Journeys in World Politics Workshop
Articles for discussion from the *Chronicle of Higher Education*

1) How Babies Alter Careers for Academics (12/5/03)

Having children often bumps women off the tenure track, a new study shows

Last year Jenny Spinner, an aspiring English professor, landed four job interviews, a feat that would make any graduate student proud. But as a nursing mother with a 5-month-old son at home, what should have been a happy time turned harrowing.

On each campus trip, Ms. Spinner brought along her curriculum vitae, a suitcase, and a breast pump, which she used every few hours around the clock. She pumped wherever she could -- in a faculty conference room while a secretary guarded the door and in a bathroom stall of a classroom building. Then she kept the milk on ice to take home.

Faculty members arranged dinners for times when, as a new mother, Ms. Spinner would normally have been heading to bed. When she found herself nearly dozing off during an interview with a vice provost one afternoon, she knew something had to change.

"I went home and told my husband: 'That's it. I'm not applying for any more jobs now. It's just too much,'" recalls Ms. Spinner, who got one job offer but turned it down because she says the campus wasn't a good "fit" for her. She is 33 and will earn her doctorate in English from the University of Connecticut next spring.

Her son, Aidan, is now 16 months old and she is starting to cut back on breast-feeding in preparation for a new round of job interviews. But Ms. Spinner's problems negotiating the academic world with a child in tow are just beginning, according to a new study, which says that having children wreaks havoc on the careers of academic women.

The study provides what is believed to be the first national data on how professors with children fare in academe. While having children, particularly early on, can severely damage the job prospects of women, fatherhood is actually a boon to academic men, it found.

Mary Ann Mason, dean of the graduate division at the University of California at Berkeley and the study's director, dubbed her project: "Do Babies Matter?" It is based on data collected until 1999 by the federal government from 160,000 people who earned their doctorates between 1978 and 1984, and continued working in academe.

Ms. Mason completed the study with Marc Goulden, a research analyst at Berkeley. She delivered a paper based on the study at a conference in October, and it will be published in the Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science next year. She says she wanted "to address the question my women graduate students always ask me, Is there a good time to have a baby?"

KIDS AFTER TENURE

The worst time for women who pursue careers in academe to have a baby is within five years of earning a Ph.D., the study found. Women who do have babies then are nearly 30 percent less likely than women without babies ever to snag a tenure-track position. And of those women in the study who had babies early on, only 56 percent earned tenure within 14 years after receiving their Ph.D. Of men who became fathers early on, 77 percent earned tenure. Of men who never had babies, 71 percent got tenure.

"Women are doing part-time things, or staying at home for a while, which is quite appropriate when children are small," says Ms. Mason. But jumping back onto the tenure track after a few years off frequently proves impossible, she says.

The study also looked at how putting an academic career first, at least for a while, affected the chances that academic men and women would eventually have a family. "What happens to the men and women who secure that first assistant-professor job before becoming parents?" Ms. Mason asks in her paper. "Will they still have a baby?" The answer, she says, is that "men do, but women don't."

Men who took a university job without children were 70 percent more likely than their female counterparts to become parents, the study found. Only one-third of women who took a university job without children ever became mothers.

Over all, male professors were much more likely to marry and have a family than female professors. Only 44 percent of all the tenured women in the study were married and had children within 12 years of earning their Ph.D.'s. But 70 percent of tenured men married and became fathers during that time period.

About a quarter of tenured women were still single without children 12 years after earning their doctorates. Only 11 percent of men were.

Academic women, says Ms. Mason, are expected to work hardest during their tenure-track years, precisely when their biological clocks are ticking the loudest. "The average age for receiving a Ph.D. is 33," she says. "Many professors do not secure tenure under the age of 40. These busy career-building years are also the most likely reproductive years."

Fathers are more successful in academe than mothers, says Ms. Mason, because they are more likely to have a spouse who stays at home. In 1999, only 48 percent of men who were married and were full professors in the sciences and social sciences had wives who worked full time. But 91 percent of women who were married and were full professors in those disciplines had spouses who worked full time, according to the study.

"We are being made to compete with people who are single and have all the time in the world, or with married men who have a wife at home," says Joline J. Blais, an assistant

professor of new media at the University of Maine's Orono campus and the mother of two young children.

Not all academic women struggle with motherhood. Kathryn L. Lynch, a 52-year-old professor of English at Wellesley College, recommends having children early in graduate school. She did, and her son and daughter were school-age by the time she took her first tenure-track job at Wellesley. "I don't think I've had to make disturbing compromises in my career," says Ms. Lynch, who had another son the year she came up for tenure. "I think you can have it all."

Academe certainly isn't the only demanding career that women have trouble negotiating with a family. It is also hard to be a lawyer or a doctor, for example, while raising small children. But those careers do not have an "up or out" point that is as unforgiving as the tenure system. If a woman wants to work in academe but is not within the tenured or tenure-track ranks, she is likely to be an adjunct or lecturer with little job security and meager pay.

"There is only one genuinely legitimate career path in the academy," says Kathleen Christensen, director of the Workplace, Workforce, and Working Families program at the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. "It's very rigid, up or out, and you have to get on and stay on or you're penalized if you deviate."

Joan C. Williams, director of the Program on WorkLife Law at American University, says academe is still based on a model in which men worked and their wives stayed at home with the children. "This is a job structure that systematically excludes mothers," she says. "It shows that so long as we continue to identify the ideal academic worker as someone who works full time, 60 hours a week for 40 years straight -- surprise! -- that will overwhelmingly be men."

The University of California system has started a family-friendly initiative, financed by the Sloan foundation. The effort, Ms. Mason says "is aimed at altering the workplace structure to accommodate families."

FEWER CHILDREN

Women trying to combine motherhood and academic careers don't find the study's conclusions particularly surprising. Many, it seems, have their own stories of just how hellish the endeavor can be.

Elizabeth Scala, an associate professor of English at the University of Texas at Austin, earned tenure last year despite giving birth to two daughters in the last six years. After her first daughter, Madeleine, was born in 1997, Ms. Scala regularly rose at 3 a.m. to nurse the baby. She would then stay up, grading papers and working on her book until she left home for her morning classes.

When her second baby, Claire, was born two years later, "I taught on fumes," recalls Ms. Scala, who has posted a picture of herself with her two girls on her university Web site. "I was sleepwalking through teaching The Canterbury Tales for the sixth time in a row, and spending all my brain power" on finishing a book in time for tenure review, she says.

Looking back, says Ms. Scala, who is 37 and earned her Ph.D. from Harvard University: "I could have done more work if I didn't have kids. I probably could have written a second book already -- maybe I could have a job at Yale."

Young academic women think a lot about whether they can have it all, and if not, what the trade-offs will be. Lorelei Mitchell is a 35-year-old graduate student in social welfare at Berkeley who has worked with Ms. Mason. She had her daughter, Lydia, 17 months ago, even though she knew the data showed she would be better off waiting until after she had earned tenure. "I wasn't about to wait until I was 42," says Ms. Mitchell.

But she is already wondering whether she and her husband will have another child, and if so, when. Being pregnant on the tenure track won't be easy, she knows. An alternative, says Ms. Mitchell, is to have another baby and forgo a tenure-track job for work as a researcher. For Ms. Mitchell, it comes down to what she wants more -- another baby, or a tenure-track career.

A second study, of 8,700 professors in the University of California system, also by Ms. Mason, shows that Ms. Mitchell is not alone. Thirty-eight percent of the female faculty members in the study said they had fewer children than they wanted.

One female assistant professor at a major research university had considered giving up on the idea of becoming a mother. But at 36 she decided she "wasn't willing to do that," and has just learned she is pregnant.

Still, she's worried. "I'm committing career suicide," she says. She hasn't yet told anyone at the university.

Part of the problem, says the woman, who wanted to remain anonymous, is that while she has several female role models, none of them offer advice on how to manage a baby with a tenure-track career. "You get a lot of mentorship about how you negotiate for your salary and for course load reductions," she says. "But the questions usually aren't: 'If I'm a woman, and I want to have kids, what do I do?'"

LOSING 20 POUNDS

Ms. Blais, the assistant professor at Maine, says there is a silence in academe surrounding parenthood. Raising two young children while holding down two academic careers has been demanding for Ms. Blais and her partner, Jon Ippolito, who is also an assistant professor of new media at Maine. They could use some advice, she says.

The couple do much of their scholarly work together, developing teaching strategies that encourage information-sharing over the Internet. They travel frequently to New York and abroad and must scramble to find someone to watch their 3-year-old daughter and 5-year-old son.

Ms. Blais was 40 years old when she gave birth to their daughter, and returned to teaching two months later. A month after that she was scheduled to fly to California for work with Mr. Ippolito. But she found herself too exhausted to travel, and wound up getting pneumonia and losing 20 pounds in three weeks.

