



**The New Norm of Faculty Flexibility:
Transforming the Culture in Science & Engineering
October 10-11, 2008
Friday Executive Summary**

Welcome¹

Dr. Elizabeth Hoffman, Iowa State University

The conference began Friday morning with ISU's Executive Vice President and Provost Elizabeth Hoffman welcoming the attendees and speakers. Dr. Hoffman cited the facts, which were repeated and analyzed throughout the conference, that women both enter STEM fields in lower numbers than men (despite higher graduation rates) and leave employment in those fields in higher numbers than their male colleagues. She noted that most women leave their positions during their childbearing years, which seems to indicate a culture of inflexibility toward pregnancy and leave policies on the part of department chairs and others in positions of authority within STEM fields. Dr. Hoffman ended by indicating that this inflexible culture needs to change if the United States' STEM fields and the businesses that depend on them for a source of talented, well-trained and diverse labor force expect to be competitive in a globalized marketplace.

Keynote Presentation

Do Babies Matter? Women in Science¹

Dr. Mary Ann Mason, University of California-Berkeley

In her keynote presentation, "Do Babies Matter? Women in Science," Dr. Mary Ann Mason set the tone and agenda for many of the speakers and World Café discussions that followed. Her charts of the "shape" of the makeup of employees at major universities show that women in their childbearing years are underrepresented in faculties. Her research indicates that this is because women with families and babies are less likely to get tenured than their peers, and that a woman's main reasons for leaving her position in the sciences was the care of her family and children. Dr. Mason found that while these problems were addressed in the form of institutional policy, people either did not know the policy existed or felt that they would be stigmatized for taking advantage of it. She said that in places where the policy was encouraged, and even modified to allow more time off for purposes of family or childcare, there was an accompanying change in culture: people took advantage of the policy as a matter of course, with no thought to repercussions to their job status.

One solution to the problem of implementing an existing policy, a solution mentioned by other speakers and discussants, was a "School for Chairs." This would educate chairs and other administrators about the policy and its proper implementation. Dr. Mason argued that change is always a struggle, and encouraged us all to be constant and vigilant in bringing about the change of cultures at our home institutions. During the question period one of the attendees mentioned the concern that if a person sued to get her job back, she was not likely to be positively received at her institution. The questioner wondered if this had changed. Dr. Mason replied that at the University of California-Berkeley there had been three such suits, all of which succeeded, though she agreed that suing was a risk. She pointed out, however, that many universities and companies are deliberately making their policies more family friendly to aid in recruitment and retention. Other questions concerned the funding of grants, and funding for replacement work for people taking family leaves. Dr. Mason agreed that some of the money should come, of necessity, from the universities, but that change was needed in funding for grants (from the NSF in particular) and general funding from other agencies.

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Keynote Presentation

Having Your Science and Your Life Too: Institutional Responsibilities, Individual Strategies¹

Dr. Shirley Malcom, American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS)

Dr. Mason's keynote presentation was followed by another from Dr. Shirley Malcom, entitled "Having Your Science and Your Life Too: Institutional Responsibilities, Individual Strategies." Dr. Malcom's main argument was that flexibility arrangements need to be implemented into policy in order to have a lasting effect. She indicated that since not every administrator was an enthusiastic partner in such efforts, care should be taken in choosing administrators. Individuals need to develop strategies for "having a life" in the sciences, but they can't do so alone: they need the backing of their institutions. She argued that the culture of science itself needed to change: we need to move from a culture that measures the value of work done mainly on the basis of quantity to one that also values qualitative work (for example, mentoring, or helping cover the responsibilities of colleagues taking family leave). Dr. Malcom finished by saying we need to push harder for change, and, again, to make the change of culture policy.

