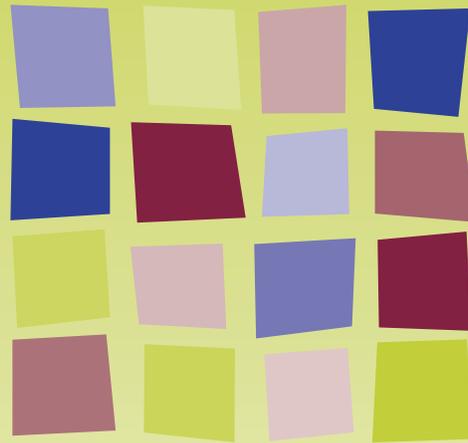


Family-Friendly Policies in Higher Education

Where Do We Stand?



The Center for the Education of Women University of Michigan



The Alfred P. Sloan Foundation's Workplace, Workforce and Working Families Initiative provides funding for an array of projects addressing such concerns in higher education and in other sectors of society (www.sloan.org). This publication is part of two Sloan Foundation grants to the University of Michigan's Center for the Education of Women (CEW): one focusing on work-family policies for tenure-track faculty and the other on the status of non tenure-track faculty. Additional information about these and other CEW activities is available at www.cew.umich.edu.

As part of the Sloan Foundation's grant to CEW, information about faculty careers, including a wide range of work-life issues, will be available on the web-based Academic Workforce Dual Ladder Clearinghouse now being developed. The Clearinghouse, expected to be online in 2006, will allow individualized searches for the kinds of information provided in this report, along with information about faculty careers and work, policies, and research to inform faculty, administrators, policy makers and researchers in higher education.

*Family-Friendly Policies
in Higher Education*

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This publication is part of *The Dual Ladder in Higher Education — Research, Resources, and the Academic Workforce Dual Ladder Clearinghouse* project funded by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation.

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Where Do We Stand? is an overview of family-friendly policies now in effect at different types of colleges and universities across the nation.

The demographics of higher education have changed rapidly over the past decades, particularly with greater proportions of women among tenure-track faculty. Since family-friendly policies and benefits are increasingly important criteria by which academics — women and men — evaluate their career options, higher education is joining other employment sectors in offering greater numbers of such policies and benefits to its employees.

As institutions of higher education seek to hire and retain high quality faculty, they compete not only with other colleges and universities but also with employers outside the academy. In fact, research suggests that institutions that do not accommodate family caregiving suffer in the competitive academic workplace.¹

The information in *Where Do We Stand?* comes from research funded by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation and conducted at the University of Michigan's Center for the Education of Women (CEW).² The *CEW Faculty Work-Family Policy Study* surveyed 255 higher education institutions stratified by Carnegie classifications; it focused on prevalent work-life policies for tenured and tenure-track faculty. This publication is the first in a series designed to highlight academic workforce concerns. The goal of *Where Do We Stand?* is to help higher education administrators:

- Understand the types of family-friendly policies now in place at institutions across the country;
- Identify which policies they might implement at their own institutions;
- Determine where their institutions stand in relation to their peers.

METHODOLOGY

The Center for the Education of Women's *Faculty Work-Family Policy Study* provides a contemporary analysis from a large, representative sample of U.S. institutions (39% response rate) to determine what types of policies and programs are in existence, which ones are under development, who is eligible to use them, and to what extent institutional climates support them.

Results are based on 255 respondents, as follows:

Research	73
Doctoral	16
Masters	66
Baccalaureate	70
Associate	30

The study included both open- and closed-ended questions in an initial web survey and a follow-up telephone survey of 51 institutions. Descriptive and statistical methods were employed to analyze the data from the web survey. This publication relies primarily on analysis of that survey data, although preliminary results of the telephone follow-up survey also informed the thinking. All quotes in this publication are from the telephone follow-up survey.

WHAT ARE FAMILY-FRIENDLY POLICIES?

The terms “family-friendly,” “work-life,” and “work-family” generally apply to policies and practices that make it easier for employees to balance and integrate the demands of the workplace with the demands of home or family life. A review of the literature in recent years indicates that the policies most often discussed are those allowing faculty to stop or extend the tenure clock,³ work part-time,⁴ negotiate with department chairs to modify job duties,⁵ take leave for child- or elder-care, and negotiate academic appointments for spouses or partners at hiring.