Many universities allow female faculty members just six to eight weeks of paid maternity leave, and require young professors to find someone to fill in for them if they give birth during a semester. Some universities, primarily major research institutions, provide a semester's paid leave from teaching.

Micki McGee, a faculty fellow in interdisciplinary studies at New York University, has a 6-year-old daughter. She says the paucity of mothers in academe is higher education's loss. "Academe deprives itself of that kind of robust understanding that parenting provides to people by limiting the number of mothers in the community," she says.

Ms. Spinner, the graduate student who will earn her Ph.D. from Connecticut in May, has put some limitations on her own career. She won't apply for jobs at major research institutions because she believes it would be too hard to manage the kind of work required with a family. Always an overachiever, Ms. Spinner has had to lower her standards.

"I knew I wasn't going to be on my deathbed thinking, 'If only I had written three more articles. If only I had chaired that committee,'" she says. "I had to decide to come to terms with the fact that I may be an A scholar, rather than an A-plus scholar, in order to have a family."

How Babies Affect Tenure

A new national study from the University of California at Berkeley looks at the impact of babies on the tenure prospects of men and women and finds women's chances for tenure are greatly reduced if they have children. A second study, of professors in the UC system, looks at the effects of academic work on families.

Family status of tenured professors

Legend for Chart

B – Women
C - Men

	B	C
Married with children	44%	70%
Single without children	26%	11%
Single with children	11%	4%
Married without children	19%	15%

Professors with early babies: who gets tenure(*)

Women	56%
Men	77%

Note: Figures are based on the Survey of Doctorate Recipients, sponsored by the National Science Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities. Survey participants received their Ph.D.'s between 1978 and 1984 and were still working in academe 12 to 14 years later.

(*) Having a baby within five years of earning a Ph.D.

Effects of an academic career on family status

Proportion of tenure and tenure-track faculty members who said, "I had fewer children than I wanted."

Women	38%
Men	18%

Proportion of tenure and tenure-track faculty members who said, "I stayed single because of my career."

Women	11%
Men	7%

Note: Based on a study of 8,700 professors in the UC system.

PHOTO (COLOR): Mary Ann Mason, dean of the graduate division at the University of California at Berkeley (left), walking with Lorelei Mitchell and her baby, said she wanted "to address the question my women graduate students always ask me: Is there a good time to have a baby?"

PHOTO (COLOR): Jenny Spinner, with her son, Aidan, on the University of Connecticut campus, where she is working toward a doctorate: She won't apply for jobs at major research institutions because she believes it would be too hard to manage the kind of work required and have a family.

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By Robin Wilson

How Colleges Can Help Faculty Members With Children

The Alfred P. Sloan Foundation gave Mary Ann Mason, dean of the graduate division at the University of California at Berkeley, a $420,000 grant in May to come up with ways to make the tenure track more accommodating to scholars with children. The foundation was attracted by Ms. Mason's research showing that babies have an impact on the careers of female scholars nationwide.

The University of California system already allows tenure-track professors who have substantial responsibility for taking care of young children to stop the tenure clock for up to two years. And professors caring for children can request a one-semester paid leave from teaching.

Using the Sloan Foundation money, Ms. Mason worked with researchers and professors to find other ways to help parents. She is now trying to persuade administrators throughout the university system to start putting into effect the package of proposals, which she calls the Faculty Family-Friendly Edge. Among the proposals:

Allow faculty members with "substantial familial caregiving responsibilities" to work part time on the tenure track.

Create "re-entry postdoctoral fellowships" that would encourage Ph.D. recipients who have taken time out of the academic work force to care for children, to return to academe. The fellowships would help them update their curricula vitae by giving them teaching and research experience.

Encourage administrators to overlook any gaps a prospective faculty member may have in his or her résumé due to child-rearing responsibilities.

Make high-quality child care available for the infants and preschoolers of tenured and tenure-track professors, particularly the newly hired.

Establish child-care programs to which faculty parents can bring school-age children during school breaks, including the summer.

Help the spouses and partners of new professors find employment. -- Robin Wilson

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2) WHY 'FAMILY FIRST' IS NOT A WIN FOR ACADEMIC FEMINISTS (11/02/01)

A job applicant wrote to me recently to say that she is willing to leave her tenure-track university position to teach on a temporary contract at my college. She wants to do this, she wrote, because her husband got hired by a university near mine, they have a young child, and she believes the family should be together.

That job applicant must have assumed I'd be sympathetic. Who wouldn't be in favor of a young family being together?

So why did the letter make me, a mother and a feminist, so angry? The application arrived in the midst of other interactions I've had recently with female job-seekers, interactions in which marital status and child care seemed to be at the top of the agenda for negotiations. I didn't bring those issues up. I'm not allowed to, and I agree with the reasoning behind the law that prevents me. Issues about personal lives should have no bearing on whether or not I hire people.

When these candidates raised their family issues in our discussions about their jobs, I found myself seeing them as unprofessional. Some feminist colleagues, who chair departments at other schools, have said that my hostility toward female candidates' declaring their marital and parental status is, in effect, antifeminist. After all, feminists have fought for years to make it possible for women to have personal lives as well as professional lives. Who am I to ask young women to put the personal back into the closet?

Since being challenged by my peers on the issue, I've been thinking a lot about that young applicant and what she might represent. Perhaps she had complicated reasons for leaving her tenure-track job, reasons that were based in an egalitarian deal with her husband. But what I keep returning to is this: All I know about the candidate is what she told me, and what she told me was that she was putting her career after her husband's. She could have simply said that she was leaving for "personal" or "family" reasons, without declaring her marital status and motherhood. Should I have ignored what looked to me like typical feminine self-sacrifice and assumed, as someone suggested to me, that because the woman had already gotten a tenure-track job in a tough market, she'd probably be a good hire?

Of course, it's not only women who follow men to jobs--we all can tell stories of men who have followed wives, or people who have followed samesex partners. What I'm taking issue with is women job candidates identifying their heterosexuality and motherhood, two absolutely standard cultural prescriptions for women, in their job-application processes. To attempt to negotiate for a spousal hire is a different matter, full of its own difficulties, whether or not the spouse conforms to cultural expectations.

For generations, the profession demanded that female academics either forgo a family life or pretend we had none, as male academics did. A woman who recently retired from my

own department started her academic career living in the dorms with students, as was required for unmarried female faculty members. I am not nostalgic for the days when personal concerns, especially children, were forbidden subjects. But I do think that women are not so secure in our place in the academy that we can afford to risk being seen as taking our careers less seriously than our personal lives.

But again, why shouldn't a woman expect a job to accommodate her family? Isn't the personal political? Why, I asked myself, did I admire the job applicant at a friend's university, who took time out from an interview to nurse her infant, when I was annoyed with the candidate at my own college who was straightforward in explaining that she wanted the job so she could be with her husband and child? I suppose it seemed to me that the breast-feeding candidate was the more feminist, the one who was forcing the academy to recognize women's lives but was pursuing a career full-throttle at the same time. The other, it seemed to me, was demanding no change from the institution but instead was asking me to approve of and participate in the most conventional kind of prioritizing: his career and their family before her career.

Perhaps what it comes down to is this: Who is willing to force institutional change so that any number of personal lives can be accommodated in the academy? What actions serve individuals and what actions change institutions for everyone? If we start not with the powerless job applicant but with the tenured, or at least tenure-track, professor, we can see that those of us who have some power need to start demanding that our workplaces accommodate relationships, parenthood, and other elements of the personal. We who are past needing campus day care, job sharing, or more flexible schedules must advocate for those who will need them. Only when we force change in the institution will our job applicants be able to assume that the jobs we offer will be compatible with a family life of any sort.

At my own institution, the administration was happy to arrange for domestic-partner benefits for gay and lesbian couples, once the faculty asked for them. But untenured junior professors or closeted staff members could not agitate on such an issue; the impetus had to come from people who already had some power. I try to mention our domestic-partner policy to job applicants so they don't have to identify themselves as gay or lesbian. If we had a day-care facility, I would mention that as well, so applicants wouldn't have to ask.

Would building an institution that made it easier to have both a personal and a professional life prevent young women from selling their careers short for the sake of heterosexual romance or domesticity? Straight men, and gay partners, too, sometimes sacrifice career for relationship, of course--but that's different. In our patriarchal society, the default position is that a woman's career takes second place to a man's. A gay relationship has no such default position on the basis of gender, and a straight man who sacrifices his career goals is countering societal expectations, not bowing to them.

Although feminism has created big changes in the canon in many disciplines, it has a long way to go before it transforms the workplace of higher education itself. In the

American academy, women do not yet have the full right to a career and a family, because men are not yet seen as having the full responsibility for both. Things are changing, to be sure. A young man in my department brings his baby to all kinds of formal campus events. He changes her diaper in the department office and brings her to meetings and readings, and he is establishing in the collective mind of the campus the idea that male faculty members can be primary caregivers for their children.

