

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/care 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:

- To study awareness, attitudes, and use of faculty policies that enhance flexibility of time.
- 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.

*This is the first part of a larger intervention study.

UCDSOM FLEXIBLE CAREER POLICIES:

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

	Child-bearing	Adoption/Placement
Who:	Faculty member giving birth	Faculty with > 50% responsibility of childcare for child < 5 yrs old
Time and Duration:	Full-time leave for 12 weeks maximum	Full-time leave for 12 weeks maximum
Salary:	Full salary	Full Salary
Healthcare Benefits:	Maintained	Maintained

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

	Family & Medical Leave	Parental Leave	Active Service Modified Duties	Part-time Appointment
Who:	1+ yr University service, responsible for 50+% childcare	Any faculty member	1+ yr University service, responsible for 50+% childcare	At Chair's discretion, and academic/ business needs
Time and Duration:	Full-time leave for 12 weeks maximum	Full-time leave for 1 year maximum (other leaves included)	Negotiated part-time for 12 weeks maximum	Negotiated % reduction, renewable at re-appt. time.
Salary:	None	None	Full base, Y* reduced proportionate to duty reduction.	Base and Y* reduced proportionate to duty reduction
Healthcare Benefits:	Maintained	None	Maintained	Maintained if 50% appointment

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

TABLE 3: LEAVE OPTIONS FOR CARE OR DEATH OF FAMILY OR OTHER HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS

	Using paid sick leave	Family and Medical Leave
Who:	Faculty with unused sick leave	Faculty with ≥ 12 months university service
Time and Duration:	Full-time leave for 5 days maximum	Full-time leave for 12 weeks maximum
Salary:	Paid	Unpaid
Health Benefits:	Maintained	Maintained

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

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

BASELINE SURVEY RESULTS:

Table 5: DEMOGRAPHICS* OF SOM SURVEY

RESPONDENTS	
Response rate:	52% (n=325)
<50 years old:	53%
Asst Professors:	31%
<10 yrs at UCD:	61%
Clinical tracks:	51%
Race:	27% non-white
Gender:	38% female, 61% male
Marital status:	>90% married/committed
Childless Women/Men:	35%/14% (SOM only)
Other family responsibilities:	26%-42% men/women
Level of family responsibilities:	very demanding

*Demographics of survey respondents similar to those of faculty in each school.

Fig 1: Family Friendly Policy Use

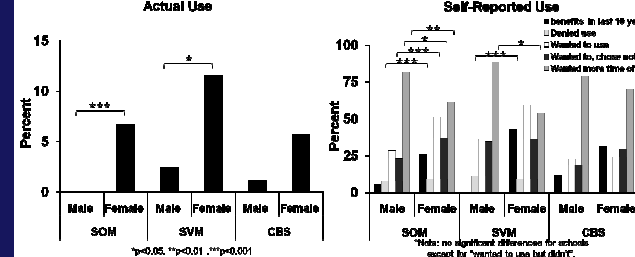


Fig 2: Family Friendly Policy Awareness

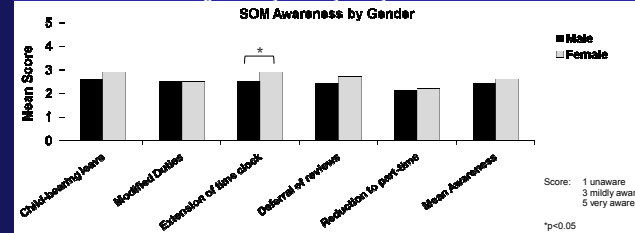


Fig 3: Reasons for Lack of Use of Family Friendly Policies

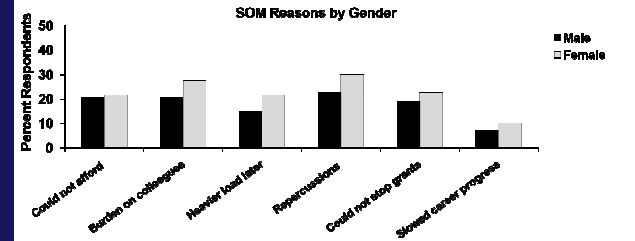
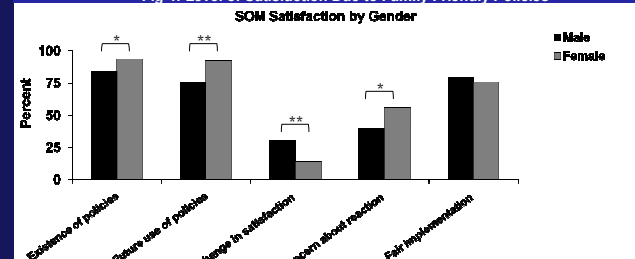


Fig 4: Level of Satisfaction Due to Family Friendly Policies



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, singles, LGBT, others.
- Publications of our work.

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