

Work Group Report
Flexible Work Loads for Tenure-Track Faculty
President's Council on Women's Issues
May 19, 2005

BACKGROUND: The President's Council On Women's Issues in January 2005 released "Increase in Women faculty – a Call for Re-visioning of Our Effort". This white paper was developed in response to the very disappointing data on the presence of women faculty at Ohio State, as outlined in the Status Report on Women 2004: as an institution we have not met our goals of increasing the numbers of women faculty. Indeed, some of our numbers look worse now than 10 years ago; Appendix I shows that our current policy of extending the tenure clock has not produced a desired result in terms of retention. Clearly, the strategies we have used to date are insufficient to recruit and retain women tenure-track faculty.

Our work is placed into the context of a national conversation ongoing about the need to make faculty positions more flexible; numerous reports have identified specific strategies for academe, notably the American Council on Education¹ report "An Agenda for Excellence: creating flexibility in tenure-track faculty careers". Similarly, some of the private-sector professions with intensive early career expectations have developed mechanisms for flexible employment that can inform the academy about costs and benefits.

Ohio State University has a provision for part-time tenure-track faculty members (Rule3335-6-03 (F)) that specifies how the tenure clock is to be altered. A recent work-life study here shows that 1/3 of female Assistant Professors and 20% of male Assistant Professors at OSU expressed interest in reducing their effort in order to have more time for family and personal needs. The mismatch between our policies and our behavior, which may hamper retention of talented faculty, deserves exploration and correction.

Our charge:

- a) Examine the feasibility of the short-term actions: supporting faculty for part-time appointments and providing re-entry postdocs for people who have left the academic environment in order to be care givers
- b) Make a recommendation on whether a task force should be established to examine and make recommendations on: lengthening the probationary period for all faculty; expanding the criteria for tolling the tenure clock; and looking at all aspects of our tenure policies to recommend how they could be made less rigid, more welcoming to women and men

The Work Group developed five principal goals, addressed in detail below

- 1) Identify barriers to implementing current policies
- 2) Suggest changes to existing policies
- 3) Propose strategies to enhance faculty recruitment and retention via flexible work policies
- 4) Compare our strategies within academia to those used in the private sector with similar high expectations for job performance (e.g. the law, accounting)
- 5) Define a mechanism for taking our work forward

¹ President Karen Holbrook is co-author of this important report, available at www.acenet.edu

SECTION I: PART-TIME TENURE-TRACK FACULTY APPOINTMENTS

1) The primary barriers to implementing current policies are internal. The first is widespread ignorance of our Rule 3335-6-03 (F)). Although some chairs have used the provision for retention, none had considered using it as a recruitment tool. Similarly, faculty deeply involved in governance did not know of the provision. Clearly, communication about the rule and its implications for recruitment and retention of faculty needs to be improved; we outline a series of recommendations below that address this problem.

The second set of barriers involves cultural norms, which produce considerable resistance to alternative descriptions of tenure-track positions. This barrier is encapsulated by Harvard President Lawrence Summers' unfortunate remark that perhaps women are "unwilling" to work the 80-hour work weeks expected to succeed in academia. While 80 hours may be an exaggeration, it is no exaggeration to assert that most tenure-track faculty feel 40 hours is insufficient to establish a successful career. Research suggests strongly that this expectation, real or imaginary, impedes the full participation of women in tenure-track positions.

A third set of barriers involves external regulations. The Immigration and Naturalization Service, for example, might require full-time employment for foreign nationals on certain visas, and may be reluctant to grant permanent resident status to individuals employed part-time. Accreditation bodies may impose restrictions on the numbers of part-time faculty allowed for accreditation. STRS policies may discourage ramping down percentage efforts in the later years of a career. More information on external constraints is badly needed.

At Ohio State, flexible career paths might prove especially attractive for certain groups:

- *Senior* faculty might take advantage of part-time positions, either as a transition to full retirement or as a way of exploring enriched outside interests (e.g. performing artists, consulting, starting companies spawned in part by University research). This option is attractive to administrators. Indeed, of the 23 tenured/tenure-track faculty currently enjoying true part-time positions at Ohio State (Appendix II), many negotiated reduced effort in order to pursue other professional interests.
- Reduced-time positions can accommodate dual-career couples for units under budgetary constraints.
- Some units have explicit expectations for sharing responsibilities across funding streams; for example, many faculty positions in FAES are partially supported on the General Fund, OARDC, and Extension. Recruiting into positions with multiple funding streams (and thus multiple expectations) has sometimes proved difficult; we suggest that in those cases part-time faculty might prove especially attractive to address multiplicity of needs.