In the *CEW Policy Study*, the family-friendly policies most often offered by academic institutions fall into the following categories:

- *Tenure-clock extension*: Allowing tenure-track faculty a period of time, typically one year, that will not be counted as part of their tenure-probationary period.
- *Modified duties*: Allowing faculty members a reduction in their job responsibilities, usually for one semester or term, without any reduction in pay.
- *Leave in excess of the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)*: Allowing faculty members extended unpaid leaves, beyond the 12 weeks mandated by FMLA, in order to care for children or other family members or to receive personal health care.

In addition, *Where Do We Stand?* refers to these policies:

- *Reduced appointment:* Arrangements by which faculty members work less than 100% for the institution. The survey differentiated between reduced appointments for extraordinary reasons (e.g., to care for an injured child, spouse or partner) and reduced appointments for ordinary reasons (e.g., to spend more time at home with young children or as a short-term transition from maternity leave). These policies include part-time and job share appointments.
- *Employment assistance for spouses/partners:* Institutionally provided employment assistance (e.g., help in job searches, job placement) for partners or spouses of faculty.
- *Paid dependent care leave:* Infant care leaves, including parental leave, maternity or paternity leave, and adoptive parent leave. Many colleges that have such paid dependent care leaves also include care for ailing parents, spouses or partners.
- *Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993:* Federal law providing unpaid time off up to 12 weeks, without risk to employment status, for those 1) giving birth, or caring for newborn, newly adopted, or foster children 2) caring for seriously ill family members or 3) taking medical leave for their own serious health conditions.

Within this broad range of policies and programs, individual institutions vary greatly in the terminology, eligibility criteria, and specifics of what each policy covers. For example, circumstances that qualify faculty members for unpaid leave at one institution may qualify them for paid leave at another. Something that is an entitlement in one setting may be available on an “exception basis” or be disallowed entirely in a different setting. Furthermore, the likelihood of a policy being offered varies by type of institution.

WHY OFFER FAMILY-FRIENDLY POLICIES?

Higher education is not alone in asking this question. The American workforce as a whole struggles to balance work and family responsibilities. The challenges have become ever more complex, given that women make up nearly one-half the total labor force⁶ and that both parents are employed in over 60% of two-parent families.⁷ Family-friendly work-life policies and benefits are gaining importance as criteria by which academics evaluate their career options.

In the academy, faculty and researchers increasingly contend that the traditional career path and the demands of the tenure system conflict with faculty members’ responsibilities to partners, children, and parents.

Women, who continue to perform the majority of caregiving tasks in most U.S.

“As more women move into faculty ranks, family issues come to the fore and we respond to them. Male expectations about co-parenting are also incredibly different from twenty years ago.”

DIRECTOR OF FACULTY MENTORING
AND DEVELOPMENT, RESEARCH
INSTITUTION.

families, are often disproportionately affected by conflicts between the ideal academic career trajectory and their personal lives.⁸ The lack of policies addressing faculty work-family balance may therefore be contributing to the slow progress toward gender equity within the academy. In fact, many theoretical and descriptive studies link the limited availability of family-friendly policies to women's lower status within the professoriate.⁹

Of course, people in many situations benefit from family-friendly policies. The policies are important for men who are caregivers, for single parents, for faculty in same-sex relationships, and for others whose lives do not reflect the traditional nuclear family often implied by the term “family-friendly.”

Overall, whether having a baby, raising children, tending to an elderly parent, or providing care for an ill spouse or domestic partner, all faculty members are likely to have family needs to manage at some point in their careers. By acknowledging these competing demands and demonstrating flexibility and support, a college or university can position itself as a premier workplace as it seeks to recruit and retain the next generation of talented faculty.

WHAT IS THE STATUS OF FAMILY-FRIENDLY POLICIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION TODAY?

Policies addressing work-family balance are not universally available in academia. The *CEW Policy Study* shows that tenure-clock extension, modified duties, and unpaid leave-in-excess-of-FMLA are the most common. Relatively few institutions have developed and implemented policies to accommodate reduced appointments, spousal employment assistance, or paid dependent care leaves.

