

A photograph of a man and a young girl walking up a set of stairs. The man, in a white shirt and dark trousers, carries a briefcase and holds the girl's hand. The girl has curly hair and wears a purple backpack. They are walking away from the camera under a large, arched glass and steel structure.

# **CREATING WORK-LIFE FRIENDLY DEPARTMENTS:**

A RESOURCE FOR CHAIRS AND DIRECTORS

This document is part of the ADVANCE Toolkit for Administrative Leaders at the University of Michigan.

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## INTRODUCTION

Many faculty and staff at some point in their careers will need flexibility with regard to the balance between their work and personal life. For some, this occurs with the birth of a child; for others, around an illness or disability; and for some, around caregiving for sick or elderly family members. Having this flexibility is important to everyone when they need it, and research demonstrates that less stress around personal and family issues makes for better work and better work environments.<sup>1</sup> Further, policies, resources, and cultures that are work-life friendly are key to the University of Michigan for the recruitment, promotion, and retention of top scholars.

The knowledge and practices of chairs and directors around these issues help to support faculty as they manage work-life events.

### Why be Work-Life Friendly?

1. *Some faculty consider leaving the University of Michigan when they feel that their departments are not work-life friendly.* ADVANCE's climate studies of departments report this finding, and ADVANCE's 2016 Exit Interview study finds that issues related to their families and to their partners' employment situations factored into [faculty members'] decisions to leave.<sup>2</sup>
2. *Women's academic careers are still negatively affected by childbearing and caregiving.*<sup>3, 4, 5</sup>
3. *Work-life and caregiving issues are increasingly important to men, single parents, and faculty caring for sick or aging parents or partners.*<sup>6, 7, 8</sup>
4. *Faculty are unclear about their options for adjusting work-life balance when they need to and are unsure about available policies.* Chairs and Directors can provide information to faculty about these policies and resources.<sup>6</sup>
5. *Many policies are entitlements, not negotiations, so we should be sure our faculty know and access the benefits and resources that our University offers.*

## Ten Steps to Creating a Work-Life Friendly Unit

1. Review and assess your practices and climate and then make it a priority to support work-life friendly policies, resources, and department culture.
2. Be sure all job candidates are aware of the University's work-life-friendly policies and benefits, including the availability of a Dual-Career Consultant.
3. Assess your own and ask others in your unit to consider implicit bias around caregiving issues ([implicit.harvard.edu](https://implicit.harvard.edu)).
4. Be sure parental status and other caregiving or family status does not affect salary decisions.<sup>5</sup>
5. Be proactive and transparent in recruitment and promotion to be sure that the use of work-life-friendly policies is not penalized. In most cases, time since degree or time in rank should not be used when evaluating candidates for hiring, promotion, or awards.
6. Actively and publicly support your unit's policies. Make sure everyone (not just women, not just young faculty) know about these policies. Make access to these policies and practices the norm. This minimizes the risk that faculty will be disadvantaged in promotion or compensation.
7. Establish a collegial culture that includes faculty and staff and supports a variety of family identities. Clarify norms about bringing children to work when needed (e.g. on school snow days). Organize some events that include families (e.g. annual picnics or holiday parties).
8. Implement small scheduling changes for meetings and/or teaching that can have a significant impact on caregiving faculty. When possible, try to schedule between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., when parents are likely to have childcare available. Small changes like this can have a significant positive effect on climate and inclusiveness.
9. Discuss emailing norms with your unit and consider ways to protect everyone's personal time. Establish norms about things like turnaround time on responding to email and emailing outside of business hours. Use your role to lead by example.
10. Know what funds are available in and out of your unit for caregiving when traveling.

## Faculty Accounts of How Work-Life Friendly Policies Matter to Them

"My department chair recently moved faculty meetings from 4:00 to 3:30. This makes it so much easier for me to get to childcare pick up before 5:30 and relieves a lot of stress."

"It was a gift to be able to have modified duties to care for my father while he was undergoing cancer treatment."

"I feel so lucky to have a job where it's ok to bring my daughter to work when there's a snow day."

"I came to Michigan because the dual career support was so much better here than anywhere else I looked."

"My department chair never emails on Saturdays. That makes it ok for me to be truly away from work on the weekend."

