

ADVANCE

Changing the Culture at the University of Rhode Island:

Dual Career Issues

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"This is a growing problem, especially when the couple are in the same area. We are losing people because of this." Provost M. Beverly Swan

Plan

- Assessment: interviews, counts, research
- Develop policy & webpage
- Develop regional southern New England network
- Identify point person

Concerns from Chairs

Adequate qualifications

- Filling scarce slots – must be an asset to dept
- Affirmative action makes placement of partners more difficult than in the past
- It is difficult when one must accommodate a less qualified spouse.
- If hiring is not merit-based, this is questionable in terms of affirm. action

Tricky situations

- I don't know when & if it might be appropriate to bring up dual career issues – I'm reluctant to bring it up.
- There seems to be some resentment toward younger women who have not had to sacrifice family for career on the part of older women who did – there is a perception of increased dedication and workload for women without families
- (*in trying to find positions for partners*) the story is always different depending on who you talk to – the blame goes around

Advice from Chairs

Make it an opportunity, not a constraint

- Searches from 1 dept. can lead to exciting opportunities for other depts.
- Change some of the affirm. Action requirements
- There should be something in it for the depts. – the university should offer a "freebie" – so that hiring a couple doesn't affect future hires
- Treat it as a serious issue
 - Our most recent candidates were very impressed with response to dual career situation. They postponed decision several times before choosing another offer.
 - The process needs to be more formal – now we just get on the phone
 - Link career center with dept. hiring practices
 - Information should be more readily available to applicants
- Change the culture
 - View situation positively – URL will benefit from 2 dedicated employees
 - Spouses are often considered 2nd class citizens
 - This is a legitimate, common, and honorable situation – no one is looking for something they don't deserve