

Dual-Career Academic Couples Rewards, Challenges & a Few Survival Tips

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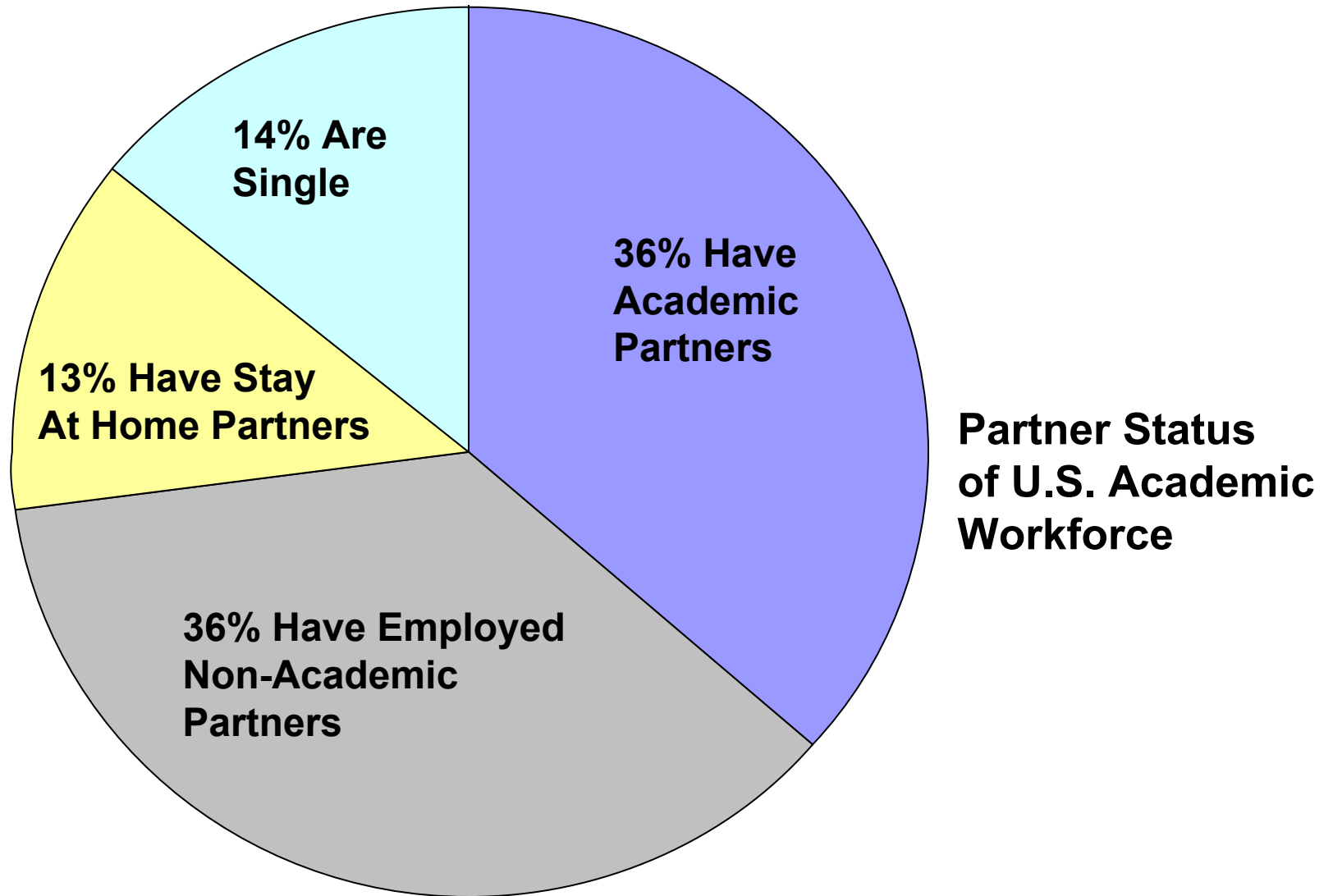
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“Meeting the needs and expectations of dual-career academic couples - while still ensuring the high quality of university faculty – is the next great challenge facing universities.”

