

Educational level: *University* | **Beneficiaries:** *Faculty*

Background

A 2002-2003 survey of University of California faculty noted that women faculty and graduate students feel that they must choose between work and family.¹ "For scholars who delay starting their academic careers to start families or provide care to others, it is extremely difficult to return to academia by securing tenure-track or postdoctoral positions. Faculty hiring committees often view these applicants as suspect because of gaps in their vitae and the time that has elapsed since they received their PhDs."²

Description

The University of California encourages faculty hiring committees to discount caregiving-related gaps in a candidate's résumé. The university's faculty search guide recommends including family-friendly language in faculty recruitment advertisements³ and advises search committees to "search for individuals with non-traditional career paths who may have taken time off for family reasons or who have achieved excellence in careers outside academe."⁴ The University of Florida, Case Western Reserve University, Stanford University, and Cornell University have also developed resources and trainings to ensure equity and diversity in faculty recruitment processes.⁵

Results

Reviewers rated this practice as featuring the following gender transformative characteristics:

- Transform family, school, and/or work arrangements so that women are not economically or socially penalized/disadvantaged for caregiving (*critical criterion*)
- Change or attempt to change an imbalance of power or otherwise level the playing field (*critical criterion*)
- Challenge and change common discriminatory gender beliefs or norms (*critical criterion*).

This is a gender transformative practice that counters discriminatory treatment of faculty who take time out of their careers for caregiving, which often disproportionately affects women faculty. By treating the taking of time for caregiving as equivalent to a more traditional career path with no such gaps, this practice challenges discriminatory norms that women with caregiving responsibilities must be continually employed to keep current in their profession or be qualified for a job. No evaluations of this practice's implementation or its effects on faculty recruitment and retention were available. However, reviewers did note that successful implementation requires the training of recruiters.

Summary conclusions

A gender equality goal is to transform the taking of time out of a career for caregiving into a traditional career path. Not only does this practice make progress toward that goal, but institutions can also implement it with a minimal outlay of resources. More documentation and evaluation, particularly on the practice's effects on women, are recommended. Nonetheless, the practice shows great potential for transforming gender norms and countering structural disadvantages.

Reference(s) and source(s)

1. Mason, Mary Ann and Marc Goulden. Nov-Dec 2004. Do babies matter (Part II)? Closing the baby gap. *Academe* 90(6): 10-15.
<http://ucfamilyedge.berkeley.edu/babies%20matterII.pdf> (accessed June 9, 2011).
2. University of California. Addressing Academic Climate Issues that May Disadvantage Faculty with Family Caregiving Responsibilities.
<http://ucfamilyedge.berkeley.edu/Academic%20climate.pdf> (accessed June 14, 2011).
3. Email correspondence with Karie Frasch, Director of Equity and Welfare, University of California, Berkeley. May 31, 2011.
4. University of California, Berkeley. 2011. Faculty Search Guide.
http://facultyequity.chance.berkeley.edu/resources/faculty_search_guide.pdf (accessed June 14, 2011).
5. Work/Life Law Center, UC Hastings College of Law. Control Bias.
<http://www.worklifelaw.org/EffectivePracticesToRetainWomen/controlBias.html> (accessed June 2, 2011).