Of course, we all should be able to have personal and family lives along with high-powered professional careers. But we need to challenge our own institutions if that is to happen. The young father in my department may be unaware that, in doing what women could not get away with, he is exercising a kind of male privilege. Though he may not know it, bringing his child to campus does not threaten his professional status at our progressive college--a man who is taking responsibility for child care is seen as nonsexist, and nonsexist is seen as good. I benefited from a similar privilege when my daughter was a baby: Everyone thought it was exciting to have a lesbian mom on the faculty, and as I was not the biological mom, my taking responsibility for child care was also seen as nontraditional.

When it comes to child care or care of elders, women have long been in the cultural role of primary caregiver. For married women to embrace that role at the expense of career possibilities is not a challenge to sexism. That is not to say that we should not be primary caregivers; it is just to say that it is not a feminist victory for us to choose to do so. Here's a difference between personal and institutional success: It is not a win for feminism when faculty members can bring their children to campus on school holidays; it would be a success for feminism if the university provided backup child care for such occasions.

Feminism does alter our perception of the relation between the personal and the professional, but feminism has to go further, to force change on an institutional level. Female professors and would-be professors owe a lot to those who will follow us. We owe them a more family-friendly workplace, and we owe them a profession in which women and men take their jobs and their personal lives equally seriously.

Ours is neither a feminist nor a postfeminist profession. A job candidate who describes her job search in terms of her family obligations, as did the candidate I described at the beginning of this article, is relying on the sisterhood of a female department chair, or the sympathy of a male one. That is risky business. Feminist or not, many department chairs will have trouble respecting a woman who declares that she puts someone else's interests ahead of her own. The ideology of self-sacrifice has long been pushed on women. Trust me on that; I'm a Victorianist. When it comes down to it, interrupting the wife's career trajectory instead of the husband's is the same choice now as it was in 1856, when Elizabeth Barrett Browning created Aurora Leigh, who shocked her beloved Romney by refusing to put his career before her own. If, a century and a half later, you want to put Romney's career before yours, that's your right, of course. But it's your risk as well.

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By Paula M. Krebs

Paula M. Krebs is the chairwoman of the department of English at Wheaton College, in Massachusetts.

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3) The Subtle Side of Discrimination (04/18/03)

Linking merit raises to outside offers may discriminate against female professors with families

STOP the tenure clock. That's the first solution offered when academics talk about how the tenure system and other workplace policies may discriminate against female professors with families.

In my first column for Career Network (http://chronicle.com/jobs/2000/10/2000102703c.htm), I wrote about how mothers are disadvantaged by the way academe defines the ideal worker as someone who can move at will and needs no time off for childbearing or child-rearing. Stopping the tenure clock is an important solution. But even if every tenure clock in the world could be stopped without repercussions, academic women would still be disadvantaged in more subtle ways.

Take, for example, the routine practice of giving faculty members a merit pay raise only if it's necessary to match an offer from an outside institution. According to Donna Euben, staff counsel for the American Association of University Professors, "Many institutions have this informal practice of only matching outside offers, which can disproportionately affect women who don't always feel as comfortable playing those kinds of games."

Why don't women play? Children are a big factor: Euben's impression is that many female faculty members "won't even go out there and get that offer to avoid uprooting their families."

Selflessness remains a key tenet of motherhood, so many mothers may be reluctant to force a transition that requires their kids to leave friends and schools where they feel comfortable, for the new and unknown. True, many American mothers describe this as the choice they made in response to their children's needs. And not dragging kids around through six different moves probably does reflect a healthy sense of priorities.

Yet a woman's reluctance to "uproot her family" has a masculine/feminine dynamic as well as a parent/child one. We need to beware of the pressures that cause women to link to "children's needs" actions that also benefit their partners.

The cultural linkage of motherhood with selflessness means that tying your decision not to change jobs to your children's needs signals that you are a good mother. On the other hand, tying that decision to your husband's career interests makes not only him, but you, look bad. As a result, much that is explained in terms of children turns out to benefit partners quite tidily.

In the past, husbands had the legal right to determine the family's place of residence, and any wife who refused to follow risked being charged with abandoning the home. Informal social forces still leave women trailing. Because we often still "measure masculinity by

the size of a paycheck" (to quote Robert Gould), many women still feel the need to follow "their" men. As Beverly Sills put it, explaining her decision to follow her husband to Cleveland, "my only alternative was to ask Peter to scuttle the goal he'd been working towards for almost 25 years. If I did that, I didn't deserve to be his wife."

A 1992 study by William and Denise Bielby found that over half of female respondents, but only 16 percent of men, reported that they were reluctant to relocate because of family considerations. This creates what we call a "trailing-spouse gap": Women are more likely than men to trail along so their husbands can take a desirable job. The trailing-spouse gap translates very directly into a salary gap.

Institutions need to avoid feeding this dynamic, and can do so in a number of ways. One is to avoid pinning raises to outside offers. This could prove more difficult than it sounds.

Whenever institutions give merit raises, they want to be able to point to an objective reason for doing so. Pinning raises to outside offers provides a reason that appears gender neutral on its face: Anyone who gets an outside offer can use it to get a pay raise. Yet many practices that appear neutral have a disproportionately negative impact on women.

Lotte Bailyn, a professor of business at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, notes that when raises are tied to outside offers, "Women get hit with a triple whammy. They are less likely to get offers because they are typically viewed as less moveable; women are also less likely to use an offer as leverage unless they are extremely serious and set to leave; and, finally, there is some evidence that women may be less likely to get counteroffers."

FACIALLY neutral practices that disproportionately affect women often wind up in the courts. Federal law forbids such practices unless they can be justified as a business necessity, where no alternative approach is feasible. The law is a blunt instrument to communicate the message that people of good will need to re-examine whether a given practice is consistent with widely held ideals of gender equality.

Besides being potentially illegal, practices inconsistent with gender equality are often inefficient as well. Linking raises to outside offers "wastes a lot of intellectual energy," observes Linda Kerber, a historian at the University of Iowa. "It is colleagues who hire and colleagues who have to decide whom to recruit. If we are doing that because there's a realistic opportunity of strengthening our department," it is a worthwhile expenditure of energy. But the practice of linking raises to outside offers ensures that departments spend a lot of energy on candidates who don't really want to move; they just want a raise where they are.

The solution? It's simple. Raises need to be linked not only to outside offers but also to excellence in scholarship, teaching, and research. As a practical matter, institutions will need to match some outside offers in order to keep desirable faculty members, but there should also be other ways to recognize faculty contributions. Institutions that don't have multiple ways to reward faculty work need to find models among other institutions that

do. "The outside offer doesn't necessarily represent the value of that person to your institution. She may be an important person who holds your community together, or may provide distinctive scholarship that otherwise you wouldn't have," say Martha Chamallas, a professor of law at Ohio State University.

If linking raises to outside offers subtly disadvantages women, so does a second common practice: the way that hiring and tenure committees typically treat gaps in a faculty member's CV. By gaps, I mean a break in the expected career path, in which the ideal worker is defined as someone who starts work in early adulthood and continues, full time and full force, for 40 years straight.

"It isn't the gap so much as how the gap is interpreted," Bailyn says. "A gap in a man's résumé may well be interpreted as evidence that he is enterprising, whereas a gap in a woman's résumé may be seen as evidence that she is not serious. And, of course, there is no recognition that a gap taken for caretaking can have positive effects when she comes back."

Any interruption of work, notes Chamallas, seems to be given an "exaggerated importance. I'm not sure that not teaching for three or four years is going to make you a less effective teacher or scholar or colleague."

As Linda Kerber and others have pointed out, the key years for gaining tenure also are the key years for childbearing and child-rearing. Even where gaps in a woman's résumé do signal time off for children, does this make her less serious? In point of fact, couldn't it also signal that she is a serious and committed parent as well as a serious and committed scholar, teacher, and colleague?

The frequent assumption in academe that gaps in a CV signal a lack of seriousness will have a disproportionate impact on female job candidates. And that assumption may, in some situations, be illegal, particularly if gaps in a man's CV are treated different from gaps in a woman's. Institutions need to take steps to avoid the stereotypes that associate homemakers and women working part time with rock-bottom competence, and examine the unspoken assumptions about who is serious and who is not.

A related, but still more subtle issue, arises when search committees look at "career trajectory." On its face, what could be more legitimate than to look at the path a faculty candidate has followed in his or her career? Surely everyone wants to back a winner.

But who is winning at what? Some search committees require candidates hired right of out graduate school to have a couple of published articles. For tenure, they expect the rate of publication to speed up, as a signal that the candidate's career is picking up steam. Given that the average age for the granting of a Ph.D. is 33, this means that the rate of publication is expected to speed up during the years when child-care responsibilities are heaviest. Since American women continued to do the majority of the child care and housework, this expectation too has a disproportionately negative impact on women.

