

# **Balancing Work and Life in the Academy: Changing paradigms for women in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

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# Old and New Paradigms

## Academic Reward System:

- Grant \$\$\$
- Publications
- Teaching
- Outreach
- Service

## Trends:

- Interdisciplinary collaborations
- Multi-departmental appointments
- Dual Academic Career Couples
- Child care
- Aging Parents





W I S E L I

*Women in Science & Engineering Leadership Institute  
University of Wisconsin-Madison*

**Founders: Drs. Molly Carnes, Jo Handelsman**

**Current Directors: Drs. Molly Carnes, Amy Wendt**

**Research Director: Dr. Jennifer Sheridan**



# ***Study of Faculty Worklife at the University of Wisconsin- Madison***

N=1340



This questionnaire was developed to better understand issues related to quality of work life for faculty at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

This is part of a larger project, funded by the National Science Foundation, to develop new initiatives for faculty on campus.

**2002**



# 2003 Faculty Demographics

- 75.4% of women faculty are married/partnered  
48.1% of partners also at UW
- 93.4% of male faculty are married/partnered  
27.2% of partners also at UW
- 12.9% of faculty have kids under 6
- 35.9% of faculty have kids between 6-17
- > 2.2% of faculty are single parents



# 2002 Survey Findings: Work/Life Balance

- **Women faculty, untenured faculty, and gay/lesbian faculty are significantly less satisfied with their work/life balance, and significantly more likely to say they have considered leaving UW due to work/life balance issues.**
- **Faculty in Science departments say they are *more* satisfied with their work/life balance than non-Science faculty, yet they report having *fewer* family-friendly policies in their departments.**



# Findings-Spouse/Partner

- **Around 1/3 of faculty who have a spouse or partner have considered leaving UW due to their partner's job (or both their job and partner's combined)**
  - **Women and untenured faculty especially report they have seriously considered leaving for this reason**
- **Almost 1/2 of women faculty report having a spouse/partner who works at UW-Madison**
- **Science faculty more “traditional”—more likely to have a spouse/partner; less likely to have a spouse in the labor force full-time; more likely to have spouse/partner not in labor force at all.**



# Findings-Childcare

- **Most faculty satisfied with childcare arrangements, but**
  - **Faculty with in-home childcare (e.g., nanny), and those whose school-aged children care for themselves after school are much less satisfied.**
- **Faculty who use University childcare report being “Very Satisfied” more than others.**
- **For most dissatisfied parents, “availability of infant/toddler care” is biggest priority.**
- **Faculty in biological science departments are the most fertile.**





# Findings-Aging Parents

- 18.5% of faculty have responsibilities for care for an aging parent
  - More women than men
  - More tenured faculty than untenured
- For those who care for aging parents, mean is 7 hours per week
  - More for women than men
  - More for untenured faculty than tenured
- 5.9% of faculty care for both aging parents and child under age 18



# Findings-Health & Well-Being

- Best health outcomes enjoyed by majority men tenured faculty. In contrast, women, untenured, and faculty of color:
  - rate general health lower;
  - report being happy, well-rested, and physically fit less often;
  - report being fatigued, stressed, nervous, depressed, short-tempered more often.
- Higher reports of significant health problems or disabilities for tenured faculty.



# Findings-Overall Satisfaction

- Most faculty (88.0%) are satisfied with their jobs; even more (91.6%) are satisfied with their careers.
  - Women faculty are less satisfied with both job and career than men faculty, but are NOT more likely to say they have considered leaving the UW
  - Faculty in the Humanities are significantly less-satisfied than other faculty, AND they are more likely to say they have considered leaving.



# **Growing Concern over Career Interruptions**



# My Own Experiences..... 1996-2000

## And Tenure.....



# WISELI Life Cycle Research Grant Program

*“Research grants will be available to women faculty at critical junctures in their professional careers (e.g., between grants, a new baby, parent care responsibilities). These grants are meant to be flexible and women may apply for varying amounts and academic purposes.”*



# Came at a Critical Juncture in Their Personal and Professional Lives

- At risk of leaving the University, academia, or this world, altogether
- Recently arrived at the UW, was in the tenure process, promotion process, or other critical stage in their careers
- Personal situations were significantly impacting their professional lives
- Not based on professional merit



