Bias Against Caregiving in the Academic Workplace: Evidence and Implications

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The Mapping Project

- Bias against caregiving
  - Joan Williams & New glass ceiling

- Bias avoidance
  - Productive & Unproductive BA
  - Game with unknown rules

- Mapping Project (Drago/Colbeck, Sloan Foundation)
  - Survey 5087 faculty at 507 schools, 10 case studies, 13 shadowing participants
Productive Bias Avoidance by Gender, Research Universities

Unproductive Bias Avoidance by Gender, Research Universities

The Mapping Project

Bias Avoidance: *Academe*, Sept-Oct 2005

1. BA more often affects women
2. BA reduced by supervisor support
3. BA reduced by positive affect
The Mapping Project

4. Productive Bias Avoidance for women
   a. Reduce yrs to tenure 8.6 to 7.6 yrs
   b. Reduce age at tenure 41 to 39.1

5. Unproductive Bias Avoidance
   a. Men: reduce yrs to tenure 9.7 to 8.9 yrs
   b. Women: reduce age ten. 40.9 to 39.9 yrs
Bias Avoidance

“My baby’s sick, my mother-in-law’s dying, and I can’t be at the meeting. And I actually ended up going to the meeting and leaving it in tears…”

“I mean I don’t discuss this stuff with anybody… you know what I mean?”

“I could not have [had children] while the tenure clock was ticking… [It] would have just sent me over the edge…”
**Bias Acceptance**

“I stopped the tenure clock… and then I moved and lost some more years toward tenure and again when I moved here and I knew I was gonna to lose a few [more] years… I knew we were going to have another child so I was like that's ok because that's the only way it's going to work.”
Ways to Improve

1) Inclusive Practices

2) Work-life Policies

3) Bias Resistance
Inclusive Practices

Alternative School:

A faculty woman on bringing children to the office: “The department does not have a problem with it... [and] the students don’t have a problem with it, but in reality it doesn’t work well because the kids want attention and students need attention...” (Woman in focus group)
Work-Life Policies

- Paid leave, reduced hours, child-elder-care supports, flexible hours

- Design to constituency:
  - Faculty – back-up child care
  - Staff – child care res. & ref.
  - Students – child care subsidies

- Communicate outside & inside

- Have broad constituencies evaluate work-life impact of policies…
Bias Resistance

• Ask for meetings/classes during weekdays
• Take 6 weeks w. no work for new child
• Ask to include family/friends in functions
• Bring children to class/office
• Create “culture of covering the work”
• Be honest
• Use “daddy privilege”