EVEN more troubling are stories I've heard about conversations where a concern is expressed when a woman has had a second child. As one academic, who asked not to be named, says, "The feeling seems to be that it is understandable that people want to have children, so one is OK. But having a second one may be felt to signal that someone is not willing to do what it takes" to get tenure.

This is not a pretty picture. First, there is the potential for legal liability: One strongly suspects that women but not men are assumed to lack seriousness when a second child is born. Treating women differently from similarly situated men may be a violation of federal and/or state antidiscrimination laws.

Leaving aside the potential for liability, the idea of penalizing women for having the standard-issue number of children clearly seems unfair and inconsistent, not only with widely held ideals of gender equality but also with widely shared values relating to family life (regardless of sexual orientation).

Let me be quick to say what I do not mean: I do not mean that academic institutions cannot hold candidates to rigorous standards. They can and they should. I am not saying that merit should not be rewarded. It can and it should.

What I am saying is that some of the accepted ways of measuring merit and rigor are unreliable, inaccurate, and systematically unfair to women. That also makes them unfair to many men who are committed to family care--and family equality.

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By Joan Williams

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4) **THE BACKLASH AGAINST HIRING COUPLES (04/13/01)**

Many professors say taking steps to accommodate partners is awkward, divisive, and unfair

BARBARA HARBACH'S 20 CD recordings on organ and harpsichord have won rave reviews from the international press, which cites her "impeccable" playing. She's written six musicals and is at work on a seventh. She edits a national journal on female composers.

She's also the wife of the chancellor of the University of Wisconsin at Stevens Point, which has just created a $57,000 visiting professorship for her.

Faculty members had little say in the appointment, and some in the music department are outraged. Ms. Harbach may be talented, says Robert Kase, the department's chairman, but university-wide budget reductions forced his department to cut faculty posts a few years back. He asks, "Now, all of a sudden, the university can come up with 60 grand?"

Gerard T. McKenna, dean of the College of Fine Arts and Communication at Stevens Point, knows that music professors there are touchy about the situation. That's why he didn't force the chancellor's wife on just that department, but cobbled a joint appointment in music, technology, and media arts. Ms. Harbach reports directly to him.

Her husband, Thomas F. George, sounds pained when asked about the controversy, but insists that he never demanded a position for his wife. Her credentials, he says, speak for themselves. She adds: "I have worked at this career all my life and sought to excel in all environments. I am sorry if that offends the faculty to whom you have talked."

The controversy at Stevens Point raises questions that have been overlooked as the number of couples hired by universities continues to rise.

"We have more requests to accommodate partners than we can possibly fill," says Sally Frost Mason, dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Kansas. Thirteen percent of the college's faculty hires last year were spouses or partners of other new hires or current faculty members. Six couples work in the molecular-biosciences department alone.

GOOD BUSINESS SENSE

Universities say couple-hiring makes good business sense, and couples call the arrangements an improvement on the torturous commuter relationships of the past. However, some professors -- especially single scholars and those whose partners work outside academe -- believe that the trend has gone too far. They say hiring partners without a national search establishes a misguided form of affirmative action that gives an edge to people who need it least.

"As someone who's been in the job market, I think about every tiny incremental advantage people can have," says one faculty member at a private university in the East whose wife has a job in advertising. "Being married is not at all like publishing an extra book or article. I would hate to imagine how many times I've lost a job to a spouse."

Stephen C. Cooke, an associate professor of agricultural economics at the University of Idaho, was among the majority of professors there who voted against a policy in 1998 that would have allowed the hiring of partners without a national search.

"Academic institutions are meritocracies in the extreme, and if you start a buddy system, it just looks bad, even if there's nothing wrong with the people involved," he says. "You may get the odd star, but you'll pay for it with your morale and your image."

Not too long ago, if colleges paid attention to spouses at all, they paid attention to the spouses of the stars. If a senior scholar was in high demand, he -- it was almost always a man -- could often persuade a college to find a job for his wife. For the rest of academe, finding two jobs in one place wasn't easy. Stories abounded of professors who lived thousands of miles from their spouses and children and spent weekends in hectic commutes. The news media, including The Chronicle, publicized the problem.

In the past couple of years, though, a lot has changed. Wendy K. Wilkins has seen it happen. Back in the mid-1990's, when she was associate dean of academic personnel at Arizona State University, she knew she could "get a leg up on the competition" by offering a job to a spouse. "We were succeeding then at doing things for couples that our competitors weren't able to do," she recalls. And since she took over three years ago as dean of the College of Arts and Letters at Michigan State University, finding room for spouses has become "standard practice," she says.

Last year, seven of the nine new faculty hires in Ms. Wilkins's college were partners of other new hires or of professors already at the university. Of the six tenured or tenure-track faculty members hired to date for the coming academic year, three are partners of current Michigan State employees.

Universities are hiring so many couples largely because so many academics are married to other academics. With the influx of women into advanced-degree programs, graduate schools have become the perfect mating ground. A national faculty survey completed in 1997 found that 35 percent of male professors and 40 percent of female faculty members had partners who were also academics. Like other couples, they want jobs that will allow them to live together.

But their options are limited. With roughly 3,500 colleges and universities in the United States, it sounds as if academics should have lots of posts to choose from. But until recently, many institutions have been scarce on new jobs for professors, particularly in the humanities. And in many rural areas, there is only one higher-education game in town.

A NECESSARY EVIL

If half of an academic couple is recruited by an isolated institution, there is often no place else suitable for the other half to work. If a couple can't find two tenure-track jobs that allow them to live under the same roof, they usually must live apart. Commuter marriages have long been considered a necessary evil in academe.

In the past few years, though, universities have begun recognizing the downside of hiring one partner and not the other. Professors who are separated from their spouses typically aren't happy about it, and spend less time on the campus and more time visiting their partners. Couples who live and work together, on the other hand, are likely to be more active and productive members of their campus communities.

'IT'S SUCH A NATURAL'

Stanley Fish, dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Illinois at Chicago, realized earlier than most that keeping couples together was a smart idea. He's used it as a recruiting tool at Chicago and earlier, as chairman of the English department at Duke University. "It's such a natural," he says. "People who are apart, bearing both the emotional and financial drain, are going to listen to you when you call them up and say, How would you like to be together?"

At Chicago, he has taken spousal hiring to a new level. This spring, he's hoping to snag a total of five couples, representing more than 30 percent of the total new hires in the college for the coming academic year.

Although few administrators are as aggressive as Mr. Fish, many have made couple-hiring a top priority. The interest extends to same- and opposite-sex couples alike, and heterosexual couples need not be married to benefit. With universities seeking to bulk up on the number of female professors they employ, it is increasingly likely that the "trailing spouse" is a man.

"It is the unusual appointment now that does not involve the raising of a spousal question," says William James Adams, associate dean of academic affairs in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor. "If there is nothing we can do to accommodate the spouse, it is quite likely they will take some other offer."

Deans often allow a department to hire a trailing spouse even if there are no positions open. That's an advantage for a department that might otherwise have to wait to make a hire until someone retires. At Michigan, the provost contributes as much as a third of the money needed to pay a spouse's salary.

Purdue University created a special program seven years ago to encourage the hiring of partners, and offers extra money to departments that do. The money, which helps pay the

partner's salary, usually lasts until the person receives tenure. In all, Purdue has helped 33 couples that way.

'YOU MUST BE VERY SPECIAL'

As interest in hiring couples rises, the unheard of has begun to take place: Young couples are getting dual offers from not one but two institutions. It happened to Paul and Ruth Ann Atchley. In the spring of 1998, she had job interviews in cognitive psychology with the University of Kansas and with Colorado State University at Fort Collins. She told both institutions that her husband was also an academic, and each responded with a tenure-track post for him, too. The couple chose Kansas, where they are assistant professors of psychology.

Their story sometimes gets a rise out of other dual-career couples. "You see people raise their eyebrows and say, You must be very special," says Mr. Atchley.

With the flood of couples onto campuses, it is sometimes difficult to keep track of who is married to whom. On Pennsylvania State University's main campus, it may be best to assume that everyone is married to someone at the university. In the English department, 10 of the 60 faculty members are married to each other, and 10 more professors are married to administrators or to faculty members in other departments. One of those is Sandra Spanier, whose husband, Graham B. Spanier, is Penn State's president.

Like many other institutions, Penn State has written rules prohibiting professors from deciding their spouses' salary increases or voting on their tenure and promotion. Don Bialostosky, the English-department chairman, says the presence of so many couples hasn't created any problems there.

Couples who have suffered through long-distance relationships feel that the special attention they are now getting simply evens the score after years of neglect. Some even argue that academe hasn't done enough to encourage faculty members to have family lives.

