

## WHAT INSTITUTIONS CAN DO

**Communicate broadly about the availability of policies.** The details and importance of policies should be communicated to all faculty members, chairs, deans, and human resources administrators. Policy use should be seen as legitimate and treated as routine, and policies should be implemented consistently across campus.

**Establish equitably reduced workloads and compensation.** Pro-rate productivity expectations based on the reduced FTE. A half-time faculty member should teach the equivalent of half the standard teaching load. Similarly, the faculty member's research output should be pro-rated.

**Clarify what is expected from a part-time faculty member and how to evaluate him or her.** The agreed-upon reduced workload should be in writing. This standard should be used in all evaluation of the faculty member.

**Develop methods to remind tenure review committees of policy details.** Whenever a faculty member has taken advantage of a part-time tenure track or tenure-extension policy, the review committee and external evaluators should be reminded of policy details. Reason for policy use should not be included, but reviewers should be reminded to evaluate the totality of accomplishment, not the rate of accomplishment.

**Track policy usage.** Determining the effectiveness of policies depends on tracking their use. Data should include details about gender, faculty rank, departmental affiliation, reasons for policy use, and the effect of such use on the faculty member's career. In addition, the impact on departments—in terms of faculty workload, resources, and benefits—should be recorded.

**Establish routine methods to meet departmental teaching requirements.** When a faculty member shifts to part-time status or uses leave, the department should have a plan cover teaching.

## WHAT CHAIRS CAN DO

**Find out what policies exist on your campus** and discuss them with your faculty, both privately and in faculty meetings.

**Offer course releases** in both the academic term the baby is due (bearing in mind that older women tend to have high-risk pregnancies) and the following term. Accommodate adoptive parents whenever possible.

**Create funding resources** which could be used to support salary, cost-share post-docs, etc.

**Provide extra teaching support** for the first academic term the faculty teaches after returning from leave.

**Work closely with the faculty member** to determine course and committee assignments that will be manageable during the academic term of her/his return.

**Encourage all faculty to be supportive** such as allowing infants to be brought to meetings and scheduling meetings not too early or late in the day to arrange for daycare drop-off and pickup.

**Maintain 'zero tolerance'** for discriminatory and disparaging comments and behaviors. Make it clear to all faculty that hostile comments and behaviors will not be tolerated.

**Be supportive of flexibility in faculty careers.** One-size does not fit all. Not all new parents desire to take leave from work. Faculty must feel safe taking a leave, modifying duties, or extending the tenure clock.

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# Work/Life Balance for Faculty: Research and Recommendations on Family-Friendly Policies and Practices

## WORK AND FAMILY IN ACADEME

Family-friendly policies, and an environment that supports policy utilization, are necessary because of the nature of academic careers.

While the assumption may hold that the flexibility of a faculty career provides the perfect opportunity for work and family balance, research has demonstrated that this flexibility blurs the boundaries between work and life and typically results in less time for the personal lives of faculty [1-2].

- » Negative ‘spillover’ between the time demands of a faculty career and family responsibilities has a high correlation with faculty dissatisfaction with both life and work [3] and appears to be more of a problem for women faculty than for men faculty [4].
- » The tenure track is modeled on a traditional career trajectory in which the faculty member either had a full-time care-giver in the home or no family obligations [5].
- » The time demands on faculty have been increasing as productivity expectations increase [6].
- » Women faculty are disproportionately affected by work and family conflict because they continue to bear the brunt of childcare and household responsibilities [1-4], not to mention gestation and lactation.

The American Council on Education states that, “In certain disciplines, namely science and technology, U.S. higher education cannot afford to lose any of its potential intellectual workforce and desperately needs the best talent in research and teaching” [7].

The inability to create a supportive environment for faculty with care-giving responsibilities will artificially limit the pool of potential faculty [7-9] because many graduate students are determining that academic careers are incompatible with satisfying family lives [9-11].

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## FAMILY-FRIENDLY POLICIES

Universities have been implementing ‘family-friendly’ policies both formally and informally for the past few decades in an attempt to be supportive of faculty with care-giving responsibilities [12, 13]. Policies such as part-time tenure track, family leave, tenure clock extension, modified duties, and transitional support programs have been implemented at varying levels at numerous institutions [12-14].

**Part-Time Tenure Track** provides the protections and benefits of a tenured faculty position while permitting a reduced workload. In 2000, Robert Drago and Joan Williams proposed a policy model designed to accommodate faculty with caregiving responsibilities [15]. Their model prorated salary and benefits based on the reduced appointment and provided guidelines for extending the probationary period for tenure. Part-time tenure track policies can permit faculty to resume their full-time appointment after a fixed time period or require a permanent reduction in appointment.

**Family and Medical Leave** includes the federally mandated Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA), as well as institution-based policies. Typically, medical leave, which covers medical and disability leave for the individual, is paid and family leave, which covers caregiving for another family member, is unpaid.

**Tenure Clock Extensions/Stops** provide additional years in which pre-tenure faculty can meet the requirements of tenure. Some policies add years to the tenure clock, while others do not count the ‘waived’ or ‘stopped’ years as years to tenure. Eligibility varies but can include childbirth or adoption, eldercare, or caregiving for another family member, as well as work-related reasons such as lack or loss of lab space or equipment and excessive service or committee work.

**Modified Duties** provide faculty with a temporary release from a duty, typically teaching, without reducing his or her pay. Eligibility might be restricted to care for a newborn or a newly adopted young child, or tied to FMLA standards.

**Transitional Support Programs** provide temporary support to faculty members who are dealing with ‘career-threatening’ transitions, such as major illness, elder care, or the birth or adoption of a child [16]. Types of support provided include funding for release time from teaching; research personnel, such as graduate students or postdoctoral assistants; and lab equipment. The intention is to allow faculty to maintain professional productivity while managing personal transitions.

*“Individuals who engage in bias avoidance fear if they so much as ask about the rules, they will not be considered serious players in the academic game” [16].*

## POLICIES AREN’T ENOUGH

Institutional policies combined with departmental climate and culture define the environment in which faculty work [8]. Where climate and culture are not supportive of work and family balance, faculty may be reluctant to utilize family-friendly policies [8, 17-19]. Faculty are not confident that they will be seen, or rewarded, as ‘ideal workers’ if they openly integrate personal and professional responsibilities [20]. The conscious decision to hide family commitments in order to avoid discrimination is called ‘bias avoidance’ [17, 20]. In fact, “individuals who engage in bias avoidance fear if they so much as ask about the rules, they will not be considered serious players in the academic game” [17].

## THE CHAIR’S ROLE

Chairs must work within their departments to create supportive and inclusive environments in which faculty feel comfortable utilizing family-friendly policies. A supportive academic climate permits the creation of informal flexible options even if there are no formal institutional policies [14]. Chairs must watch for bias avoidance behaviors from faculty, as well as behaviors from faculty indicating a bias against caregiving. Additionally, family-friendly policies are implemented at the department level, so chairs must see that they are implemented consistently and effectively [7].