A questioner wondered if there was a better way to talk about this situation: "having a life" outside of science seemed to make work and "life" two different things, when perhaps it would be useful to speak of them as one thing. Dr. Malcom agreed that there wasn't a good vocabulary to talk about these subjects yet. For example, she said, she doesn't consider this conference "work," she considers it part of her "mission" to "shift the world." She noted that women are marginalized in an inflexible workplace, and African-Americans are further marginalized. Both gender differences and cultural differences matter. We need to forge a position where life and work are not in an "either/or" relation, but in a "both/and" relation so that we don't feel torn up about these matters. Another questioner noted that jobs providing a temporary part-time status for purposes of care-giving were not generally available, yet could help women. Dr. Malcom responded that one way to change this situation is "to vote with our feet" by taking jobs at institutions that have better policies. If institutions with less flexible policies have trouble recruiting, they will soon follow the lead of more progressive institutions.

Panel 1: Best Policies and Practices for Faculty Flexibility

Help for Dual Career Academic Couples¹

Nancy Aebersold, National Higher Education Recruitment Consortium

The first panel, "Best Policies and Practices for Faculty Flexibility," began with Nancy Aebersold's presentation, "Help for Dual Career Couples." She opened by arguing that dual career issues make recruitment and retention of talented faculty very difficult. HERC (the Higher Education Recruitment Consortium) has developed strategies to help with this problem. Especially important, Ms. Aebersold said, was cooperative outreach between institutions, and the development and maintenance of websites collecting career data at regional, as well as national levels of focus. She also noted that HERC's websites of these kinds were also being used to collect data on dual career couples to contribute to the study of this problem. One questioner wondered if population density was a problem in this area. Ms. Aebersold replied that it was very difficult to find work for dual career couples in areas with low population density. One solution she recommended was that institutions with similar broad goals team up to help each other recruit in these geographical areas. Another questioner asked if same-sex couples were able to take advantage of this. Ms. Aebersold replied that HERC actively sought to outreach these services to same-sex couples. Some other

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questioners asked questions about how these services were funded. Ms. Aebersold said that member institutions of HERC paid dues to the organization, but that the services were free for couples seeking employment.

Panel 1: Best Policies and Practices for Faculty Flexibility

Part-time on the Tenure-Track: The Nexus Between Policy and Utilization¹

Dr. Joan Herbers, Ohio State University

In Dr. Joan Herbers' presentation "Part-Time on the Tenure Track: The Nexus Between Policy and Utilization" she argued that while there is general agreement across the nation that a Part-Time Tenure Track (PTTT) option was desirable, there were several obstacles to the implementation of such policies and their utilization by faculty. There are still only a small number of universities with PTTT policies in place, and most of those are research universities. Also, in general, the STEM fields are more resistant to the idea than humanities, business, or law fields, with most resistance to such policies coming from department chairs. Where policies existed, some chairs were unaware of the policies or unwilling to encourage their faculty to use them. Retirement programs, granting agencies, and unions were also resistant to the implementation of PTTT policies.

Dr. Herbers noted that while it is fairly easy to gather data about which institutions have initiated PTTT policies, it is much more difficult to gather data on whether the faculty use the policies or not. This is partly because of idiosyncratic HR coding at each institution, and/or because the proper data is spread amongst several different locations within an institution. Her tentative conclusion, however, was that faculty seemed reluctant to use the PTTT policies. A person in the audience commented that one solution to agencies dragging their feet on this issue would be to write the policy in the agencies' mandates at the congressional level, and to tie salaries to behavior. Dr. Herbers agreed that these were good ideas. Another person said that her institution had one person take advantage of PTTT, but that faculty member had soon returned to full time work because there was very little difference in work expectations between full-time and part-time status. Dr. Herbers replied that that was one problem with PTTT policies: there was not enough definition about what exactly counted as part-time work. This was something she thought needed to be seriously considered. The discussion time ended with a question about the AAUP's stance toward PTTT. Dr. Herbers replied that at one time they had been against PTTT, but had since backed off of this position, though they were not actively talking about the issue.