Differences Among Institutional Types

Analyses from this study indicate that research institutions have the most institution-wide, formal policies. In fact, research institutions offer almost twice as many formal family-friendly policies than do other types of institutions (*see Figure 1*).¹⁰

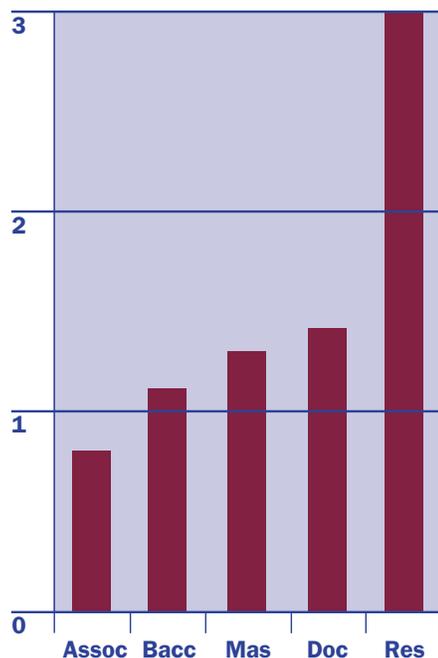
The irony is that research institutions, while offering the greatest number of family-friendly policies, also employ the fewest tenure-track and tenured women faculty (*see Figure 2*). In other words, women are least likely to be employed at institutions that offer them the most family-friendly policies. Conversely, they are most likely to be employed at institutions that offer them the fewest formal family-friendly policies.

Interestingly, when baccalaureate institutions in the sample are divided into “elites” (as defined by their ranking in *U.S. News and World Report*)¹¹ and “non-elites,” the

“Women used to not ask to use the policy for fear of being judged negatively, for fear that using the policy would be used against them. But in the last 5-6 years, the attitude has changed.”

ASSOCIATE PROVOST FOR ACADEMIC
ADMINISTRATION, RESEARCH INSTITUTION

Figure 1.
Average Number of Family-Friendly Policies
by Institution Type



The average number of institution-wide, formal policies at associate, baccalaureate, masters and doctoral institutions were all significantly less than those at research institutions.

elite baccalaureate institutions more closely resemble research institutions in terms of their numbers of formal family-friendly policies. This finding suggests a relationship between perceived institutional prestige and the number of institution-wide, formal policies (see Figure 3).

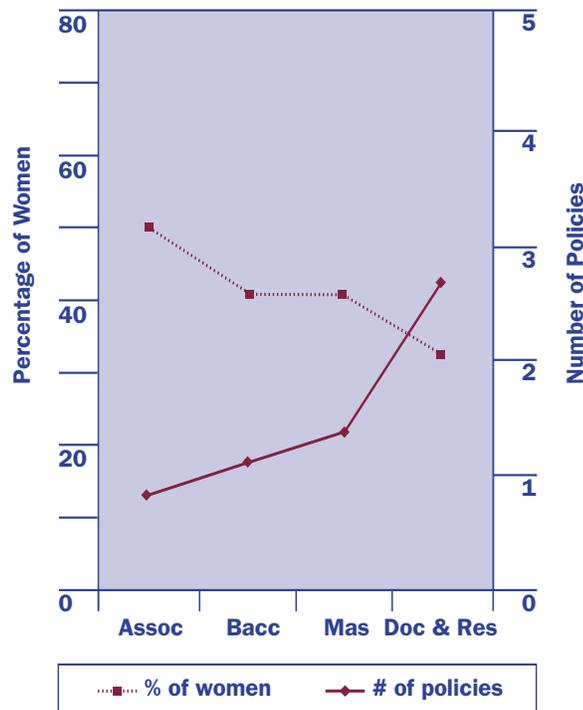
The three most common family-friendly policies — tenure-clock extension, modified duties, and leave-in-excess-of-FMLA — are present at different rates at different types of post-secondary institutions.

For example, tenure-clock extension policies are predominantly found at research universities. In the *CEW Policy Study* sample, research universities offer tenure-clock extension policies at nearly twice the rate of doctoral institutions and at even greater rates than all other institution types (see Figure 4).

