



Managing Academic Careers and Caretaking in STEM

National Academies Science, Engineering & Medicine
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Outcomes

- Terminology and Conceptual Lenses
- Differences that matter
- Focus on issues facing academics who are caregivers
 - All faculty
 - In STEM
 - International faculty
 - Non tenure track faculty
 - COVID contexts
- Discussion of systemic fixes

Terminology

- Avoid use the term “balance”
- Use “integration” or “management”
- Avoid work/family – use work/life
- Use caregiver not parent
- Much of the work is focused on women – as they are more likely primary caregivers
 - Men also face problematic norms
- Focus on structures not on individual change
 - Focus should be on changing norms and policies (not people)

Frames of reference

- Gendered academy
- Ideal worker norms
- Greedy nature of caregiving
- Entrenched gender roles
- Socialization and role models
- Life course perspective
- Neoliberal university structures
- Academic culture of doing more with less
- Crisis orientation/precarity
- Historically exclusive

Work-life integration:

Diverse circumstances and considerations

- Dual career
- Parenthood
 - Single parenthood
 - Blended
 - Same sex
 - Adoption
- Family care
 - Elders
 - Children
 - Grandparent
 - Spouse/partner
- Health and wellness



The difference that difference makes...

- Race/ethnicity
- National Origin
- Sexual orientation
- Gender identity
- Family Formation
- Socioeconomic status
- Intersectionality

Work-life integration: Diverse circumstances and considerations

- Institutional Type Differences
 - 2 year vs 4 year
 - Teaching vs Research Focus
- Field Differences
 - Humanities
 - Social Science
 - Professional
 - STEM
 - Lab Based
 - Field Based
- Tenure track position
 - Varying ranks
- Instructor/Lecturer (NTT)
 - Full time
 - Part time
 - Retired
 - Working full time in other field
 - Piecing together part time gigs
 - Aspiring to be full time
- Post Doc
- Graduate Student
- Administrative Role



The TT Academic Career Lifecycle for Caregivers

- Graduate School – women earn 50% of doctorates in STEM
- Post Doc
- Early Career
 - Biological and tenure clocks tick simultaneously – women represent 25% of tenured faculty in STEM
 - Diapers, daycare, breast feeding , maternity leaves
 - Joys of academic motherhood
 - No time
 - Perspective and Buffering
 - Need mentoring and support
- Mid Career
 - Car pools, activities, schedules
 - Lots of service and teaching – care work
 - Hesitancy to “go up” – women represent 20% of full professors in STEM
 - Feel Stuck – dual career couple concerns
 - In need of mentoring and support
- Late Career
 - In need of mentoring and support



Caregivers in STEM

- Gender & Racial inequality
- Not all STEM is the same
- Managing labs
- Field Work
- Grant funding
- Identity as a scientist
- Options beyond academe
- STEM Women perceived need to work harder
- Collaboration (+/-)



Care Related Needs of International Faculty

- Foreign Born faculty make up 20% of STEM faculty
 - 1/3 of all new hires
 - Surpass number of US female hires and US URM hires
 - COACHE survey from 2012-2018 (n=67,000 faculty from 164 universities)*
 - 88% US citizens
 - International faculty more likely to be married with children (55% compared to 48%)
 - 10% caregiver for an adult
 - International faculty less satisfied with measures related to work-life
 - International faculty less satisfied overall, but more productive
 - International faculty less mobile and less likely to hold leadership positions
 - Recent concerns about targeting of international scholars (FBI and racism) -- #invisibleasians
 - Work Life Concerns
 - STEM women more likely to be in dual career academic couples – affects on mobility and likelihood of TT job
 - International women likely to have traditional gender role orientations
 - Two patterns
 - Have mother (or MIL) live nearby to assist with childcare (til relative needs care themselves)
 - Live far away from family and lack support
- * Thanks to Amanda Kulp at UNF for running these data

Care Related Needs of Non-Tenure Track (NTT) Faculty

- Contingent Faculty – “fast food workers of the academy”
 - Part time adjuncts (retired, industry, “freeway” or “internet” fliers)
 - Full time NTT – research scientist (soft money) or teaching faculty (precarious short-term contracts)
 - Majority of faculty positions (2/3 of all faculty positions)
 - Women and URM more likely to be contingent: The Glass Wall
 - Women opt for NTT positions for family reasons
 - Paid less, work more, status is marginalized, work is precarious, disenfranchised – lots of flexibility
 - Cut off from TT career ladder – lack of opportunities for advancement
- Work Life Concerns
 - Adjunct faculty have no work life recognition – though many “choose” position to allow them to care for family – you don’t teach, you don’t get paid
 - Full time NTT faculty – getting more recognition now (slowly)
 - Dissatisfied with mismatch between aspirations and reality
 - Very little support for caregiving responsibilities
 - Vampirism

COVID-19 Contexts

Work Contexts

- University shifts in institutional priorities
- Disrupted research productivity for faculty
- Working from home
- Financial difficulties in higher education

Personal Contexts

- Closures or hybrid childcare centers and schools
- Working from home
- Increased stress, anxiety, and depression for caregivers
- Disrupted personal support structures
- Safety concerns in interacting with senior family members
- Especially difficult for International and NTT faculty

Permeable boundaries with public and private spheres

Gendered differences in distribution of additional labor



In sum....

- Family life and academic careers are life-long propositions
- Progress is more than just “leaning in”
- Friction between structure and agency
- It’s not just about women, but gendered
 - New generation of men do participate more in work life than other generations
- Gender norms entrenched – in and outside of work
- Higher the rank – the fewer women (women also less likely at prestigious institutions)
- Tenure process—based on the male clock
- NTT structures are inequitable and exploitative
- Women more likely to get stuck in the middle—Associate Professor/Associate Dean
- Cumulative disadvantage

Policies and Strategies

- Recognize gendered nature of the academy
- Change requires structural and cultural changes
- Continued need for work-life policies and resources
- Expand focus of policy mentoring from mothers of infants to caregivers across the career & lifespan
- Recognize that work/life is not only a “women’s” problem – need for gender equity in solutions
- Communication regarding policies must normalize, streamline, encourage use & assess them
- Professional development for chairs, deans, reviewers, panelists, award committees
- Tenure clock extension, with compensation boost given after delay
- Formal recognition of impact on caregiving on productivity – COVID statement and plan
 - Recognize the current impact (document past) and longer-term impact
- Differential load policies
- Differential paths to promotion – a “balanced case”
- Center experiences of most vulnerable faculty on campus
- National associations, funding agencies, and institutions should support & legitimize NTT faculty
- Create structures that support all faculty and resist perpetuating ideal worker norms

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A faded background image showing the faces of several smiling people, likely students or staff, at the top of the slide.

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