# LCRG Goals

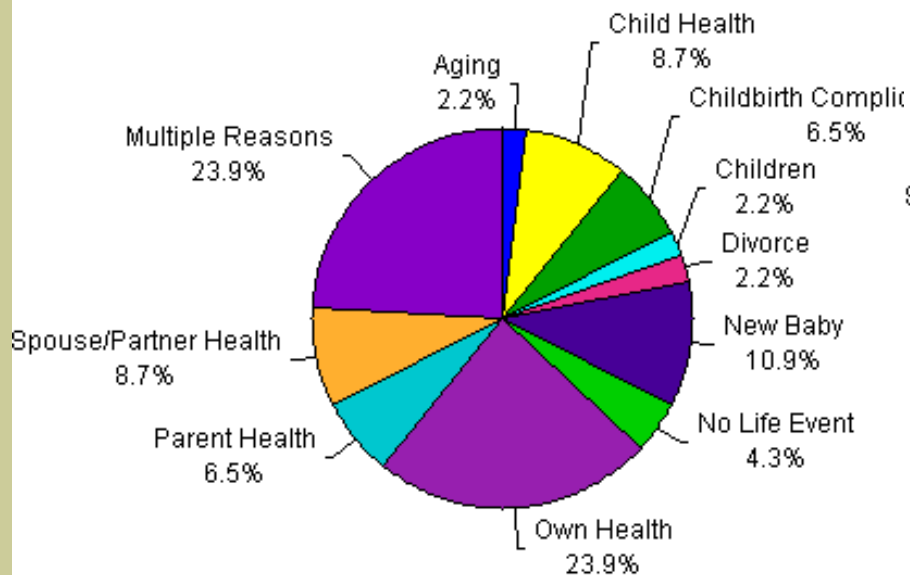
- Recognize that life events outside of one's control happen
  - Both men and women experience such events, but women are more likely to experience them early in the career, when they are more vulnerable
- Reduce turnover by providing research support for faculty in crisis
- Understand what events are problematic and which career junctures are most critical
- Understand what faculty need when they are in crisis



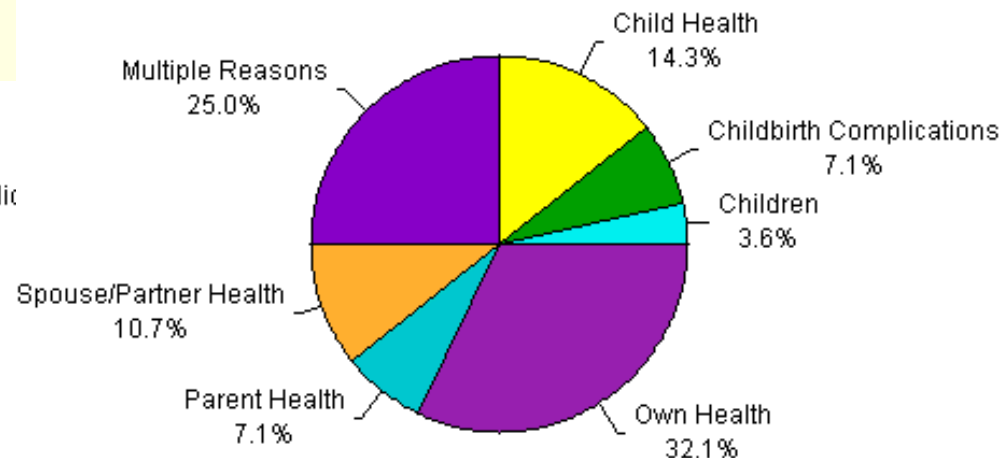


# Life Cycle Grant Program Data

## Applicants



## Awardees



# Provided Psychological Support

- Provided the needed psychological “boost” to stave off depression, health deterioration
- Made them feel as if they could get over the “hump”
- Grantees used words such as “desperation,” “depression,” “fear,” and “downhill spiral”
- Described grant as “motivating,” “life raft,” and “reversing the momentum”



# Institutional Support/Institutionalization

- Short term: Provost Office & Graduate School
- Long term: Funded by the Estate of William F. Vilas
  - Extended to all UW-Madison faculty and permanent PIs
  - \$310,000 per year
  - Renewable annually contingent upon continued positive evaluation results
  - WISELI retains control of grant administration as long as we exist, otherwise reverts to the Provost's Office
  - Grants renamed: *Vilas Life Cycle Professorships*



# 2002-2007 Award Statistics

**87 applications**

**57 awards**

**\$22,658 average award**

**\$1,291,499 total dollars awarded**



# Changing Paradigms....

The future is up for grabs.... It belongs to any and all who will take the risk and accept the responsibility of consciously creating the future they want.

Robert Anton Wilson