In most units, though, deliberately seeking individuals who might wish for part-time work, rather than allowing part-time job descriptions when they are specifically negotiated, is far outside the norm. This last cultural barrier is the most difficult, especially for entry-level positions. However, once Chairs and Deans see the advantages of part-time employment for some of their faculty (e.g. senior), then the door to flexible employment for junior faculty has been cracked open.

Universities lag behind the private sector in recognizing the importance of flexible employment options. Few would argue with the proposition that large law firms and Big-4 accounting firms are as demanding as the professoriate; yet these firms not only have flexible employment programs (c.f. Ernst and Young), but their clients hold them accountable for using those policies to attract and retain preferred talent. We will describe below what we can learn from the private sector.

2) Suggest changes to existing policies. In general, Ohio State Rules already provide mechanisms for flexible employment. Our policies are not the problem.

Even so, we suggest that our policies could be made more explicit by the following:

- a) The policies do not have clear language about shifts to and from full/part - time. We suggest that any faculty member who negotiates a part-time position be given clear guidelines about a possible transition to full-time. In most cases such a transition should be the expectation rather than the exception, and a timeline should be negotiated, as the following examples illustrate.
 - a. Dr. A is hired as an Assistant Professor and has a child in year 3; she asks to change to 75% effort until her child is five years old, and to resume full-time status thereafter.
 - b. Dr. B is a tenured Professor who wishes to engage in more consulting activity. She negotiates a 75% position for five years with the expectation that she can revert to full-time if the business becomes self-sustaining or if it under-performs.
 - c. Drs. C and D are a couple and together negotiate 1.4 FTE positions from a single search. In this case the department may not wish to promise them 2.0 FTE within a specified time frame, but it is almost always in the department's best interest to do so, as a retention strategy. A timecourse of transition to full time over several years is reasonable.
 - d. Dr. E is nearing retirement and wishes to ramp down over a period of years. He negotiates a 50% position for a fixed term, with the clear expectation of full retirement at the end of that term.
- b) Grant an automatic extension of the tenure clock to both men and women faculty for every birth/adoption event. Our current policies require that a faculty member request an extension after a child joins the family, and a substantial amount of literature shows that many females practice "bias avoidance"². By not asking for the extension, female faculty avoid the stigma (perceived or real) associated with parenthood. The University should consider automatically granting tenure extensions according to existing policies, rather than requiring faculty members to request them. Such a shift would not require that each faculty member having a child in his/her pre-tenure years take that extra year (or two), but it would provide the opportunity equally among all Assistant Professors who become parents.
- c) Grant an automatic extension of the tenure clock to faculty with reduced-time appointments. While the University Rule is silent, OAA guidelines make it clear that

² Drago, R and Colbeck, C. (2003). The Mapping Project: Exploring the Terrain of U.S. Colleges and Universities for Faculty and Families. Final Report for the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation.

faculty must request such an extension (see Appendix III). We strongly suggest that this be automatic, in line with our recommendation above (b).

- d) Require job descriptions and advertisements for faculty searches to add language to the required “Ohio State is an EEO/AA employer” that states “Ohio State is an EEO/AA employer with flexible employment policies in place”
- e) Require Appointment, Promotion, and Tenure documents to have explicit language about expectations concerning part-time faculty. These expectations will vary considerably among units, depending on local culture. For example, some units may choose to have *all* aspects of job performance pro-rated, whereas other units may choose to maintain the same expectations for scholarship but pro-rate teaching and service.
- f) Consider mechanisms to allow faculty between 50% and 75% effort to retain full-time benefits. The need for health coverage may drive many faculty interested in part-time employment to retain full-time status. In particular, we suggest that part-time tenure-track faculty be given full-time benefits for a limited time, perhaps three years. Short-term coverage might prove a very attractive option for faculty who wish to reduce their FTE for a limited period, and may not seriously disadvantage staff. Clearly, any such a policy change will require careful study, and we can learn from our colleagues at other institutions that have instituted such changes.

3) Propose strategies for enhanced faculty recruitment and retention via flexible work policies

Most chairs and deans have faculty with partial appointments in departments; we have part-time Assistant and Associate Deans, Associate Vice Presidents, and the like. Many faculty buy out part of their salary from external grants, and others take leaves of absence to pursue temporary opportunities elsewhere. Thus chairs are quite familiar with administrative faculty having less than 100% appointments in the TIU. Yet the same chairs are reluctant to consider such appointments at the entry level. Thus the focus of leadership training should be to clearly illustrate the hiring process and to give examples of strategies that lead to a 100% appointment over time. The provision of a template and information on “success” stories³ might increase the widespread acceptance and use of this option.