*Dual-Career Academic Couples
What Universities Need to Know
Michelle R. Clayman Institute for Gender Research
Stanford University, 2008*

University Recruitment and Hiring of Academic Couples is Increasing



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Dual-Career Academic Couples Benefit an Institution

Enhance Campus Diversity

Provide a Broader Spectrum of Role Models

Help Bring Talented Faculty to an Institution

Foster Social Interactions

Raise Awareness

Rewards & Challenges

For Dual-Career Academic Couples

Shared Interests & Work

Equality & Rank

Spheres of Influence

Mutual Career Success

Family Matters

Tending the Home Front

Shared Interests & Work

Understanding and Awareness of Career Challenges and Time Commitments

- Years in Training**
- Mountains Climbed to Reach an Academic Position**
- Understands the Meaning of:
“I’ll be home late” or “I need to work this weekend.”**
- Dedication to Making it Work**

Shared Interests & Work

Understanding of a Field or Area of Specialization

- Often Speaks the Language**
- Provides Critiques of Work or Creative Ventures**
- Offers a Sounding Board for Work**
- Frequently Knows the Players First Hand**

Equality & Rank

Dealing with Issues of Equality

- Strive for Equality During Recruitment**
- Collaborate but Recognize the Need for Individual Recognition for Each Partner**
 - Publishing**
 - Grant Funding**
 - Credit for Effort**
 - Attendance at Meetings**

Equality & Rank

Dealing with Issues of Equality

-Tenure and Promotion

- Work to Make Each Individual a Strong Contender**
- Prepare Starting Day One**
- Collect Supportive Material for Each Dossier**
- Make Connections to Faculty and Administrators**
- Do Not Assume Favor Due to Your Partnership**

Equality & Rank

Dealing with Issues of Rank

- **Recognize the Ups and Downs of Each Individual**
 - **The Cyclic Nature of Careers and Duties**
- **Show a Willingness to Trade-off and Shift Focus to One Career or the Other at Difficult Times**
- **Recognize that Most Dual-Career Recruitments Bring Double Value to an Institution**
- **Educate Those Who Underestimate the Power of Two Career Couples**

Spheres of Influence

Individual



**Colleagues
Mentors
Collaborators
Students & Fellows
Administration**



**Colleagues
Mentors
Collaborators
Students & Fellows
Administration**

Spheres of Influence

Expand Your Spheres



Double the Advice

Greater Visibility For Each Partner

Broader Recognition of Each Partner

More Support

Spheres of Influence

Strive to Build Expanded Networks as Partners

-On Campus

Get to Know Your Partner's Colleagues, Mentors, Trainees, and Chair

These Individuals can be an Important Source of Support, Technical Help, and Advice

Access to Additional Administrators & Staff Can Be Helpful

Spheres of Influence

Strive to Build Expanded Networks as Partners

- In Your Discipline

**External Colleagues and Collaborators May Be
Helpful to Both Partners**

**Don't Be Afraid to Recommend Your Partner
For Service or Committees**

**Consider Shared or Rotating Service
on a Committee**

Mutual Career Success

**Identify and Strive for Success
as Individuals and as a Couple**

- Work for Success in Your Selected Areas of Excellence**
- Identify Goals as Individuals and a Team**

What is Important For Academic and Family Success?

Focus on Research

**Do You Need to Build Your Research Program by
Attending Meetings, Finding Collaborators, Getting
More Paper or Grants?**

Mutual Career Success

Focus on Service

Is Service Important to Your Career Goals and Growth? Will You Learn Something New by Serving? Will Your Service Make a Difference in an Area that is Important to You?