Panel 1: Best Policies and Practices for Faculty Flexibility

Flexibility as New Norm? Faculty Response is Not Always Trusting of Institutional Motives¹

Dr. Gertrude Fraser, University of Virginia

The first panel concluded with Dr. Gertrude Fraser's presentation, "Flexibility as New Norm? Faculty Response Is Not Always Trusting of Institutional Motives." Dr. Fraser spoke about her experience with trying to implement flexibility policies at her institution, the University of Virginia. In particular, she talked about the attempt to extend the tenure clock to ten years. The committee who examined the feasibility of this policy and the administration were both very enthusiastic about it, and thought they were promoting the best interests of their faculty. However, when the initiative was presented to the faculty it was met with fairly strong resistance. Most of the resistance came from pre-tenured faculty who feared that the longer clock

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would result in the university exploiting their labor for a long period of time before dumping them just before they were to be awarded tenure. The pre-tenured faculty also saw this as an attempt to get more work out of them in order to qualify for tenure than was the case under the present clock. Dr. Fraser concluded that while institutions may seek to promote flexibility from the best of intentions, there are symbolic aspects of these actions as they are interpreted by faculty that need to be considered. Some in the audience reported similar opinions to those of the University of Virginia faculty. They worried that extending the clock for everyone would cause dissatisfaction with the wait for tenure. One audience member supported the idea (mentioned in Dr. Fraser's talk) that faculty could choose to extend the clock if they wished. Another supported lowered work expectations for those taking advantage of PTTT rather than a clock extension. Dr. Fraser concluded that we might have cause to be wary of the idea of clock extension. An audience member from Ohio State University reported that faculty taking advantage of the clock extension had more career troubles than faculty who didn't. A person from the University of Washington reported, on the contrary, that people who took multiple extensions had troubles, while those who took only one extension for family or personal reasons were more likely to receive tenure than people who took no extension.

There followed a discussion time for the entire panel. One person argued that there was a lack of transparency to the tenure process that had to be addressed; there needs to be a clear, consistent calculus for the granting or withholding of tenure. Another person argued that we are not providing excellence for our faculty, but are testing for it. A more effective method of testing productivity exists in the corporate world where the culture has changed from one focusing on solitary individual workers to one where workers are formed into groups and the work divided amongst group members. This provides support for individual workers, while still ensuring work gets done.

The Role of the American Council on Education in Supporting Faculty Flexibility¹

Dr. Claire Van Ummersen, American Council on Education

Before the second panel Dr. Claire Van Ummersen spoke on "The Role of the American Council on Education in Supporting Faculty Flexibility." She argued that academic culture needed to change at all levels in order to compete effectively in a global marketplace where there is competition for students, faculty, and resources. ACE started by getting well-respected academicians and administrators to sign on for some of these changes, which allowed other people and institutions to feel that it was OK to follow their lead. She believed that greater communication about the existence of policies was essential to this cultural change, as well as allowing people to take advantage of the policies without stigma. In persuading chairs and deans of the necessity of flexibility policies, we need to emphasize both the moral and business reasons for these policies. Cost-benefit analyses could be very helpful in making this case. Dr. Van Ummersen ended by calling for the embedding of flexibility policies into the campus infrastructure, for continued vigilance in their enactment, and the creation of a new institutional cultures and faculty norms.

Panel 2: Intersections & Collaborations Among Business, Industry, & Academe

Brain Drain: Why Women Scientists/Engineers Leave Academe and Industry²

Dr. Anne C. Petersen, Stanford University

In her presentation, Dr. Anne C. Petersen cited results from the National Academy of Sciences report called *Rising Above the Gathering Storm*, which indicated that the U.S. is losing ground internationally in the

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sciences, concluding that there is a labor shortage in most science & technology fields. Dr. Petersen asked, what causes these departures and what might we do? The data show that the pipeline, while leaky, is not the problem, with slow increases in all fields except computer science. Given these data, women should have a stronger presence. In the bigger picture, we are seeing slight increases in women and minorities, dramatic increases in foreign students, and big declines in SE degrees to men.

In industry, while most companies value diversity and the data show women are dedicated, industry is experiencing high rates of attrition. Data indicate that the climate is “chilly” and is regarded as competitive not cooperative, particularly given the team environment. In the academic work force, lots of women are getting the degrees, but low numbers of women are on the faculty.