We suggest the following strategies for changing the work culture at Ohio State:

- a) Identify Training Opportunities for Chairs and Deans

Currently the Offices of Academic Affairs and Human Resources collaborate on orientation for new academic leaders, including deans, associate and assistant deans, department chairs and school/center directors. We therefore recommend that existing training venues a) weave the issue of flexible employment into existing seminars (e.g., leader roles and expectations, promotion and tenure) and b) develop a new seminar that focuses on recruitment and retention and addresses the importance of flexible career paths in academia.

³ For example, two of the current Deans at Ohio State were part-time faculty early in their careers.

Other programs that should explicitly include flexible workload policies for tenure-track faculty include Emerging Academic Leaders, Senior Human Resource Professional Development, and the new President's and Provost Leadership Institute.

b) Develop materials and resources

We recommend that OAA and HR collaborate to produce a set of materials that lays out important issues for units to consider: What does part-time mean? Are we just talking about teaching? What does part-time look like for research and service? For incoming faculty negotiating part-time appointments, what are expectations for lab space, startup accounts, access to graduate students, and the like? Do part-time faculty take advantage of Special Research Assignments and Faculty Professional Leaves?

We also recommend that OAA and HR collaborate to produce a one-page information sheet to assist units and search committees in faculty recruitment. This resource should include information on current policies regarding the tenure clock, part-time employment, and benefits, with particular emphasis on child care, parental leave, elder care and other issues that are often important to women faculty.

c) Identify external speakers

Over the last three years the President's and Provost's Diversity Series has hosted Nancy Hopkins, Virginia Valian, and Debra Rolison. These three dynamic women truly engaged the campus concerning issues of gender equity in academia; the momentum built by this lineup should not be lost! We have already secured the assent of Dr. Robert Drago of Penn State, who works on bias avoidance, to speak during fall 2005, and we urge the President's Council to continue bringing speakers to campus for this important set of issues.

d) Help Deans and Chairs to understand the rewards of implementing flexible work policies.

We encourage all Deans to examine their history of faculty recruitment and retention, specifically with regard to losses incurred when faculty leave the institution. Faculty leave for "pull" reasons⁴ such as offers at more prestigious universities, a wish to be closer to family, and opportunities for spouses. We should be especially concerned about faculty who leave for "push" reasons, because they perceive their departments, colleges, or institutional policies to be nonsupportive of their needs. Every faculty member who leaves for a "push" reason represents institutional failure. Thus we strongly recommend that each Dean conduct exit interviews to identify the real reasons why faculty choose to leave Ohio State; Deans should keep in mind that sometimes more is learned if such interviews are conducted by a colleague perceived to be nonjudgmental.

⁴ Hewlett, S.A. and C. B. Luce. 2005. Off-ramps and on-ramps: Keeping talented women on the road to success. Harvard Business Review March 2005, pp. 43:54

We speculate that an honest analysis of faculty recruitment and retention will show each Dean how flexible work policies might have averted the programmatic, fiscal, and other losses incurred by retention failures. Once Deans have done such an analysis, they can identify strategies for ameliorating the push factors that impede faculty retention. Some of those factors derive from our university policies, some may be college-wide, and others may vary among departments.

4) Compare our strategies within academia to those used in the private sector with similar high expectations for job performance.

The demands of women professionals in the private sector, and in particular, in law and accounting firms, mirror those of women in academia. The struggle to balance work and life continues in most major law firms that demand billable hours of a minimum of 2000 per year and also expect additional service hours.

Most major law firms, and especially those in the National Law Journal 250, provide for flexible employment options. These employment arrangements are usually negotiated department by department. In most cases, women chose to work at reduced hours for a reduced level of compensation after the birth of their children. For some, it is for a short period (2-3 years) and for others it can proceed through partnership. In most cases, the choice for a reduced schedule lengthens the time period by which one is considered for partnership, and in some cases, one is removed from the partnership track while on a reduced load schedule. Many law firms also have partners who work at reduced hours, and reduced-time appointments are common for those nearing retirement.

The same is true in major accounting firms. Ernst & Young, for example, has an extensive array of formal flexible work arrangements (“FWAs”), most of which involve some level of part-time schedules. In some cases, the result is reduced work loads; in others, employees become “boomerangs”—those who leave the firm with the birth of a child but are recruited back to the firm at a reduced schedule. Ernst & Young has developed a FWA Database and Road Map to facilitate its professionals’ use of flexible arrangements. Ernst & Young incorporates, and indeed promotes, the availability of flexible arrangements in its marketing and recruiting materials.

