Women’s Careers in Biomedical Sciences: Family Friendly Policies and Career Flexibility

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BACKGROUND:
Although women receive nearly half of all doctoral degrees and show a high interest in academic careers, the pipeline is leaky. In academic medicine this leak is particularly profound for women, and occurs steadily at all ranks, independent of department. The challenges of balancing life course events, particularly child-bearing and -rearing, with career trajectory are an important determinant leading to premature dropout or slower career advancement. There is little data on how balancing family life affects women in academic medicine, or how family-friendly university policies can influence work-life balance, career satisfaction, and academic advancement. This report describes the findings of a faculty survey exploring satisfaction and awareness of intent to use specific career flexibility options at the University of California, Davis (UCD).

WHAT’S CAREER FLEXIBILITY?
Flexibility of Time:
- Leaves for child-bearing, -rearing, adoption, personal medical reasons, death/illness of loved ones, disability.
- Extension of the “clock” for promotion.
- Part-time faculty appointments.
- Alternative work schedules or job sharing.

Flexibility of Place:
- Telemedicine, telecommuting, video conferencing.
- Programs that link business outcomes with flexible arrangements.

PURPOSE/OBJECTIVES:
1. To study awareness, attitudes, and use of faculty policies that enhance flexibility of time.
2. To identify key elements of family friendly/career flexibility policies that serve as a model for improved faculty satisfaction/career success.

METHODS:
- Obtain Baseline Data: 2010 survey of all men/women faculty in the University of California, Davis (UCD) Schools of Medicine (SOM) and Veterinary Medicine (SVM), and College of Biological Science (CBS) re: satisfaction, awareness, and use of career flexibility options.
- Data tabulated for men and women in each school and proportions calculated.
- Statistical comparisons were made via exact tests, t-tests, and ANOVA.
- The SOM was used as a prototype, and SVM and CBS were health science and non-health science controls, respectively.

CONCLUSIONS:
- Awareness of policies is low, particularly in the SOM.
- Men made little or no use of the policies.
- Self-reported use is higher than actual use (this may reflect differences in time periods covered, over-reporting of family friendly leave, or misattribution of vacation or sick leave).
- Majority of faculty in all schools feel they need more time off than they have taken.
- Barriers to use are more common, and greater, among women.
- Men and women show high satisfaction knowing that policies exist, and because of possible future use.
- Existence of policies is viewed as important to recruitment and retention.
- There is a high level of interest in on-site child care among men and women.
- Women are more interested in workshops and policy advisors.

NEXT STEPS:
- Implement Accelerator Intervention:
  - Increasing awareness: brochure, new website, presentations, workshops, grand rounds, faculty meetings, internal media, new faculty orientation, etc.
  - Re-surveying to assess change in awareness and use (2011 & 2012).
  - Examining affect of awareness/use on merit and promotion actions and satisfaction.
- Explore Success Model(s):
  - Personal & professional characteristics affecting performance, awareness, use of options, & satisfaction.
  - Working with SOM leadership re: expectations and additional improvements for dads, single, LBGT, others.
- Publications of our work.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS:
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UCDSOM FLEXIBLE CAREER POLICIES:

TABLE 1: FULL SALARY LEAVES FOR CHILD-BEARING OR FAMILY LEAVE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family &amp; Medical Leave</th>
<th>Parental Leave</th>
<th>Active Service Modified Duties</th>
<th>Part-time Appointment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who:</td>
<td>Full-time</td>
<td>Reduced to part-time for 1 year</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time and Duration:</td>
<td>leave for 12 weeks maximum</td>
<td>reduced to part-time for 1 year maximum</td>
<td>reduced % to part-time for 1 year maximum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salary:</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Full base, Y* reduced proportional to duty reduction</td>
<td>Full base, Y* reduced proportional to duty reduction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthcare Benefits:</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Maintained</td>
<td>Maintained</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Y is non-base salary funded from other sources.

TABLE 2: CHILD-BEARING AND FAMILY LEAVES AT REDUCED SALARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family &amp; Medical Leave</th>
<th>Parental Leave</th>
<th>Active Service Modified Duties</th>
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TABLE 3: LEAVE OPTIONS FOR CARE OR DEATH OF FAMILY OR OTHER HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Using paid sick leave</th>
<th>Family and Medical Leave</th>
<th>Reviews</th>
<th>Time and Duration:</th>
<th>Full-time leave for 6 days maximum</th>
<th>Full-time leave for 12 weeks maximum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who:</td>
<td>Faculty with unused sick leave</td>
<td>Faculty with responsible for care of child</td>
<td>Full-time leave for 12 weeks maximum</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time and Duration:</td>
<td>Full-time leave for 12 weeks maximum</td>
<td>Full-time leave for 12 weeks maximum</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salary:</td>
<td>Paid</td>
<td>Unpaid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Health Benefits: Maintained

TABLE 4: ADJUSTMENTS TO THE "CLOCK" FOR ACADEMIC REVIEWS

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<tr>
<th>Extending the Promotion Clock</th>
<th>Deferral of Merit or Promotion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Who: Assistant professors with 50% responsibility for care of child &lt;5 yrs, or on medical leave</td>
<td>Those who experienced leaves for childbearing, adoption or placement, for medical reasons, or for other significant reasons which impacted productivity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time: One year extension for each event above, up to 2 years maximum extension</td>
<td>Deferrals to one year each, can be requested more than once.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>