To reduce the chill, Dr. Petersen recommended that we focus on changing the culture and providing supports for everyone, not just women. Demonstrating the value of women in STEM fields requires a systems perspective that gives institutions permission to make policies for improved practices. To counter the phenomenon known as “stereotype threat,” a social mistrust over a group’s ability (such as women and math), leadership needs to promote the idea of a human work model. Women cannot do this alone. It’s within everyone’s interests.

Panel 2: Intersections & Collaborations Among Business, Industry, & Academe

From the Board Room to the Academy – How Promising Corporate Workplace Practices Can Transform the Academic Culture¹

Dr. Linda Siebert Rapoport, University of Illinois at Chicago

In this presentation Dr. Linda Siebert Rapoport discussed how corporations had become enthusiastic initiators of flexibility policies. They found that success in recruitment and retention were directly related to whether a corporation had a flexible work policy. Corporations discovered that not only did productivity and profits go up, but the workers were happier and suffered less from stress-related illnesses than workers at workplaces that did not have flexibility policies. She said that, in the corporate world, flexibility had begun as individual deals, evolved into policy, and in that way changed the culture. Academia needs to compare itself to the corporate world and benefit from their example. Many faculty members share the same stresses and concerns as corporate workers. She argued that chairs need to be educated on the benefits and return on investment flexibility policies provided to employers. She also argued that data needed to be collected regularly from faculty to continue study of these issues.

Panel 2: Intersections & Collaborations Among Business, Industry, & Academe

The Future Workforce: Why Should We Include Everyone?¹

Ron Hanson, Sauer-Danfoss, Inc.

Ron Hanson opened his talk by saying that he came to this speaking engagement with both surprise and frustration. As a member of industry, he was surprised to be included in this academic discussion and frustrated by a lack of qualified engineers graduating from universities such as Iowa State University. Having returned that day from his company’s annual business planning meeting, he reported that his colleagues are frustrated because human resources cannot find enough people to meet the company’s needs. The primary constraint for Sauer-Danfoss, Inc. is having enough people with the right skills in engineering and other

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science areas. The U.S. educational system is not producing the skills needed for precision engineering in a team-driven, culturally diverse environment, but China, India, and most of Europe is. Hanson said, “This outsourcing of labor doesn’t suit us—the business is in the United States. We need resources here. The global competitive environment is overwhelming today, and as we look at our job candidates, women are missing from the labor pool.” Sauer-Danfoss, Inc. seeks diversity in their workforce to give the company a competitive advantage—diversity brings more ideas and better solutions to the table.

Hanson reminded his audience that he sees the educational system as a key supplier for his company. He feels he is a customer of universities—a dissatisfied one, reiterating the importance of developing the university’s diverse human resources to meet the needs of American companies doing business in a global marketplace.

Keynote Presentation

Time Norms and Glass Ceilings: Exploring the Role of Gender Bias²

Joan C. Williams, University of California Hastings College of the Law

Culture and climate are two metaphors used to talk about work/life issues. In her presentation, Joan Williams asked whether that is the best language for framing the discussion. In practice, writing policies is easy. The hard part is getting people to use them. To get people to use such policies, we have to reconsider how the framework within which those policies are presented. Ms. Williams argued that “change the culture” metaphor is not suited to this purpose.

In looking for an alternative frame, Ms. Williams identified two problems that can subvert the usage of solutions: stigma and schedule, discussing studies that outline the challenges we face. Stigmas surrounding use of policies include “maternal wall bias,” or expectations about what women can and should do in the workplace. As the strongest form of workplace gender bias, the maternal wall has to do with ideas about how we perform our gender correctly.

She also discussed the politics of time, noting that the tenure system is still designed for a two-person career with one person at home. What is the extent to which we have internalized norms based on this model? For instance, the variables of schedule and dedication are traditionally tied together. The more hours you put in to your work, the more dedicated you are to the work. Williams advocated that norms should be based on a balanced work life modeled after a working mother with children.

Finally, Williams briefly remarked on bias and the law. Some forms of bias are illegal. To share your experiences, go to www.worklifelaw.org.

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