That law firms and accounting firms are committed to such flexible arrangements is not surprising. Not only is it the right thing to do, but also many businesses, such as DuPont and Sara Lee, now look at the numbers of women and diverse employees at professional services firms as one of the criteria used in making a decision to hire a firm in the first instance. The retention and promotion of women thus also makes good business sense.

SECTION II: Part-time Postdoctoral Training

Most women emerge from graduate programs with their PhDs in their late 20s and early 30s, right at the peak of their child bearing years. Many postpone starting a family during their graduate study to meet the demands of classes, research and writing.

Some, like many women on the task group, have worked to raise a family while pursuing full-time faculty positions. Yet this path is often unattractive, and so many instead pursue other career options, limiting the number of women available for faculty positions.

Post-doctoral appointments are intended to bridge the gap between graduate school and a faculty position. Through these appointments scholars continue to conduct research and publish, gaining experience working at a different institution and/or under a different faculty member. As maturing scholars, post docs are more independent than graduate students and free of coursework requirements, allowing them to focus on research. Post docs also often work closely with graduate students and can serve as important role models.

Post-doc positions, taken on a part-time basis, present an excellent opportunity for young women to both continue their professional development toward faculty positions while also taking time to start a family. An institution, like Ohio State, could benefit greatly by tapping this scholar pool. Part-time postdoctoral positions

- Increase diversity in work group
- Reduce costs of hiring specialized scholars
- Can stretch a 2 year post-doc position into a 4 year part time position, allowing the research effort to maintain continuity
- Increase the pool of women eligible for faculty positions

Twenty OSU departments were surveyed to determine the extent of part-time post doc positions within the university. Thirteen of the 20 departments offered post-doc positions, but **none employ part-time post docs.**

As an experiment, Food, Agricultural & Biological Engineering is offering a part-time post doc position to a woman with a young child. Her skills as a PhD Analytical Chemist are needed to enrich the laboratory research program. She is able to work every morning while her child is in school and is serving as a tremendous role model to the graduate students, half of them women.

SECTION III: Recommendations going forward

The policy and cultural issues we have raised above will require more study and discussion among campus leaders. Fortunately, Ohio State is positioned well in the sense that our current policies provide latitude for substantial flexibility in work options. Our primary barrier to implementing flexible work paths for tenure-track faculty and postdoctoral appointments is cultural — exactly the culture that so many recent reports have called into question.

The most important group to involve is the Council of Deans. Deans provide the crucial leadership to set agendas in their colleges, and deans appoint department chairs and heads. Deans control resources needed for faculty recruitment and retention, and deans can provide incentives for their units to pursue flexible workload assignments.

We therefore recommend that our preliminary report first be shared with the Council of Deans. Implementation of recommendations above will require further study and broad discussion among OAA, the deans, faculty leadership, department chairs, and Human Resources.

Honest discussions of our expectations for performance must be counterbalanced by strategic analysis of our poor record of recruiting and retaining women faculty. As a group of faculty and staff, we firmly believe that flexible work paths in no way conflict with our Academic Plan, our Diversity Action Plan, or the President's Leadership Agenda; indeed, Ohio State has an opportunity to become a national leader in the effort to reshape expectations for tenure-track faculty and postdocs and thereby truly become the employer of choice among academicians.

Appendix I. History of Faculty Hires 1986 – 2004, with information on tenure clock extensions⁵.

HIRES	Total	Did not take Extension	Took Extension
Men	1476	1341	135 (9.1%)
Women	913	739	174 (19.1%)
Total	2389	2080	309 (12.9%)

Faculty Still at OSU

	Tenured/ Still on Tenure Track	Did not take Extension	Took Extension
Men	1206 (81.7% of hires)	1128	78 (6.5%)
Women	671 (73.4% of hires)	581	90 (13.4%)
Total	1877 (78.6% of hires)	1709	168 (8.9%)

Faculty no longer at OSU⁶

		Did not take Extension	Took Extension
Men	270	213	57 (10.2%)
Women	242	158	84 (28.4%)
Total	512	371	141 (27.5%)

Impact of Clock Extension: proportion of faculty taking extension

	Tenured/ Still on Tenure Track	No longer here
Men	57.8%	42.2%
Women	51.7%	48.3%
Total	54.4%	45.6%

⁵ Extensions were granted for parental leave, medical/family difficulties, professional interruptions out of the faculty member's control et al.

⁶ Faculty leave the University for a variety of reasons. Some resign to take positions elsewhere, others move to industry or other opportunities, and some are denied tenure. We present these data simply to illustrate the magnitude of our retention problem, and to show that our current policies on extension of the tenure clock do not seem to be helping with retention.

