

Dual-Career Policy Recommendations

U.S. universities are in the midst of a major transition in hiring practices. Couples comprise a significant proportion of the academic workforce, and couple hiring, when done properly, can support important institutional objectives. Based on our findings, we offer the following recommendations:

Develop a Dual-Career Academic Couple Hiring Protocol

Universities have much to gain by developing agreed-upon, written protocols or guidelines for the processes whereby requests for partner hires flow efficiently through the institution. Each institution needs to develop policies that are right for it. Well-developed protocols increase the transparency and fairness as well as the speed with which departments can vet potential candidates. Written protocols may also help cultivate departmental reciprocity in partner hiring.

Think of the University as an Intellectual and Corporate Whole

Finding an appropriate fit for a qualified partner is one of the most difficult aspects of dual hiring and requires cooperation among departments across the university. Couple hiring may be an instance where the whole becomes more than the sum of its parts, and faculty should be encouraged to think of the university not as a set of autonomous departments but as an intellectual and corporate whole.

Use Dual Hiring to Increase Gender Equality

Our data and practices at one of our participating universities suggest that recruiting women and underrepresented minorities as first (rather than second) hires may help universities address both diversity and equity issues. Women more than men tend to request positions for partners of equal academic rank.



Dual-Career Policy Recommendations (2)



Communicate with Faculty

A general awareness of institutional goals and priorities as well as policies and practices surrounding couple hiring can lead to greater cooperation across the university as individual cases arise. The process of developing or refining protocols provides an excellent opportunity to saturate the scholarly community with information about partner hiring and to build greater consensus.

Budget Funds for Dual Hiring

Couple hiring is now part of the cost of doing business. Universities need to budget funds for partner hiring to increase the speed and agility with which they can place qualified partners.

Make the partner Issue Easier to Raise

Job candidates currently have much to lose by discussing the employment needs of a partner too soon (fearing that preference may consciously or unconsciously be given unencumbered candidates). At the same time, universities have much to lose by not finding out about partners early enough to act. Universities that are dual-career couple friendly should signal this in job announcements, recruitment materials, and university websites.

Interview Potential Partner Hires

Departments asked to consider hiring a partner must do so carefully. Partners should go through a department's full review process. This will help build consensus within the department and, should the candidate be successful, contribute to a warm welcome for the new colleague.

Negotiate Partner Positions Fully Up Front

Among dual-hired faculty who were dissatisfied with at least one aspect of the process, 27 percent thought that they did not receive what was promised during negotiations. Universities need to step up to dual hiring and make decisions about where and how partners will—or will not—fit into a particular institution at the time of hire. All promises need to be made in writing before either partner signs a contract.

Dual-Career Policy Recommendations (3)



Collaborate with neighboring institutions.

The many Higher Education Recruitment Consortia (HERCs) springing up around the country provide new opportunities for institutions to coordinate job opportunities. It is important to publicize local HERCs effectively on campus so that dual-career couples, faculty, department chairs, and deans take advantage of these networks.

Develop dual-career programs

Universities should hire dedicated staff or outside consultants to assist faculty relocate. For partners of new or current faculty seeking academic positions, programs should appoint a senior faculty member to serve in an official capacity as special assistant, vice provost, or the like. This administrator will work with departments to place partners. For non-academic partners seeking employment, program staff or consultants should be available to assist in the on- or off-campus job search. Program staff may help all faculty with quality-of-life issues, such as locating good-quality housing, daycare, elder care, and schools in the area.

Evaluate dual-career programs

Universities need to collect data and evaluate their programs in order to (1) assist universities in overall strategic planning and (2) ensure equitable treatment of faculty partners—both academic and non-academic.



MICHELLE R. CLAYMAN INSTITUTE
for GENDER RESEARCH
STANFORD UNIVERSITY

Founded in 1974, the [Clayman Institute for Gender Research](#) at Stanford University creates knowledge and seeks to implement change that promotes gender equality at Stanford, nationally, and internationally.