The data also indicate that tenure-clock extension and leave-in-excess-of-FMLA policies are offered more frequently than other family-friendly policies by institutions across the Carnegie spectrum. At the same time, though these are the least expensive policies to implement, they are still offered by fewer than half of all institutions that are not research universities. Associate institutions do offer leave-in-excess-of-FMLA policies at a greater rate than baccalaureate and masters institutions and at a rate nearly equal to doctoral institutions (see Figure 4).

The data also suggest that the policies likely to be more expensive for institutions, such as modified duties and paid dependent care, are less common among all types of institutions, although research institutions offer them most frequently (see Figure 4).

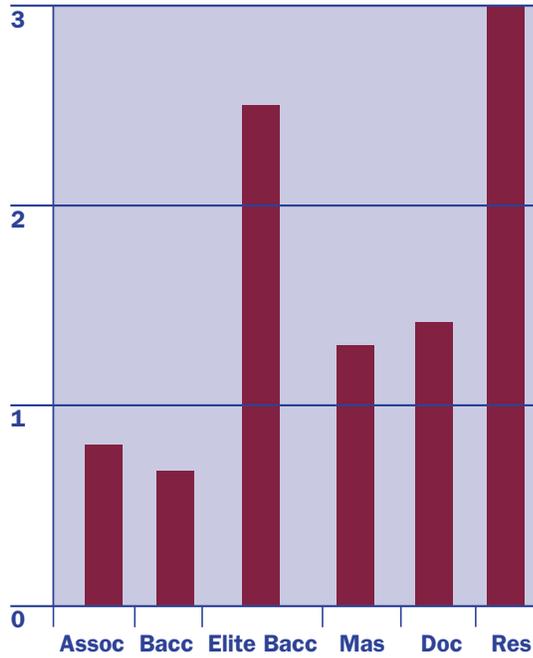
Figure 2.
Percentage of Women Faculty (AAUP, 2004)
and Average Number of Family-Friendly Policies
by Institution Type



Women are less likely than men to be employed at the institutions that offer the greatest number of family-friendly policies.

Figure 3.

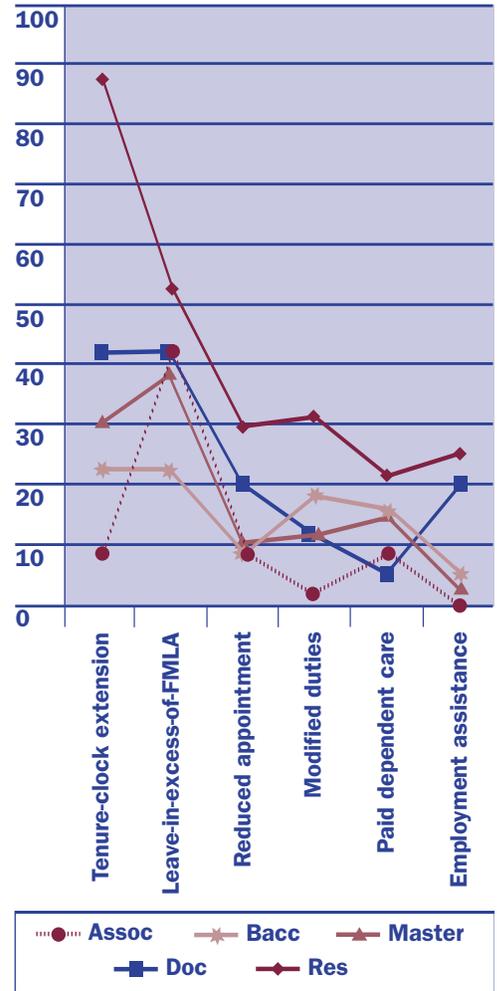
Average Number of Formal Policies by Institution Type, with Baccalaureate Institutions Disaggregated by Institutional Rankings



Elite baccalaureate institutions offer formal family-friendly policies at nearly the same rate as research institutions.

Figure 4.

Percentage of Institutions by Type That Offer Each Formal Policy



Tenure-clock extension and unpaid leave-in-excess-of-FMLA policies are offered more frequently than other family-friendly policies.