## Where can I find the University Policies and Resources?

Be sure to check with your particular school or college for information on unit-specific policies, norms, and resources that extend or enhance University-wide policies.

### Policies

Family Medical Leave Act:

[hr.umich.edu/working-u-m/management-administration/additional-resources-supervisors-managers/fmla](https://hr.umich.edu/working-u-m/management-administration/additional-resources-supervisors-managers/fmla)

Modified duties for birth mothers and caregivers:

[spg.umich.edu/policy/201.93](https://spg.umich.edu/policy/201.93)

Effects on Tenure Clock of Childbearing and Dependent Care Responsibilities:

[spg.umich.edu/policy/201.92](https://spg.umich.edu/policy/201.92)

Engineering Specific:

[adaa.engin.umich.edu/policies/modifiedduties](https://adaa.engin.umich.edu/policies/modifiedduties)

LSA Specific:

[lsa.umich.edu/lsa/faculty-staff/academic-affairs/policies-and-procedures/tenured-and-tenure-track-faculty/family-friendly-policies-and-procedures.html](https://lsa.umich.edu/lsa/faculty-staff/academic-affairs/policies-and-procedures/tenured-and-tenure-track-faculty/family-friendly-policies-and-procedures.html)

Medical School Specific:

[faculty.medicine.umich.edu/work-life-benefits/family-friendly-policies](https://faculty.medicine.umich.edu/work-life-benefits/family-friendly-policies)

## Child Care Resources

Childcare Gateway:

[hr.umich.edu/benefits-wellness/family/childrens-centers](https://hr.umich.edu/benefits-wellness/family/childrens-centers)

KidsKare: Backup or Sick Child Care:

[hr.umich.edu/benefits-wellness/family/work-life-resource-center/sick-or-backup-child-care-service](https://hr.umich.edu/benefits-wellness/family/work-life-resource-center/sick-or-backup-child-care-service)

Child Care and Professional Traveling Resources—Engineering:

[adaa.engin.umich.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2013/07/CoE-Child-Care-Travel-Reimbursement-Policy.pdf](https://adaa.engin.umich.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/22/2013/07/CoE-Child-Care-Travel-Reimbursement-Policy.pdf)

Child Care and Professional Traveling Resources—LSA:

[https://lsa.umich.edu/content/dam/lsa-site-assets/documents/academic-affairs/policies-procedures/LSAChildTravelExpensePolicy%203.22.16.docx%20\(2\).pdf](https://lsa.umich.edu/content/dam/lsa-site-assets/documents/academic-affairs/policies-procedures/LSAChildTravelExpensePolicy%203.22.16.docx%20(2).pdf)

For Programs/Practices That Would Aid in the Retention and Promotion of  
(Among Others) Women Scientists:

[advance.umich.edu/crosby.php](https://advance.umich.edu/crosby.php)

Summer Writing Grants:

[advance.umich.edu/writinggrants.php](https://advance.umich.edu/writinggrants.php)

## Dual-Career Resources

At the University:

[provost.umich.edu/programs/dual\\_career/index.html](https://provost.umich.edu/programs/dual_career/index.html)

At the Medical School:

[faculty.medicine.umich.edu/work-life-benefits/dual-career-program](https://faculty.medicine.umich.edu/work-life-benefits/dual-career-program)

## Counseling for Faculty and Staff

<https://hr.umich.edu/benefits-wellness/health/mhealthy/mental-emotional-well-being/faculty-staff-assistance-program-fasap>

## Other Work-Life Resources:

<http://www.provost.umich.edu/faculty/family/faculty/index.html>

## References

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6. Report on the Experiences of Single Parent Faculty at the University of Michigan, ADVANCE Program, March, 2016.
7. Ellen Galinsky, Kerstin Aumann and James T. Bond (2008). Times Are Changing: Gender and Generation at Work and at Home. Families and Work Institute. [http://familiesandwork.org/site/research/reports/Times\\_Are\\_Changing.pdf](http://familiesandwork.org/site/research/reports/Times_Are_Changing.pdf)
8. Report on the Study of Faculty and Partners Who Used Dual Career Services at the University of Michigan, ADVANCE Program, April 2016.

\* Adapted from *Creating a Family-Friendly Department: Toolkit for Academic Administrators*, Office of Academic Affairs, Oregon State University

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