Faculty Recruitment: Dual-Career Considerations

“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.”

“Despite the sizable number of academic couples in the workforce, little institutional and national data exist describing their career trajectories. Institutional approaches to couple hiring tend to be ad hoc, often shrouded in secrecy, and inconsistent across departments. Faculty tend to be unfamiliar with key issues and solutions, and many know little about their own university’s policies and practices.”

--Schiebinger, et al., 2008

Dual-Career is an issue at UD.

- Reflective of national trends, there is minimal data collected at UD on this topic. Qualitatively we know that STEM faculty have left UD over the last few years for jobs that accommodate a partner’s career.
- Others face dual-career challenges and may thus be at risk of leaving.
- Spousal employment is an important factor when faculty candidates decide whether to come to UD or not.

This issue affects all faculty, but women are disproportionately affected by dual-career issues.

- 40% of female faculty and 34% of male faculty have academic partners, based on data from a 2008 study of 9,000 faculty in 13 research institutions.
- The situation is amplified in STEM: 83% of women scientists (vs. 54% of men scientists) in academic couples are partnered with another scientist.
- Women are more likely than men to reject a job offer if their spouses cannot find satisfactory employment nearby.
- Dual hiring may help to advance not only gender equity but also racial/ethnic diversity.

Dual-Career Policies

- Best practices include:
  - Dedicated staff to assist with dual career concerns and placement, including academic and industry jobs in the local region.
  - A clear, written policy that recognizes that dual-career considerations are crucial for future hiring and retention, and that they will follow a clear and consistent process across all disciplines.
  - Collaboration with neighboring institutions (other universities and industry leaders). Join and publicize local HERCs (Higher Education Recruitment Consortia).

References


2 Education Advisory Board, Spousal Hiring Considerations: Program Structures and Limitations, 2011.

Example schools with dual-career programs formed in association with ADVANCE programs:

- Cornell
- UC Davis
- University of Wisconsin – Madison
- University of Michigan – Ann Arbor
- University of Rhode Island
- Virginia Tech

February 11, 2015 Provost Talking Point Meeting