Managing Work/Life Demands Across the Career Cycle

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What’s on your mind about work and family?
Why I Collapsed on the Job

Problems in the Pipeline: Gender, Marriage, and Fertility in the Ivory Tower
Nicholas H. Wolfinger, Mary Ann Mason & Marc Goulden

A Bad Reputation

Academic Motherhood: How Faculty Manage Work and Family

New Directions for Higher Education: How Ideal Worker Norms Shape Work-Life for Different Constituent Groups in Higher Education

Work-life integration: What can be included?

- Dual Career couples
- Elder/family care
- Parenthood/child care
- Sick care (self and others)
- Same sex couples/families
- Birth and adoption
- Personal Health and well-being
- Civic engagement/hobbies
- Other?
Why Institutions are Becoming “Family Friendly”

- To recruit and retain quality faculty
- Concerns about (under)representation of women
- To have higher morale and greater productivity
- To create more equitable work places
- Pressure from external sources
  - AAUP Statement on Family and Academic Work
  - Funding Agencies (NSF)
  - Other institutions
Academic context

- Greedy workplaces
- Greedy jobs
- Bad reputation
- Ideal worker norms
- Work-life conflicts
- Culture of doing more with less
- Crisis orientation
- Historically not friendly to women
Personal contexts

- Choice
- Timing
  - Careers (e.g., wait to be full)
  - Family (e.g., when kids get older)
- Readiness
- Socialization
- Dual careers
- Family/personal needs
- Synergy between teaching, research, service, and clinical practice
What is at stake?

- Health and well-being
- Productivity
- Making WSU a great place to work
- Mimetic isomorphism – keeping up with the Jone’s
- Millenial faculty
- Shared parenting
- New models for families
- Other?
Work and life integration?

Really?
Methods

- Qualitative study
- Interviews with 120 women pre-tenure (1998-2000) (early career)
  - Research universities, comprehensive colleges, liberal arts, community colleges
  - All with young children, all tenure track
  - Variety of fields
- Follow up interviews with 87 post-tenure (2007-2009) (mid career)
- Follow up interviews 2014-2017 (n=82 mid mid-career)
Conceptual lenses

- Socialization
  - Linear (pipeline)

- Life Course Perspective
  - Synergistic/Integrative View of Life and Work
  - Feminist Perspectives
    - Liberal
    - Post structural
Early career

“I can only do so much in a day. Having a family helps me be more efficient with my time and also gives me much needed perspective.”
“You get tenure and you never hear anything about promotion.”

“I am not really interested in moving up at this time.”
“Going into administration isn’t really worth it. You have to work all the time and that doesn’t seem that appealing to me.”
The difference that difference makes...

- Race/ethnicity
- Sexual orientation
- Gender identity
- Socioeconomic status
- Dual careers
- Single moms
- Institutional type
- Rank and status
- Disciplinary differences
Women in STEM

- Not all STEM is the same
- Managing labs
- Field Work
- Grant funding
- Identity as a scientist
- Options beyond academe
- Collaboration (+/-)
In sum:

- Family life and academic careers evolve
- Both life long propositions
- Progress more than just leaning in
- Friction between structure and agency
- Tenure process—based on the male clock
- Getting stuck in the middle—Associate Professor/Associate Dean
  - Smile work (Tierney & Bensimon, 1986)
  - “good professor”/ “good mother”
- Women at the top – leadership not a priority
Implications

- Update, monitor, publicize campus policies
- Leadership development programs
- Lead by example
- It’s not just about women, but gendered
- It’s not just about agency – it’s structural
- Problem with pipeline metaphor
Questions?

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