"I believe in merit, but if we're going to consider people on bases other than strictly merit, family status ought to be part of that," says Charles W. Nuckolls, a professor of anthropology at the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa. He and his wife, Janis B. Nuckolls, lived apart for 10 years, until the department hired her this year. Mr. Nuckolls says academic departments should go after mothers the same way they recruit minority scholars. "If it is prima facie evidence of discrimination that a department has no minorities and no women, then it should be prima facie evidence that it has no reproductively active women," he says.

AN END TO THE STIGMA?

Ever since universities began hiring couples, people have been raising questions about the qualifications of the trailing spouses. Academics who have been "accommodated" --

oftentimes women -- have had to live with that stigma. Now questions surrounding a partner's qualifications have died down as more and more husbands become trailing spouses, and as partner hires have become so common.

Of course, there are some notorious cases that faculty members on some campuses still whisper about. There's Sally McNall, wife of the provost on California State University's Chico campus, whom the English department refused to hire. Carol Burr, a former chair of the department, says Ms. McNall wanted to teach but wouldn't submit to a job interview.

The provost's wife eventually got a job lecturing in the honors program, which is designated for the institution's best professors. But she has consistently received poor student evaluations, according to professors who say they've seen them and who do not want to be named.

Ms. McNall says "it simply isn't true" that she has received bad evaluations.

Byron M. Jackson, vice provost for academic affairs and dean of undergraduate education at Chico, agrees. "I have not seen any problems in her evaluations or in her teaching at all," he says.

Those who question couple-hiring say the usual issue is not a spouse's qualifications. With an overabundance of Ph.D.'s, particularly in the humanities, it is common for several hundred qualified candidates to apply for a job. The real question is whether a person is the best candidate a university could have hired.

"If the person is average, it is not so much a question of whether they harm you as whether they don't allow you to improve," explains Kingsley R. Browne, a law professor at Wayne State University, in Michigan, whose specialty is employment discrimination.

One prestigious private law school recently hired the wife of another law professor whom it wanted to keep. "She has a solid record, but if you were going to pick someone, would you really pick her?" asks a law professor at a major research university. Equally as important, he says, is the question of who isn't hired.

Donna L. Clevinger, chairwoman of the theater department at Hardin-Simmons University, is worried it might be someone like her. She's single and has left two tenured posts during the past several years to care for her sick parents. Each time she's returned to the job market, she's had to search on her own, "without relying on somebody else's coattails to get me through."

Meanwhile, no university offered to help Ms. Clevinger with her own family circumstances by paying someone to take care of her parents, so that she wouldn't have to resign. "But it is OK to ask for a favor for your spouse, because it's been institutionalized," she says.

An assistant professor of medicine who works on the East Coast says favoritism for couples is simply a twist on the old-boy network. She is a divorced mother of two, and no one has done anything to help her get a job, she says. Universities would find it preposterous, she argues, if she applied for a position and asked for a job for her sister, too. "If I were close to my sister and we lived together and shared a household, and I got a fabulous job at the University of Kentucky, could I say to them: What about my sister? Can you give me a job for her, because I'm not going to leave her here?"

In the world outside academe, people don't assume that an employer will hire their spouses, says the assistant professor. "In the private sector, if your husband got a job in Seattle, then you would have to make a decision about what you wanted to do with your career."

Karen S. Usher, president of the Personnel Office, a company that helps businesses handle personnel issues, agrees that the private sector is different from higher education when it comes to the issue of dual-career couples. "In the private sector, the support for the working spouse is more focused on helping them network into employment and find work rather than offering them an opportunity within the same organization," she says. "It does happen, but it's rare."

Some professors have taken a public stand against spousal hiring. At the University of Idaho, the issue arose a few years ago, when the wife of the dean of the College of Agriculture was given a coveted job as an assistant to the dean of another college at the university. Up in arms, administrative staff members helped persuade professors that spousal hires were a bad idea. The couple who sparked the uprising have moved on to another university.

At Miami University, in Ohio, Mark Bernheim votes against partner hires in the English department if it is clear that they are candidates primarily because their spouses already work on the campus. He knows that this makes him look like a curmudgeon: Opposing accommodations for couples, he says, is like opposing motherhood and apple pie. "It is many of the things one would like to be on the side of. It's convenient, collegial, and nice," he says. But there are consequences. "In the academy, we like to say we're on the side of justice, fair play, and openness," says Mr. Bernheim, whose wife works in publishing. "Then I find myself hearing about jobs that are being tailor-made for a spouse, while applications from other people are being thrown away like so much chaff."

Jonathan F. Lewis, a professor of sociology at Benedictine University, in Illinois, jokes that the interest in academic couples could be the basis for a situation comedy: "Two people who really don't have a whole lot in common decide to get married to get teaching positions."

'IT WAS A NIGHTMARE'

The hiring of so many couples has made academic life more complicated. It is difficult to say no when the partner of one of your favorite colleagues comes up for tenure. If one

half of an academic couple gets tenure and the other doesn't, the department is likely to lose both. And entire departments now suffer when a couple breaks up.

That's what happened in Mr. Bernheim's department. In 1992, it hired Kate McCullough. Two years later, it found a spot for her partner, Victoria L. Smith. Soon after Ms. Smith accepted the job, she and Ms. McCullough broke up, but Ms. Smith decided to join the department anyway.

"It was a nightmare," Ms. Smith says. She and Ms. McCullough didn't speak to one another. The department chairman had to make sure that they didn't serve on the same committees or advise the same graduate students.

Ms. Smith is starting over this month, leaving Miami University for a teaching job in Germany. Ms. McCullough has been on leave for two years as a visiting professor at Cornell University, which just made her a permanent job offer. Her new partner is an assistant professor of English there.

PHOTO (COLOR): Some faculty members at the U. of Wisconsin at Stevens Point were angry when the institution created a visiting professorship for Barbara Harbach, a musician, journal editor, and the wife of Thomas F. George, the chancellor.

PHOTO (COLOR): Ten of the 60 faculty members in Penn State's English department are married to each other. They include (from left) Jon Olson, sitting behind his wife, Cheryl Glenn; Marie and Robert Secor; Susan Harris, sitting in front of William Harris; Linda Selzer and John Selzer.

PHOTO (COLOR): In 1998, Paul and Ruth Ann Atchley received job offers from both the U. of Kansas and Colorado State U. They ended up at Kansas.

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By Robin Wilson d Scott Smallwood

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5) ACADEMIC COUPLES SAID TO BE HAPPIER WORKING AT SAME UNIVERSITY (08/02/02)

ACADEMIC COUPLES who work at the same university are happier and report less stress in balancing their jobs and their family lives than do dual-career couples in which one spouse works at a university and the other works at a different institution or outside academe.

The finding is among the results of a new study of 276 couples completed by scholars at Cornell University's Careers Institute. The study was supported by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. A report on the study is called "Intimate Academics: Co-Working Couples in Two American Universities." Nationwide, about 40 percent of male faculty members and 35 percent of female faculty members are married to other academics.

As those proportions have grown in the last decade, accommodating couples has become a major concern in university hiring. Cornell's study is one of the first to explore the phenomenon. "There are a fair amount of formal and informal policies at universities to adjust their employment to accommodate spouses," says Stephen Sweet, associate director of the Careers Institute, "but there is almost no research on the subject."

The 276 couples were identified for study because at least one spouse worked for one of two unnamed universities in upstate New York. Over all, 17 percent of the individuals in the study were married to someone else who worked at the same university. Of those couples, about half -- 23 -- were pairs in which each spouse was a professor or academic administrator.

The study found that men whose wives worked at the same university spent six more hours per week working than men whose wives worked elsewhere. But the men whose wives worked at the same university reported greater family success.

Women with advanced degrees whose husbands worked at the same university reported being more satisfied with their marriage and family life than other married women in the study.

And women with school-age children whose spouses worked at the same university reported working fewer hours and reported greater success in balancing work and family.

Another key finding was that couples who worked at the same university were more likely than others to place an equal priority on both partners' careers, rather than favoring the husband's.

"Our study isn't intended to say that academic environments are entirely suited to work and family life," says Mr. Sweet, who completed the study with Phyllis Moen, director of the institute.

"But co-working relationships help to buffer some of the work and family strains."

Copies of the report may be obtained from the institute, at G21 MVR Cornell University, Ithaca, N.Y. 14853-4401.

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By Robin Wilson

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6) Singular Mistreatment (04/23/04)

Unmarried professors are outsiders in the Ozzie and Harriet world of academe

Dateline: Santa Barbara, Calif.

Bella M. DePaulo remembers the semester at the University of Virginia when she was asked to teach a night class because the time was inconvenient for her married colleagues. She recalls the Thursday evening she wound up taking a job candidate to dinner alone because everyone else in her department had family obligations.

