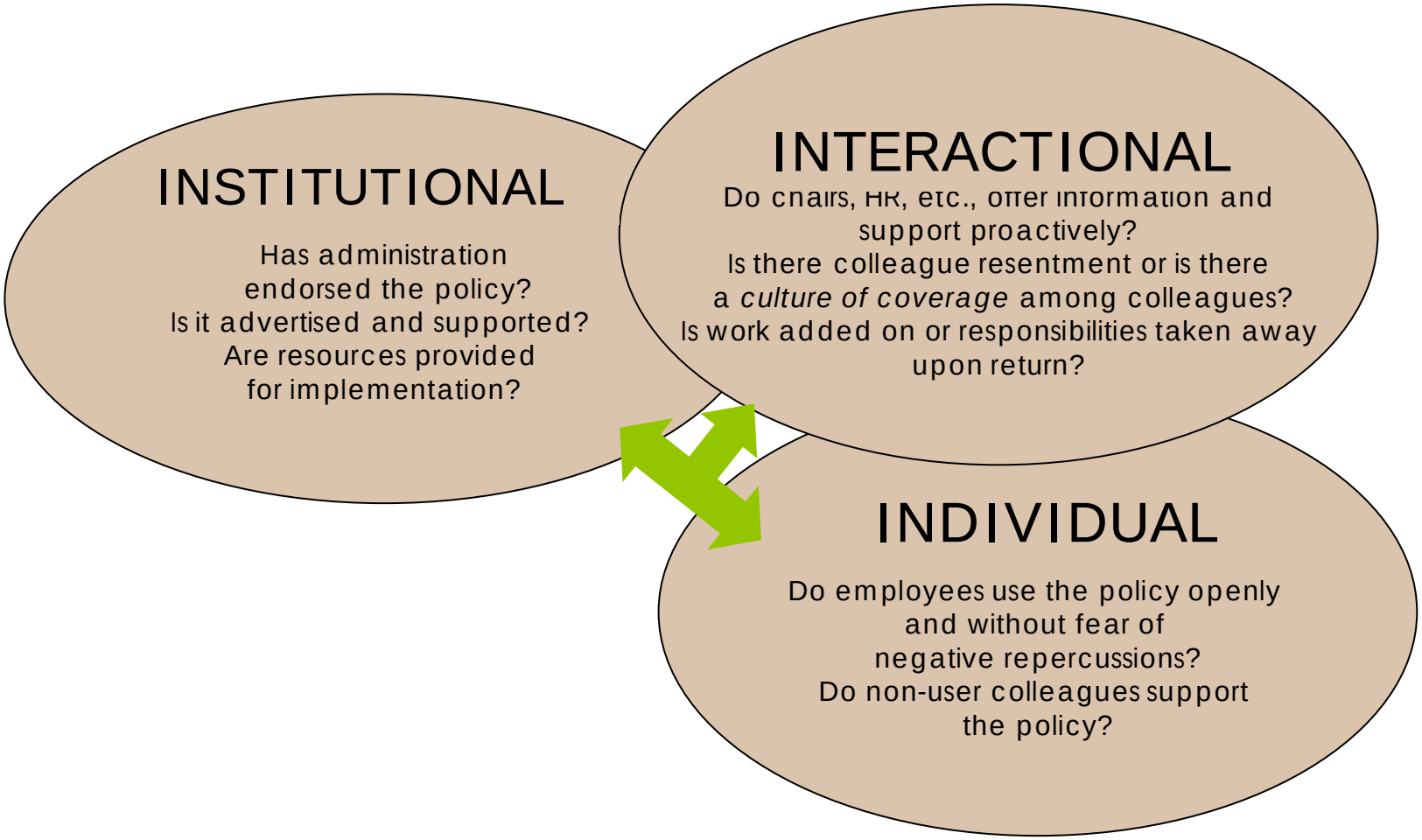
Individual

- Personal endorsements
- Proactive behaviors
- Mentoring and advocacy
- Belief and knowledge base about equity, fairness, gender norms, etc.
  - e.g., buy-in to the business case or not?
  - e.g., women = teachers, men = researchers
  - Those with family responsibilities get a break

Interactional

- Subtle interpersonal dynamics that fly under the radar
- Passive resistance by supervisors in spite of towing the party line
- Bias avoidance behaviors by employees
- Examples
  - Letters of recommendation
  - Scheduling meeting times early or late in the day
  - Talking over someone in a meeting
  - Differential use of “managerial allowance” decisions
  - Forgetting to publicize a work-life policy to employees
  - Not inviting the solo faculty to the lunch group
  - Women doctors sneaking away to pump breastmilk
  - Distancing behaviors during interviews

Paid Parental Leave



What to Do?

- Promote the idea that family/life friendly policies and practices are as necessary as pay equity
- Tune in to the Culture – is it warm? Open? Family-friendly?
- Promote a "culture of coverage" and community
- Discourage bias avoidance behaviors
- Broaden awareness about what is available to faculty
- Reward flexibility initiatives by supervisors/chairs
- Educate chairs/deans about the critical role they play
- Mentor at every level – train mentors about work-life issues
- Promote women who "get it" to leadership positions

Thank you.

Questions?

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