Dual-Hiring and Women

Couple hiring can help build a more diverse, equitable, and competitive workforce, especially with regard to gender.

Women are More Likely Dual-Career Academics

Women are more likely than men to have academic partners (40% of female faculty in our sample versus 34% of male faculty). In fact, rates of dual hiring are higher among women respondents than among men respondents (13% versus 7%). This means that couple hiring becomes a particularly relevant strategy for the recruitment and retention of female faculty.

Women Value Their Partner’s Career

Women in academic couples report that their partner’s employment status and opportunities are important to their own career decisions. Not only do women more often than men perceive a loss in professional mobility as a result of their academic partnerships (54% for women versus 41% for men), but they actively refuse job offers if their partner cannot find a satisfactory position. In our study, the number-one reason women refused an outside offer was because their academic partners were not offered appropriate employment at the new location.

Dual Hiring is Key in Natural Sciences and Engineering

Couple hiring is important to attract more female faculty to fields where women are underrepresented, such as the natural sciences and engineering. Academics practice “disciplinary endogamy”; that is to say, they tend to couple in similar fields of study and are often found in the very same department. Endogamy rates are high in the natural sciences, particularly among women. Fully 83 percent of women scientists in academic couples are partnered with another scientist, compared with 54 percent of men scientists.

From the report: Dual-Career Academic Couples: What universities need to know by the Michelle R. Clayman Institute
Men Have Done the Bargaining

Historically, men more than women have used their market power to bargain for positions for their partners. Men comprise the majority (58%) of “first hires” (or the first partner hired in a couple recruitment) who responded to our survey. They make up only 26 percent of second hires (meaning that women are 74% of second hires). However, gender ratios of first and second hires may be changing with time, which suggests that there is an increasingly equitable share of bargaining power among women and men.

Senior Women Negotiate for Senior Partners

An important finding is that recruiting women as first hires breaks the stereotype of senior academics seeking to negotiate jobs for junior partners. Remarkably, more than half (53%) of female first hires who are full professors are partnered with male academics of equal rank. By contrast, only 19 percent of male first hires who are full professors seek positions for women who are their equals in academic rank.

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.