Single professors frequently experience such slights, says Ms. DePaulo, a visiting professor of psychology on the University of California's campus here who does research on discrimination against single people.

Particularly unfair, she says, are the perks that some universities offer to married professors, but that do not apply to single professors, like hefty tuition discounts for children of faculty members.

Whenever Ms. DePaulo has pointed out that single professors without kids receive nothing comparable, her married colleagues have looked at her as if she's "antifamily values," she says. "At a time when we are all so familiar with the antics of the old boys' club, so many people seem so oblivious to a similar kind of club -- the couples' club."

While the proportion of single people in the country has surged over the past few decades, academe remains a very coupled universe. Three-quarters of faculty members at all two- and four-year colleges are married, compared with just 57 percent of adults nationwide. The dearth of single professors makes those who are unwed feel like outsiders. And the up-or-out nature of tenure makes working in academe a risky option for single people, who do not have a spouse to fall back on -- emotionally or financially -- if their tenure bids fail.

"Single people are the last underrepresented minority," says Alice Bach, an associate professor of religion, who is the only single woman in her department at Case Western Reserve University.

Although colleges may be aware of single professors' complaints, few seem inclined to do anything about them. "Fair doesn't necessarily mean equal," says Michael P. Aitken, director of governmental affairs for the Society for Human Resource Management. "Universities tend to craft their policies around the majority of their employees." That means married people.

And professors who are married with children don't feel much sympathy for single colleagues. To those who have juggled research, teaching, and child care while trying to earn tenure, the life of the unattached often looks blissful.

"To be without major family or partner responsibilities is the sine qua non of the research-oriented academic," says Michael Finn, a professor of French at Ryerson University, in Toronto, who is married but has no children. "You can follow that writing inspiration until 5 a.m. if you want, shut down the telephone and close the door for the whole month of June."

At a time when gay and lesbian people are lobbying for the right to wed, marriage is an institution in decline. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, married couples make up only 50.7 percent of all households today, down from 80 percent in the 1950s.

By comparison, academe still resembles the world of Ozzie and Harriet. A nationwide survey of faculty members in the academic year 2001-2, conducted by the Higher Education Research Institute at the University of California at Los Angeles, found that 76 percent of professors were married and an additional 5 percent lived with a partner. Only 19 percent were single. The proportions were roughly the same as a decade earlier.

"Academe is a marriage culture," says Nancy Berke, a single assistant professor of English and women's studies at La Guardia Community College of the City University of New York. In fact, of those professors who are married, roughly 40 percent are paired with other academics. In the past decade, more universities have accommodated academic couples by finding jobs for both on the same campus. Inevitably, that leaves fewer jobs open to single scholars.

What's more, single professors say, the academic job market can be even tougher on them. Unlike doctors or lawyers, professors don't always have much choice about where they end up -- particularly when the market is tight. Scholars must go where the jobs are, and that may mean an isolated campus in a remote town with few romantic prospects.

A PERSONAL SACRIFICE

Marlo M. Belschner, a single, 35-year-old Shakespearean scholar, knew full well that she risked sacrificing her personal life for her career when she accepted a job two years ago at Monmouth College, in Monmouth, Ill., population 9,500. But she didn't realize how big the sacrifice would be. By her count, Monmouth has only three tenured, single male professors, and she has found no eligible men off the campus.

"There are several really amazing things here: I have smart and fun-loving colleagues, I can walk to work, and I bought my four-bedroom house for $65,000," says Ms. Belschner. "This gig is everything I could ask for. It's only when I think of the long term that I become concerned about my personal life."

Ms. Berke, at La Guardia, says that's why she would never move to a small-town campus. She recently interviewed at a small college near New York City, where she learned that everyone in the department was married. "I'm at the interview and two of the guys' wives have just had babies," she says. "The conversation turns to strollers and what brand is

best." Would her inability to enter the conversation cast her as an outsider and possibly cost her the job? she wondered. She decided not to pursue the post.

One historian, who used to work at a major research university in the East and asked to remain anonymous, says single scholars do have reason to worry about how their marital status may affect their career prospects. She believes the university denied her tenure two years ago because she counseled her female students to put their personal lives on hold for their careers, something she had done herself. The advice backfired. "This was interpreted by some students as my being against marriage and family," says the scholar, who was told that female students had complained.

Women in academe seem to experience singleness differently from their male counterparts. That may be in part because female professors are more likely to be single. According to the Higher Education Research Institute's survey, 82 percent of male professors were married in the 2001-2 academic year, compared with 65.5 percent of female faculty members. The single male professor has an "almost fetishized status," says Johnnie Wilcox, an assistant professor of English at Ohio University's main campus.

"That person is thought of as such a desirable mate that to have the person lying around single is seen as a waste, a tragedy," says Mr. Wilcox, who is 36 and single. His colleagues, he adds, are always trying to set him up.

Single female professors, by contrast, say they are often ignored and even shunned -- particularly if they are over 40. "If you say, 'I'm a healthy, middle-aged, white woman and I'm single,' people don't even turn around," says Ms. Bach, at Case Western.

SINGLE: A STIGMA?

Not all single female professors feel slighted. Sara Hodges, a 37-year-old associate professor of psychology at the University of Oregon, says that being unmarried has never been a stigma for her, and that her married colleagues have always made her feel welcome. "The first year I was here," she recalls, "I had five invitations for Thanksgiving dinner."

Her single status has also paid dividends for the university, she believes. "At a place like the University of Oregon, people tend to stay in their departments and not be interdisciplinary," Ms. Hodges says. She has struck up personal and collegial relationships with professors all across the campus, she says, primarily because she is interested in getting to know people. As a result of those friendships, she says, she has taken part in interdisciplinary undergraduate programs, invited outsiders to speak at brown-bag lunches in her department, and served as the nondepartmental member of a graduate student's dissertation committee.

Most single professors, however, count more negatives than positives to their circumstance. Benita Blessing, 36, an assistant professor of history on the Athens

campus, says that while her married colleagues feel free to leave boring faculty meetings to meet their spouses or pick up their children, she has no excuse good enough to walk out. "I could never just say, 'I have to go home and watch Buffy the Vampire Slayer reruns.'"

CELEBRATING FAMILIES

Since Ms. Blessing arrived at Ohio three years ago, she has grown bitter about the unacknowledged ways in which she believes single scholars are snubbed. The sole single woman in the department, she has attended countless bridal and baby showers and engagement parties.

"We do not have parties for people getting tenure or getting promoted," she says. "I received a very prestigious fellowship from the National Academy of Education, and I got a couple of words of congratulations in the hallway. But no one bothered to throw me a party. Here we are in an academic environment, and the things we're celebrating are family-oriented activities."

She also feels compelled to watch her step while interacting with her married male colleagues. "I have professional relationships with male professors, but if I talk to them much outside the office, the wife has to come along," she says, "even if we're going to a coffee shop to talk about a paper."

Most academic research is a solitary activity. That, too, can become stifling when a professor lacks a partner or children to break up the grind.

"In a discipline like history, you're working in some dusty archive, you're by yourself all day, and it's hard not to have immediate family at the end of the day," says Ellen F. Fitzpatrick, a professor of history at the University of New Hampshire. "The problems with being single can be enhanced by the isolation of the academic task."

Still, Ms. Fitzpatrick and other single professors resent the assumption that they have nothing in their lives but work. "Even people who are single get cancer, get depression, and have family responsibilities," she notes.

Many of the tasks of daily life -- caring for a house, running errands, paying bills -- are more onerous for single professors because they have no one with whom to share the work, some of them say. Moya Luckett, an assistant professor of film studies at the University of Pittsburgh, says trying to earn tenure was a particular strain on her because she is single and had no one to lean on. "You have to compile your dossier, and if you're on your own, you can't say to someone, 'I'm going to go AWOL this year, you pick up the slack,'" says Ms. Luckett, who was denied tenure and will leave the university this spring.

But the struggles faced by single professors seem to slip below the radar screen on campuses. It is married professors with children who reap the biggest benefits: health

insurance for their families, paid leave after giving birth, subsidized day care, and tuition discounts for their kids. Those extra benefits can add up to a big difference in compensation between single professors and married ones. For example, to provide health insurance for a single employee, Purdue University pays $3,624 annually, compared with the $8,159 it pays for an employee and spouse, and $10,527 for an employee, spouse, and children. The university also covers half the undergraduate tuition, or about $2,930 annually, for a faculty member's child who attends Purdue.

At private institutions, the tuition benefit is worth even more because costs are much higher. At Cornell University, for example, it is worth between $7,250 and $23,000 annually, depending on how long a professor has worked at the university and on the college at Cornell in which the professor's child enrolls.

'UNEQUAL PAY'

Ms. DePaulo, of Santa Barbara, says colleges could level the playing field by allowing single professors to put a parent -- or even a friend -- on their health-insurance policies. And administrators, she believes, should reconsider who gets tuition benefits, to make sure they go to people who need them. "I'm all for helping students who could not otherwise go to college," she says, "but that's not true of very many faculty kids."