INFORMAL POLICIES

The *CEW Policy Study* survey asked whether policies were institution-wide and, if so, whether they were formal or informal.¹² As Figures 4, 5 and 6 illustrate, colleges and universities of all types are much more likely to have formal, institution-wide policies than informal ones — especially those policies regulating tenure-clock extension and leave-in-excess-of-FMLA.

For modified duties policies, however, the pattern alters. Among baccalaureate and associate institutions, the proportion of informal modified duties policies is somewhat higher than that of formal policies (see Figure 6). Informal policies, by their very nature, are likely to lead to differences in application across the institution. Such idiosyncratic application of policies may occur at the department level or on a case-by-case basis.

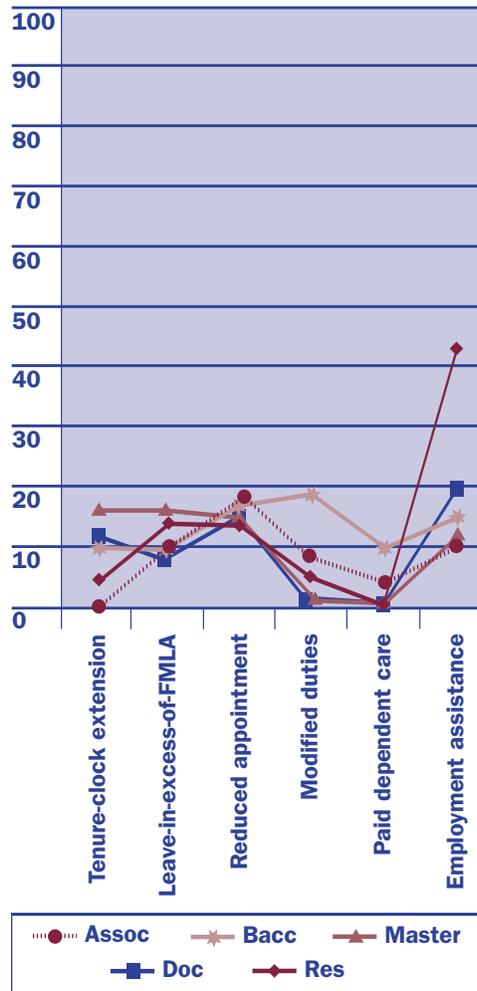
In the future, market forces may pressure a higher percentage of institutions to offer more formal work-family policies. Conversely, budget constraints may continue to limit the formal policies available to faculty.

FACTORS AFFECTING POLICY ELIGIBILITY

The vast majority of institutions use their family-friendly policies to address a variety of family matters, not simply childbirth. Eligibility for specific policies often falls under two categories. The first is

Figure 5.

Percentage of Institutions by Type That Offer Each Institution-wide, Informal Policy



Informal modified duties policies are most likely to be found at baccalaureate institutions.

“It’s part of the cost of doing business [to cover the teaching load of faculty on leave].”

DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES,
MASTERS INSTITUTION

Figure 6.
Family-friendly Policies by Institution Type

	Res	Doc	Mas	Bacc	Assoc	Total
Tenure-Clock Extension						
Formal	86%	44%	32%	23%	7%	43%
Informal	4%	13%	6%	9%	0%	6%
Unpaid Leave in Excess of FMLA						
Formal	53%	44%	39%	24%	43%	40%
Informal	12%	6%	15%	9%	10%	11%
Modified Duties						
Formal	32%	13%	12%	17%	3%	18%
Informal	6%	0%	3%	19%	7%	8%

gender, and the second is condition or circumstance. In other words, are policies available to both men and women? And exactly what events or dependents constitute eligibility? (A childbearing leave, for example, is restricted to women giving birth.)

In terms of dependent care leaves, most are not restricted specifically to women but include men as well. In fact, dependent care policies at only about 3% of the study's institutions restrict eligibility to women giving birth. Generally the policies also apply to men and women who are adoptive or foster parents or who face eldercare responsibilities. To a lesser extent, dependent care policies also cover same-sex couples or anyone with other kinds of family care needs. An emerging trend is to require faculty members, both

male or female, to declare or certify that they will be "primary," "major," or "substantial" caregivers during the time of their leaves.