Focus on Teaching

Is Teaching Critical to Your Success and Advancement? Will a Specific Teaching Assignment Enhance Your Skills? Build Your Academic Portfolio? Will You be Teaching a Subject or to an Audience You Enjoy?

Mutual Career Success

Focus on Family

Is Your Family Strong? Do You Devote Sufficient Time to Family? Have You Built Traditions to Sustain and Enrich Your Family? Do You Build Creativity and Education into Family Time?

Mutual Career Success

Identify and Strive for Success as Individuals and as a Couple

- Recognize that Attaining Goals & Balancing Work & Family Will Always Be an On-going Process**
- Realize that You May Need to Be Flexible to Accommodate Your Partner's Goals**
- Discuss Your Short and Long-term Goals Frequently**
- Keep the Lines of Communication Open & Be Flexible to Change**

And now for another point of view...

Commitment is Key

- **Time for spouse and family is a high priority; nevertheless you need to be there at work when they really need you.**
- **Family activities need to be part of the rhythm of daily life**
- **Set a very high threshold for activities that compete with family time**
- **Be involved in children's day to day lives – school, and extracurricular activities**
- **If commitment is there, other things will fall into place**

Minimizing Inevitable Work-Family Conflicts

- **Build flexibility into work schedule to the extent possible**
- **Be very selective about off hours and out of town meetings. Come home a day early from trips, if possible.**
- **Be able to work at home occasionally**
- **Support colleagues when they have work-family issues**
- **Minimize routine household tasks to the extent possible**
- **Keep a family calendar of out of town trips, evening commitments, doctor visits, teacher conferences, school breaks, etc.**
- **Write spouse/family commitments in your own calendar**
- **Usually attend department social functions alone, unless children are invited**
- **Start early on time-sensitive assignments**

Tending the Home Front

- Hire help, cleaning, garden work, and major projects
- Get recommendations from colleagues & local referral agencies
- Accept that your home may not be exactly like your neighbors'
- Be willing to compromise on décor including books, computers, tools of the trade, & your home office
- Assign tasks to fit each partner's skills or enjoyment
- Reliable transportation is essential. Driving to work together is usually not practical
- Schedule home duties to fit your work schedule

Family Matters

- **Schedule family time & visits with extended family as priorities along with work**
- **Long distance & local eldercare: look to colleagues for advice, help & support. Check federal, state and local rules.**
- **Recognize the importance of elder family members to children**
- **Don't overlook family & friends for help**
- **Be flexible and have a backup plan**

Maintaining the Marriage

- Both of us put the children first, we are there when they need us
- Divide household and child rearing tasks.
- We talk about things, but also have a lot of autonomy for the little stuff.
- Understanding what's going on with the partner's job is important.
- Spouse's career is equally important. If there's something she needs to do for her job, I'm not going to second guess it.
- In the big picture, most stuff probably doesn't matter. Try not to criticize how she does her tasks
- Watching a show together after the kids go to bed and lunch together on campus are good things

Staying Happy

- **Get involved in varied and regular activities you enjoy and find fulfilling**
- **Eating dinner as a family is a good thing**
- **Small things together (bedtime reading, a walk) are good things**
- **Include the children in routine household activities whenever possible**
- **Be selective about extracurricular activities**
- **There are many great family activities in Indianapolis and Indiana. Younger kids like just about anything.**
- **Stay in contact with extended family**

Take Care of Yourself

- Get plenty of sleep
- Get plenty of exercise and outdoor recreation
- Get involved in activities you enjoy and find fulfilling
- Eat a healthy breakfast
- Restrict junk food and fast food, prepare most meals at home
- Limit fat: Favor monounsaturated fat \geq polyunsaturated oils \gg solid fats
- Consume mostly plant derived foods
- Favor fresh vegetables, fruits, whole grains, and nonfat dairy
- Restrict salt and refined sugar

Disclaimer

- We winged it
- We had no idea what we were getting into
- We blundered through the last 23½ years
- I'm a very lucky guy