Retaining Postdoc Women Through Effective Postdoctoral Policies

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URI ADVANCE Institutional Transformation
Program Components

Recruitment

- Faculty Fellows Program
- Supplemental Start-up Funding
- Best Search Practices Training

Faculty Development

- Incentive “mini-grant” Fund
- Topical Lunches
- Career Workshops
- Mentoring Program

Work-Life Initiatives

- Parental Leave Policy
- Dual Career Hiring Program
- Lactation Policy and Program
- Creation of a Work-Life Standing Committee
Evaluation

- Academic Work Environment Survey (pre and post)
- Benchmark Data Collection
- Program Evaluation
- Dissemination

Climate Change

- Internal Advisory Action Council
- Department Climate Workshops
- Public Events, Workshops, Literature, Manuals, etc.
- Chairs’ Discussion Forum
- Integrated Theoretical Model for Climate Change
How does change occur? The traditional model:

Top Down
(Formal policy change, administrative leadership)

Climate Change
or
"Institutional Transformation"

Bottom Up
(Individual, grass roots)
Work-Life Integration

**Family Leave**
- Parental leave
- Elder care leave
- Sick-leave bank
- Care for other dependents

**Dual Career Assistance**
- Partner placement
- Regional network

**Flexible Work Options**
- Full-time, modified duties
- Part-time options
- Job sharing
- Reasonable options for self-care, wellness, and personal commitments
- Tenure clock stops

**Community Resources & Support**
- Health & wellbeing
- Housing & relocation
- Community organizations
- Transitional financial support
- Networking & connections
- Advice & guidance

**Education & Awareness**
- Policy review and development
- URI community education about work-life integration
- Research and data collection

**Lactation Program**
- Lactation Policy
- Lactation sites across 3 campuses
- Information and Support
- RI Dept. of Health

**Child/Elder Care**
- Child/elder care facilities
- Resources for caregivers
- Financial support during significant family transitions

- **Work-Life Integration**
  - responding to workers’ needs on and off the job
Parental Leave at URI

History
2003: Lack of standard agreements petition for policy

PCOSW/ADVANCE collaboration

Business Case: http://www.uri.edu/advance/work_life_support/general%20recommendations%20new.html

Philosophical Framework: http://www.uri.edu/advance/work_life_support/parent_leave%20philosophical%20framework.html
Presented to University President at formal meeting;

President took it to Board of Governors (BOG).

BOG brought it to bargaining table from the Administration
• eliminated resentment (nothing “given up”)
• made room for other inclusive work-life proposals

Modeled for other bargaining units
• advised on strategy
URI’s Parental Leave Policy
AAUP Policy as of July 2004

http://www.uri.edu/advance/work_life_support/parental_leave_policy.html

• 6 weeks of paid leave, independent of sick leave;
• Modified duties before or after can be negotiated;
• May be used in combination with sick leave.

Not perfect yet!
INSTITUTIONAL
Are administrative offices in support of adequate leave options for parents?

INTERACTIONAL
Do Chairs, HR, etc., offer information and help proactively?
Does a culture of coverage exist among colleagues?

INDIVIDUAL
Are parents using the policy openly and without fear of negative repercussions?
Do non-parents endorse the policy?

PARENTAL LEAVE
URI’s Dual Career Policy

History
URI acknowledges family-friendliness with Paid Parental Leave Policy: July 2004

The “March 30 Summit” at URI: 2005

ADVANCE Fellows dual-career needs: 2003 – 2005

Small study of dual-career issues on URI campus: 2004 - 2005
Creation of Dual Career Committee

Research best practices
Work with PCOSW
Work with AAEEO
Use Philosophical Framework
President’s Strategic Plan: inclusiveness & diversity

Draft policy
Present to Council of Deans
  Deans need it; but wary of Departments’ strategic hiring plans

*Back-to-Drawing Board #1*
Confronting Collective Bargaining issues
(URI has 9 unions; 3 categories of state workers)

“bumping” and seniority

*Back-to-Drawing Board #2: more rationale provided*

URI President withdraws support: wary of nepotism potential

AAUP wary of too much rationale re nepotism
(a “red flag” to the BOG)
President wants AAUP to waive “grievability;” AAUP says no;

President and Provost worried about “white male spouse” issue;

President and Provost protest that URI is different than other universities with successful dual career programs;

Back-to-Drawing Board #3
One more time!

Present a one-page summary: what this policy does, and what it doesn’t do;

President endorses policy statement with caveats;

Legal scrutiny, State Ethics Commission;

“Guidelines,” not “Policy”
Policy Statement
2007

“The University of Rhode Island acknowledges the importance of supporting dual-career partners in attracting and retaining a quality workforce, and in its long-range economic benefit to the University, and is committed to offering placement advice and assistance whenever feasible and appropriate.”

http://www.uri.edu/advance/work_life_support/dual_career_partners.html

• policy statement and guidelines
• background information
• resources for dual-career couples
• dual-career handbook
Dual Career Guidelines

• Advertising

• Providing information

• Definition of Domestic Partner

• Responding to a request

• Accommodation strategies
Summary: Strategies for Creating and Implementing Family-Friendly Policies and Programs

Research
Best practices

Rationale
a) Business Case (recruitment and retention)
   b) Philosophical Framework

Use theory
Embed policy in three-level model of institutional transformation
Patience
Two steps forward; one step back; Downtime is useful as cooling off

Work with known entities and committees

Be inclusive

Tie to university’s strategic plan

Plan for implementation

Educate
Information and Training is essential