Tenure achievement appears to make little difference in eligibility for these policies. That is, both tenure-track and tenured faculty are eligible for the family-friendly policies (with the exception, of course, of tenure-clock extensions). Interestingly, non-instructional research faculty from the institutional sample are eligible for these policies only about half as often as tenure-track and tenured faculty.

Among research and masters institutions, the presence of faculty unions is associated with an increased chance of having certain formal policies. Unionized masters institutions, for example, are more likely than their non-unionized peers to have tenure-clock extension, modified duties, and leave-in-excess-of-FMLA policies. Unionized research institutions are more likely than non-unionized research institutions to have the above-mentioned formal policies, as well as policies for reduced appointments, including part-time and job-sharing arrangements.

THE PARTICULARITY OF PREGNANCY

The Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978 requires that women affected by pregnancy, childbirth and related conditions receive

benefits at least equivalent to employees who are otherwise disabled or unable to work. Data indicate that nearly 70% of the institutions in this survey designate sick leave policies for pregnancy and childbirth, as seen in Figure 7. The next most common methods are disability leave (43%), temporary relief/modified duties (40%), and vacation leave (36%). (Note that institutions may use more than one policy to cover childbirth.) Given the dramatically smaller percentage of institutions with formal, long-term modified duties policies (see Figure 6) compared to those offering “temporary relief of teaching/modified duties” specific to childbirth (see Figure 7), it is clear that many universities arrange for less than a full term’s worth of teaching coverage for childbearing faculty.

Women may also find that the time off provided for normal childbirth under most sick leave policies is difficult to use. For example, if departmental coverage of term-long teaching responsibilities is not adequately addressed, traditional sick leave policies may require or pressure women to return to the classroom sooner than the six to eight weeks following childbirth that is considered to be good medical practice. In other cases, an institution’s sick leave policies may apply to faculty on 12-month appointments but not those on 6- or 9-month appointments.

In addition, an institution’s use of disability leave for childbirth may present problems.

Figure 7.

Methods of Providing Paid Childbirth-related Time Off by Institution Type*

	Res	Doc	Mas	Bacc	Assoc	Total
Sick Leave	77%	56%	79%	47%	90%	69%
Disability Leave	51%	50%	44%	37%	33%	43%
Vacation Leave	51%	31%	36%	17%	43%	36%
Maternity Leave**	34%	6%	17%	34%	10%	25%
Temp. relief from teaching, modified duties	55%	44%	26%	49%	17%	40%
Other	36%	13%	21%	11%	13%	21%

* Respondents could choose more than one method. Therefore, percentages total more than 100%.

** Distinct from Sick, Vacation, or Disability Leave

Since some colleges’ disability benefits do not begin until faculty members have been disabled for six or more weeks, in most cases women would not be eligible for paid leave immediately before or after the birth of their children — the times when they would most likely want time off.

Given the requirements of the Pregnancy Discrimination Act, as well as good medical practice, it is important for institutions to determine whether they are handling sick leave for pregnancy and childbirth in a manner which actually enables women to take adequate time off. Moreover, when relying on sick time or disability, institutions need to ensure that pregnancy and childbirth are being handled in the same manner as other temporary disabilities, such as elective surgery.¹³

“I think a lot of chairs see it [tenure-clock extension] as a plus; see it as a way to increase the odds that their faculty members are going to get tenure.”

DIRECTOR OF FACULTY MENTORING AND DEVELOPMENT, RESEARCH INSTITUTION

It's interesting to see the degree to which the attitudes you project during your recruitment are met by [faculty] interests which then reinforce the attitudes."

DIRECTOR OF ACADEMIC PERSONNEL,
MASTERS INSTITUTION

WHERE DO YOU STAND?