In Ms. DePaulo's mind, providing more benefit dollars to married people than single ones amounts to "unequal pay for equal work." The professor, who is 50, started her career at the University of Virginia in 1979 and quickly made a name for herself in scholarly journals and the popular press with her research on the psychology of deception. For several years she didn't think much about being single. "I always thought marriage would happen to me eventually," she says.

But gradually she began noticing slights and inequities. (Timothy D. Wilson, chairman of the psychology department at Virginia, declines to comment on her contention that the department discriminated against her because she was single.) Ms. DePaulo also began reading books and articles on being single, and found that almost all of them looked at it as a problem to be fixed. While she believed that single people were often treated unfairly, she didn't think the only solution was to marry.

She was happy living alone, socializing with a wide circle of friends, and visiting her close-knit Italian family. "I like my alone time," she says.

By 2000, when Ms. DePaulo moved to Santa Barbara for a one-year sabbatical, her personal interest in the psychology of singleness had become a budding academic passion. She realized that "in stark contrast to the scholarship on marriage and family, there are no academic journals dedicated to the study of people who are single, no government funding earmarked for research on singles, no textbooks about singles, and no annual conferences on singles."

She started doing research on discrimination against single people and began giving academic talks on the subject.

When the year was up, Ms. DePaulo took a dramatic step: She jettisoned her 20-year career at UVa, sold her house in Charlottesville, and became a visiting professor here at the University of California to pursue her work. She rents a four-bedroom house -- where she has frequent guests -- in a small, laid-back beach town called Summerland, about 15 miles from the campus.

"I was no longer content to try to squeeze this passionate interest into the crevices of my professional life," she wrote in a proposal for a book -- called "Singled Out" -- that she began sending to publishers in January.

"Thinking about the place of singles in society was my new emotional center," she says. Her hope is to "create a whole new academic field," changing not only the way America treats single people but also the common wisdom about them.

Ms. DePaulo wants most to raise consciousness among single people. Her book proposal lists several myths she believes they need to condemn, including that marriage is the only "truly important peer relationship" and that without it "you will grow old and you will die in a room by yourself." She wants single people -- including those in academe -- to begin questioning what she considers unfair treatment, including the "scam" that she labels: "Let's give all the perks, benefits, gifts, and cash to couples and call it family values."

While her proposal does not offer lots of detailed solutions, Ms. DePaulo believes that colleges should stop treating single professors like second-class citizens. "I don't just think about this as identity politics," she says, "it's about human rights."

But, from the outside, Ms. DePaulo's quality of life doesn't appear to be second class. From her living room, she has a perfect view of the ocean. And her large, blond-wood desk, where she does all of her work, sits smack in the middle of the room. The prerogative of someone who lives alone.

Academe, a Married World

The percentage of single people in the American general public has grown, but academe has remained a largely married world, often making single faculty members feel like outsiders.

2001	Married	Single
American public	57%	43%
All faculty members	76%	24% (A)
American men	59%	41%
Male faculty members	82%	18% (B)
American women	55%	45%
Female faculty members	66%	34% (C)

(A) Unmarried living with partner(*): 5% (within Single category)

(B) Unmarried living with partner 4%

(C) Unmarried living with partner 7%

Note: Figures for the American public are for 2001, for Americans age 15 and over; figures for faculty are for 2001-2. All figures are rounded.

(*) Figures for "unmarried living with partner" are not available for the American public.

SOURCE: U.S. CENSUS BUREAU; HIGHER EDUCATION RESEARCH INSTITUTE AT THE UNIVERSITY CALIFORNIA AT LOS ANGELES

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By Robin Wilson

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Thursday, August 31, 2006

Some related articles:
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It's in Their Interest, Too

By JOAN C. WILLIAMS

BALANCING ACT

How to find a balance between work and family

You want to take a caregiving leave. Or you're interested in working part time for a while, yet remaining on the tenure track. Or maybe you ask for a maternity leave and your department head agrees, so long as you find someone to cover your classes while you are gone. (The latter actually happened to someone I know, even though it is illegal under federal law unless the same requirement is imposed on anyone who takes a short-term leave, say, after a heart attack or prostate cancer).

How do you approach your chairman? (And chances are it will be a man.) Do you get on your knees and beg? Do you go in with a lawyer in tow, talk about gender bias, and win the battle but lose the war?

It's best to start by thinking about it from the chairman's point of view. He has a department to run, courses to staff, precedents to worry about. So even if his impulse is to help you, my advice is to provide him with the business case for family-responsive policies -- or, as academics are more likely to call it, the link between those policies and academic excellence.

This column is designed to help you link your request to the basic mission of the department and the institution, in a way that will resonate with administrators.

Saving Money and Preserving Lines

Make the case that granting your leave will, in the long run, do both of those things.

Departments that are slow to approve temporary leaves run the risk of having faculty members depart for good. In this age of tight budgets, the most concrete costs of a family-hostile atmosphere are the high out-of-pocket ones associated with an employee who leaves. Those "sunk costs" -- unrecoverable expenditures like the cost of setting up labs for scientists, medical researchers, and engineers -- may run into several hundred thousand dollars.

Joan M. Herbers, dean of biological sciences at Ohio State University, estimates that start-up costs for a new faculty hire in molecular biology or biochemistry are $400,000 to $600,000. When a scientist leaves, the effect is that the university has paid to build the career of someone who takes her human capital to the competition: "We don't want to be the farm teams for the majors," she said.

It makes no sense for universities to hire a female professor, spend thousands of dollars setting up her lab, only to have her depart because she needs a maternity leave or a part-

time schedule -- and then replace her with another woman, who, in due time, may also leave for similar reasons. We're not talking gender equity here. We're talking raw economics.

Outside the sciences, the costs of attrition are those that apply to all professionals. According to standard estimates, replacing departing workers costs from 75 to 150 percent of their annual salaries.

Why so much? Think about it. The costs associated with a departing worker include all the initial recruiting costs: advertising, moving expenses, housing allowances, and benefits that are, in effect, signing bonuses (summer salary, for example, and money for hiring postdocs and extra research assistants).

But the most important sunk cost is the time that other faculty members spent recruiting the colleague who has left. Everyone knows that if you lead a major search, your own productivity plummets. A university that runs search after search to fill and refill the same position not only loses the productivity of the departing faculty member, but also productivity of his or her colleagues.

Additional costs include the staff time necessary to stop payroll and do exit interviews, as well as the material costs of refurbishing an office. Even steeper are the costs of having faculty members walk off with their human capital. Now, instead of strengthening your institution's grant proposals, those individuals will be competing for money from the same agencies, armed with the relationships their old colleagues may well have helped them build. And if enough departing faculty members leave unhappy, that can erode an institution's ability to attract high-quality candidates in the future. Then come all the costs associated with hiring the replacement.

Last but not least, department heads may worry about losing a faculty line when someone leaves.

The Realities of the Talent Pool

Since about 1995, 50 percent of Ph.D.'s have been earned by women -- in some fields, that percentage is even higher. A department that defines "commitment" as someone available to work 50 to 60 hours a week for 40 years without a break is defining its workplace ideals in a way that may well exclude half the talent pool.

Nationally, 95 percent of mothers between the ages of 25 and 44 work less than 50 hours a week, so an employer who offers only a 50-hour-a-week schedule wipes most women out of its labor pool. Census data show that 82 percent of women in that same age bracket have children. When women give birth they need maternity leave. While they are caring for children, most will want to work shorter hours than the average academic does today.

A 2003 study at the University of California found that male faculty members work an

average of 54 hours a week, while female ones work 52 hours. Parents with an average commute who work 50 hours a week will leave home at say, 7 a.m., start work at 8 a.m., leave work between 5 and 6 p.m., and return home around 7 p.m. -- if they don't work weekends. Only a tiny percentage of Americans would view that as an appropriate schedule for a mother, which helps explain why nearly 60 percent of faculty members who are married moms are thinking of leaving the profession.

Academic employers without a part-time tenure-track will "churn and burn" women through their ranks. In fact, most academic employers today are choosing and promoting professors based on schedule rather than on talent -- in a society where schedule correlates tightly with gender.

According to another University of California study by Mason and Goulden, "Marriage and the Baby Blues," only one in three women who entered the tenure track without children ever had them, and nearly 40 percent of tenure-track women had fewer children than they wanted to.

Both patterns make many women miserable.

Academic institutions need to abandon outdated notions of the ideal worker, not only to retain women, but also to attract and retain men. Gen-Y men are less likely than their fathers to be married to homemakers and more likely to want to be more involved with their children.

