






FAMILY-FRIENDLY POLICIES FOR FACULTY

For the US to remain competitive in the global arena, we must support and retain all of our intellectual workforce — women , men, parents, and other caregivers alike — especially in science and technology.¹ Family-friendly policies are designed to help caregivers remain productive in the workforce. While many were originally intended to help academic women remain competitive despite family responsibilities, they are increasingly relevant to men.²





What are “Faculty Family-Friendly Policies”?

Also called “work-life policies,” family-friendly policies for faculty fall into three categories:

-  Tenure flexibility: tenure clock recalculations (i.e., tenure clock extensions or stopping the tenure clock) and part-time tenure track positions.
-  Institution-level supports: dual-career hiring policies, transitional support programs, on-campus childcare or childcare subsidies, flexible benefits programs.
-  Department-level and informal supports: telecommuting, modified duties (i.e., teaching release), family responsive meeting times.




Barriers to Use

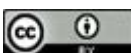
While work-life policies have existed for many years, faculty underuse many of them.

-  Some faculty fear they will not be taken seriously or that policy use will hamper their efforts at promotion, especially if they are the only person to use one.⁴
-  The stigma against using these policies can be especially strong for men, if policies favor pregnancy or immediate post-birth timeframes.⁵
-  Faculty may not be able to afford reduced pay associated with full- or part-time leave.
-  Policies may exclude the needs of some faculty (see Common Policy Issues, below).

Family-friendly policies for faculty, and an environment that supports policy utilization, are necessary because of the nature of academic careers. ... the flexibility of a faculty career blurs the boundaries between work and life and typically results in less time for the personal lives of faculty.³

Common Policy Issues

-  Framing family-leave policies as a pregnancy or new-parent issue excludes faculty who need policies for non-infant child care, spousal care, elder care, etc.
-  Restricting caregiving eligibility to immediate family excludes faculty, especially URM faculty^{6,7}, who provide care to extended family members, as well as LGBT faculty who may not be able to claim their non-biological children.⁸
-  Gender-neutral family-friendly policies have been shown to disproportionately help men, especially if the men are not actually providing care.⁹



Group Activity: Discussion Questions

- Review the family-friendly policies of your campus and discuss potential improvements.
- How can your department better understand the work-life needs of faculty?
- How would more inclusive work-life policies directly benefit you? How would they benefit your department?

Strategies for Supporting Faculty Work-Life Integration

- Support of work-life integration must be part of supporting excellence on campus. Institutions and mentors must promote a “culture of use” to reduce stigma.¹⁰
- To minimize repercussions, the use of family-friendly policies should be addressed directly on CVs, in tenure statements, and in requests to external reviewers with the reminder that they are not to be considered in evaluations.¹¹
- Information on family-friendly policies must be visible and easily accessible. Successful examples of policy use can help normalize policy use.⁵ Websites should allow for anonymous collection of information by current and prospective employees.

What Department Chairs Can Do

- Be ready to explain policies and support whatever decision is made to use a policy.
- Regularly discuss work-life policies with all faculty during the hiring process, annual reviews, the promotion process, and other career evaluations.
- Ensure that the department culture is supportive of using family-friendly policies.
- Support diverse work-life needs, regardless of an individual’s career stage.
- Monitor the outcomes of policy use for unintended consequences and get feedback about policy use from faculty, especially woman and URM faculty, to strengthen policies.¹⁰

Additional Readings

University of Washington ADVANCE Faculty Retention and Work-Life Resources:
<http://advance.washington.edu/resources/facretention.html>

Effective Policies and Programs for Retention and Advancement of Woman in Academia, UC Hastings College of Law:
http://www.worklifelaw.org/pubs/worklife_academia_FINAL.pdf

National Science Foundation, Career-Life Balancing Initiative:
<https://www.nsf.gov/career-life-balance/>

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