Clearly every institution has a unique character and culture that will be reflected in its family-friendly policies as much as in other aspects of campus life. This publication outlines the landscape of family-friendly policies at American institutions of higher education. Administrators examining the policies at their own institutions, perhaps in order to make them competitive with similar institutions, will find that asking the following questions is a useful starting point:

- Which family-friendly policies are offered at our institution?
- Are our policies formal or informal?
- Are our policies flexible? Do they cover a single circumstance, or are they available for use by faculty of both sexes and with different life circumstances?
- How is childbirth covered? Are we in compliance with the Pregnancy Discrimination Act?
- How does eligibility for family-friendly policies compare among various faculty groups (e.g., non tenure-track, tenure-track, tenured, research faculty)?
- Are policies being used as designed?
- Can utilization data improve the way our policies are implemented or revised?

- What is the level of policy use in relationship to tenure and promotion outcomes?
- If our faculty are unionized, how does that fact influence the existence and implementation of family-friendly policies?
- How does our institution compare with others?

CONCLUSION

As documented by the *CEW Policy Study*, institutions of higher education mirror the trend of other U.S. employers in developing family-friendly policies for their employees. At the same time, the existence of such policies is uneven across institutions as well as among types of institutions. Availability of these policies depends on whether they are formal or informal, how faculty are deemed eligible, whether campuses are unionized, and other factors.

While family-friendly policies are being implemented in many individual educational institutions, it is clear that academic employers need to continue developing and offering such policies in order to support their faculty, to enhance their institutions, and to remain competitive.

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The CEW Policy Study provides useful data regarding family-friendly policies at post-secondary educational institutions. It also suggests additional questions for research at an institutional and on a national level. Some of these research questions follow.

- What effect do family-friendly policies have on faculty recruitment, retention, and satisfaction?
- What effect does the use of family-friendly policies have on tenure achievement?
- What factors contribute to the implementation of formal versus informal policies in an institution?
- What factors contribute to successful use of policies?
- To what extent are family-friendly policies available to nontraditional families?
- How do family-friendly policies and domestic partner benefits intersect?
- Is there a relationship between the number of family-friendly policies and the labor market environment within which an institution operates?
- Does an institution's size affect the number and types of family-friendly policies?
- Does an institution's public/private status affect the number and types of policies?

NOTES

¹Friedman, D. E., Rinsky, C. & Johnson, A. A. (1996). *College and university reference guide to work-family programs*. New York, NY: Families and Work Institute.

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⁶U.S. Department of Labor. Women's Bureau (2005). *Women in the labor force in 2003*. Retrieved March 8, 2005 from www.dol.gov/wb/factsheets/Qf-laborforce.htm.

⁷U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2005). Table 4: Families with own children: Employment status of parents by age of youngest child and family type, 2002-03 annual averages. *Current Population Survey*. Retrieved March 8, 2005 from www.bls.gov/news.release/famee.t04.htm.

⁸Hochschild, A. R. & Machung, A. (1989). *The second shift: working parents and the revolution at home*. New York: Viking; Drago & Williams.

⁹AAUP, 2001; Drago & Williams, 2000; Mason, M. A. & Goulden, M., 2002. Do babies matter? *Academe*, 6, 21-27. Retrieved Dec. 13, 2002 from www.aaup.org/publications/Academe/2002/02nd/02ndmas.htm.

¹⁰Respondents were asked whether a given policy was held institution-wide, only in some schools or departments, or by neither the institution nor any subunits. Of those who said the policy was institution-wide, respondents were asked whether the policy was "formal and written, or informal and based on individual arrangements."

¹¹We identified "elite baccalaureate" institutions as those that were ranked among the top 100 liberal arts colleges on the *U.S. News and World Report* website. Retrieved January 11, 2005 from www.usnews.com/usnews/edu/college/rankings/rankindex_brief.php. All 15 elite baccalaureate institutions in our sample were privately operated.

¹²See Note 10, Above.

¹³Williams, Joan C. (2005). Are your parental-leave policies legal? *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 51:23, p. C1 February 11, 2005.

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David A. Brandon, Ann Arbor; Laurence B. Deitch, Bingham Farms; Olivia P. Maynard, Goodrich; Rebecca McGowan, Ann Arbor; Andrea Fischer Newman, Ann Arbor; Andrew C. Richner, Grosse Pointe Park; S. Martin Taylor, Grosse Pointe Farms; Katherine E. White, Ann Arbor; Mary Sue Coleman, *ex officio*

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