Appendix II. Part-time tenured and tenure-track faculty at the Ohio State University*

College	Department	Gender	Rank	FTE
Art	History of Art	M	Professor	.50
Humanities	Comp Studies	M	Professor	.50
	English	M	Prof	.75
	English	F	Assoc Prof	.75
	German	M	Assoc	.75
MAPS	Astronomy	F	Prof	.75
	Mathematics	M	Prof	.50
	Physics	M	Prof	.75
SBS	Economics	M	Prof	.50
FAES	Agric. Tech.	M	Asst Prof (tenured)	.75
	Agrc Env Deve Econ	F	Asst Prof (probationary)	.50
	Extension	F	Asst Prof (probationary)	.90
	Extension	F	Asst Prof (tenured)	.50
	Extension	F	Asst Prof (tenured)	.90
Education	Edu Policy	F	Assoc Prof	.85
Veterinary Medicine	Clinical Sciences	M	Prof	.90
	Clinical Sciences	F	Assoc Prof	.75
	Clinical Sciences	F	Assoc Prof	.85
	Clinical Sciences	M	Assoc Prof	.75
Law		M	Prof	.90
Libraries		F	Asst Prof (tenured)	.80
		F	Assoc Prof	.75
		F	Asst Prof (tenured)	.75

We have not yet been able to ascertain validity of data for faculty in Medicine

Appendix III. OAA Policy concerning probationary periods for part-time faculty (taken from the web site oaa.osu.edu/handbook/ii_reducefte.html on May 6, 2005).

II. FACULTY APPOINTMENTS

Reduction in FTE

Updated 3/25/05

REGULAR TENURE TRACK FACULTY

If a part-time appointment was not included in the terms of hire as stated in the letter of offer, regular tenure track faculty who desire a reduced appointment (less than full-time but not less than 50%*), whether temporary or permanent, must consult with the TIU head.

*Tenure track faculty are defined in [Faculty Rule 3335-5-19](#) (Section A) as holding an appointment of 50% FTE or greater. Persons with a regular faculty title on an appointment of **49% FTE or less** are **auxiliary** (non-regular) faculty. (See [Compensated Auxiliary Appointments](#).)

- **Temporary** reduction: has a specified end date with a guarantee of return to the previous FTE.
- **Permanent** reduction: one without a specified end date. In this situation the faculty member must understand that no right to a future change of FTE is assumed.

Upon the faculty member's request, the TIU head, with the approval of the college dean, has the authority to grant a reduction in FTE. In colleges without departments, the dean has final authority. The letter directed to the dean should state all relevant information, e.g. the amount of the reduction, when it will take effect, and whether it is permanent or temporary.

Also see: [Shared Position](#).

PROBATIONARY TENURE TRACK FACULTY

A reduction in FTE does not involve an automatic extension of the probationary period, even though the projected revised dates may be mentioned in the letter approving the reduction, as is often the case. Probationary tenure track faculty whose appointment is less than full-time but not less than 50% may request an extension of the probationary period in accordance with [Faculty Rule 3335-6-03](#) (Section F):

The extension shall be for an integral number of years based on the principle that the usual probationary period represents full-time service. The maximum permissible extension of a probationary period under this paragraph is one year for a probationary instructor, three years for a probationary assistant professor (including time spent at the rank of instructor) and one year for a probationary associate professor or professor.

The Office of Academic Affairs policy does not approve extensions in advance. Rather, during the second year of a faculty member's reduced appointment, OAA will approve an extension of one year, for example, in recognition of two years of service at 50% FTE. At the appropriate time a letter requesting approval of the extension is forwarded by the TIU head to the dean and then the Office of Academic Affairs.

For probationary faculty, the letter directed to the final level of approval should state—in addition to the amount of the reduction, when it will take effect, and whether it is permanent or temporary—a projected revision of the review schedule and the projected year in which the adjusted "fourth year" review would fall (if the fourth year review has not already occurred).

REGULAR CLINICAL AND RESEARCH TRACK FACULTY

Regular clinical and research track faculty who wish to renegotiate their FTE during a contract period must consult with the TIU head. The agreement of the parties who initially approved the appointment is required to approve a change in FTE.

Appendix IV. Work Group Committee Membership

Mimi Dane
Squires, Saunders, and Dempsey

Joan Herbers
College of Biological Sciences

Mary Juhas
College of Engineering

Karen Mancl
College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences

Shari Mickey-Boggs
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Phyllis Newman
Colleges of the Arts and Sciences

Alayne Parson
College of Mathematics and Physical Sciences