The Link Between Productivity and Morale

Business-school literature documents what we all already know: Employees who are more committed to the institution have higher levels of productivity, and happy employees lead to happy customers. For example, when First Tennessee Bank offered flexible work arrangements to its employees, it saw a 50 jump in its employee retention rate, which contributed to a 7 percent increase in its customer retention rate, which translated into $106-million in additional profit over two years.

So, morale matters. We all know of dysfunctional departments that sap everyone of energy. What is perhaps less widely recognized is the demoralization, stress, and burnout produced by the long hours that most faculty members work.

A report based on a survey of faculty members at Ohio State University found that two-thirds of female faculty members -- and half of men -- thought their jobs required too much time and only one in three faculty members saw their employer as supportive of their attempts to balance personal and professional responsibilities. About a third of female faculty members in the survey delayed starting families because of professional responsibilities; they reported lower satisfaction with their jobs than men.

Clearly, faculty members' inability to balance their work and family responsibilities

corrodes morale -- which corrodes productivity and commitment.

The Link Between Stress, Infertility, and Health Insurance Costs

The stress that accompanies a busy schedule may be correlated with miscarriage. A study at the law school of the University of California at Davis reports that female lawyers who worked more than 45 hours a week while pregnant suffered three times more miscarriages than those who worked less than 35 hours a week.

Stressed-out parents are more likely to burn out. That's bad news for an industry like academe with a tenure system that makes it very difficult to fire professors who do very little. The mad dash for tenure leaves many women on the tenure track with infertility problems. Fertility starts to diminish at age 27, long before most professors get tenure.

Stress, burnout, and high rates of infertility lead to high health insurance costs, which are a major concern for many university administrators. Until now, few have thought of containing costs by dealing with the high levels of stress, burnout, and infertility produced by decades of 50- and 60-hour workweeks. They should begin to do so.

The Potential for Litigation

Academic institutions have a unique problem: Their frontline personnel managers are department heads who who have little to no expertise in human-resource management, and may be skeptical or disdainful of personnel procedures. Recent studies show that department heads routinely discourage professors from taking leave time that they are entitled to under federal (and often state) law.

In gender-discrimination lawsuits, plaintiffs' employment lawyers regularly point to universities' failure to observe their own procedures as evidence. Quite apart from the risk of a jury verdict -- about as likely as lightning, but equally painful when it does happen -- even settlements in gender-discrimination cases can be expensive. One case I know of -- in which the provost called a faculty member's decision to stop the tenure clock a "red flag" -- produced a reported tentative settlement of nearly $500,000. Now that's news adminstrators can use.

So, also, is the fact that litigation surrounding work and family issues has increased sharply in recent years. Lawsuits alleging discrimination on the basis of pregnancy have increased 131 percent in 12 years. That's troubling for academe given that, according to a survey by Saranna R. Thornton, an associate professor of economics at Hampden-Sydney College, one in three academic institutions had policies that likely violated the Pregnancy Discrimination Act or other federal legislation.

The simple point here is that academic institutions, for their own good, need to become more family friendly in order to achieve and maintain excellence. You might not persuade many administrators of that with more talk of gender equity, but by making the business case for such policies, you will change more than a few minds.

Friday, August 3, 2007

An Unexpecting Minority

By CAROL PEACE

BALANCING ACT

How to find a balance between work and family

In many ways, my unexpected status as an outsider in my department could be interpreted as a sign of success for women in academe.

I arrived at my dream job last August on the tenure track at a major research university (relieved to have pulled off a wedding and a cross-country move). When I wandered into the office next to mine to chat with my new colleague, she greeted me by saying, "So, are you pregnant?" It was a punch line to a joke I hadn't heard.

As I soon learned, most of the female faculty members in my new department had given birth in the past few months. My colleague's greeting was meant to include me in the joke and perhaps even let me know it would be OK if I was pregnant. But I'm not, and I'm not sure I ever will be. Suddenly I found myself in the minority in my department, and I really didn't see it coming.

My husband is also an academic, and we have yet to decide if we want children, although we are leaning toward not. At my first job out of graduate school, only three faculty members (all of them male) in our entire division had young children. People rarely asked me and my then-fiancé whether we wanted to have children, and we worked, ate lunch, and played with colleagues who did and did not have kids. We frequently held cookouts and *American Idol* gatherings at a moment's notice.

I inhabited the preferred status quo (or so I thought) -- a career woman, dedicated to my work, with limited family obligations and a partner who shared household work.

Truthfully, I expected my new department would be grateful that I wasn't having kids. But the unofficial motto here seems to be "We do babies!" And indeed we do. Four women (36 percent of our faculty) have a baby (or two) getting ready to turn a year old this summer. Of the remaining female faculty members in our department, two have children in school or college, and a third is childless.

To those who fear, or have been told to fear, the supposed disaster presented by a department full of women of childbearing age, we beg to differ. The department has

been chugging along earning national accolades.

And people in the department, parents and nonparents alike, have bonded over the baby boom. Our new hire for the coming fall, I kid you not, is set to give birth on the first day of classes. While that may sound horrifying, as one colleague says, "If that's going to happen to her, I can't think of anywhere better for her to be than here." We can't wait for her and her family to arrive.

And yet my status as one of the few child-free women in the department has left me feeling strangely isolated. When I arrived, the four women had given birth mere days or months before. Understandably, they weren't around much during the fall. I hung out in my office, yearning for contact and socialization, but there wasn't much to be had.

At the same time, one of the male faculty members had had surgery, and another was dealing with the serious illness of a parent. That left only the department head and the program directors who weren't (to my knowledge) experiencing some sort of personal upheaval.

Despite that, the working moms would pop into my office and ask how I was doing, often offering apologies that they weren't around more. But regular contact at work, much less after-hours socializing, was missing.

In my heart, I knew I had connected with the department's faculty during the interview process and would just have to be patient. I mustered the courage to ask four different colleagues to lunch, but none of them ever asked me out in return. And one of the four made me feel as if it was a personal sacrifice to spend lunch time with me.

So I began to look elsewhere, seeking people in other departments who wanted to go to lunch or could hang out after 3 p.m. I had met two women during orientation, and we arranged to have lunch, at which I discovered that they both had children less than a year old. Now the only time we get together is if I initiate a round of e-mail messages suggesting lunch. I really enjoy those lunches but it takes a week or two to schedule them and no one ever suggests getting together after work.

I couldn't believe that I was struggling to meet anyone who could go out for a drink. Here is a rundown of some of the other people we met last fall and their baby status:

- My husband's closest female colleague has a 3-year-old and a newborn. And five others in his department had babies this year.
- Casual friends we know from our undergraduate days who happen to live nearby have a young daughter and another on the way. (Their invitation: "She's going to bed by 8 so we need child-free couples who can come play at our house later, We'll hang out!")
- An acquaintance from our college days who is now a graduate student asked us to dinner, and we love him and his wife, but she was eight months pregnant at the

time, and we've only seen them once since the baby was born.

Let me make clear: These are fabulous people, and we try to see them as much as they are willing to be seen. My husband and I did find two childless couples. One is actively trying to start a family, but we've started to shop together for furniture or have an occasional cookout. The second couple seems up for most invitations we have made but rarely takes the initiative to call us. I am happy to report that they finally had us over for dinner at their place this summer.

But that's how it's gone. In moving from a town of 10,000 people to one of more than 100,000, I had no idea that building a social network would be this difficult. After a tough day last November, I was sad to realize the only person I had to hash it out with was my husband. Meanwhile I had run into the faculty moms exercising together. I had heard them discuss the baby programs they took their kids to. I saw them working on research projects together.

I enjoy being child-free, but in my new town it began to seem as if I would have more friends if I got pregnant. And that was the realization that threw me. I recall sitting on the couch and thinking, "Well, gee, why not have a baby? There seems to be nothing else to do."

So that was my pity party, my low point. No, we did not get pregnant. But, clearly, I wasn't prepared to be the odd woman out.

I am thrilled that my female colleagues can choose to have children while working in our field and still get tenure. I love debunking myths about pregnancy at work. I am proud of how well my department has accommodated the unexpected simultaneity of pregnancies. I think the children are absolutely adorable and fun to be around. I think it's wonderful that the faculty moms have each other to lean on.

I just want them to be comfortable leaning on me, too. I don't want to be ostracized for being childless any more than they want to be for having children.

I can finally say, however, that it's getting better. As the faculty moms have emerged from their sleepless nights, and as I have overcome my fear of intruding, we have indeed begun to connect. The day I was invited to come out to dinner with some of the new moms, I came home and cried out of happiness.

The bittersweet part is that I know everyone will reach out immediately in the fall to our new pregnant hire, myself included. She'll probably be socialized into the department by October. Intellectually I'm thrilled and proud of my department for that, but personally I'm wondering if I won't get jealous watching her quickly develop the relationships I am still trying hard to foster.

Carol Peace is the pseudonym of an assistant professor in a professional school at a university in the Midwest.