



Executive Summary: Dual Career Survey Report

In September 2015, the UVa CHARGE Program fielded a survey on dual career experiences to all faculty at the university. The survey was part of a data collection effort to support a grant application to the Jefferson Trust to create a telework community in the Research Park WorkSpaces 2.0 facility to expand the career opportunities for spouses/partners of dual career candidates and faculty.¹ Accommodating dual-career candidates and faculty now represents a significant hiring and retention challenge at UVa as candidates and current faculty are lost because spouses/partners cannot pursue careers in the area. The goal of the survey was to assess the need for a telework facility among the current dual career faculty, and to gain understanding into their experiences as dual career couples at UVa.

Findings

The survey was open to all faculty from September 1, 2015 through September 29, 2015. During that time, 586 faculty responded, representing 25% of the faculty (N=2349, Office of Institutional Assessment). Respondents self-selected into the survey and thus are not representative of the entire faculty population currently or formerly in a dual career relationship. However, the high response rate indicates the importance of this topic for faculty and we can discern some general patterns and needs.

- 56% of respondents (N=586) were women representing 40% of the university women faculty (N=828, Office of Institutional Assessment). 44% of the respondents were men representing 17% of the male faculty (N=1521, Office of Institutional Assessment)
- 42% of respondents were from the College and 40% from the Medical school representing 37% of the faculty in the College and 22% of the faculty in the Medical School (Office of Institutional Assessment)
- 62% of respondents were over 41 years of age, however the majority of dual career couples were either between the ages of 31 and 40, or over 50

Dual Career Situations

- 86% of respondents reported they were currently in a dual career situation and another 14% reported they previously had been in a dual career situation (n=485); 6% of this group were men over 50 who reported their wife had to give up her career due to lack of opportunity and support.
- Another 4% of faculty live apart from their spouse/partner to allow their spouse/partner to continue their career.

¹ Dual career couples are those in which both have established or are developing careers and at least one, often both, spouses/partners are academics.

- The three most common employers of respondent spouses/partners are:
 - UVa (33%, n=313). These dual career couples reported commuting less than 30 minutes (90%, n=103).
 - Private companies (27%, n=313) and 67% (n=84) of these spouses/partners commute less than 30 minutes while 18% commute more than 60 minutes or greater than 50 miles.
 - Other universities (13%, n=313) and 73% (n=41) of these respondents reported their spouse/partner commutes more than 60 minutes and greater than 50 miles
- 8% of respondents reported their spouse/partner already teleworks and the majority of these spouse/partners work for private companies. However, 75% of respondents said their spouse/partner was not interested in telework because they already work for UVa or commuted less than 50 miles to work.

Dual Career Experiences

- Overall, respondents described a university culture and policies that were antiquated and did not meet the needs of contemporary professional couples or families. Respondents described the current support given by UVa to dual career couples as:
 - “Humiliating”, “seat of your pants approach”, and “zero support”
 - Often, respondents described the university’s lack of support as “forcing” them into traditional family roles and structures that were unproductive, “chauvinistic”, and demeaning
 - Respondents also made comparisons between support given today and twenty years ago when they were hired, noting that “nothing has changed in twenty years”. Based on a comparison of current and past experiences described in the qualitative data, their assessment may be accurate
- Faculty respondents described their dual career experiences in the following ways:
 - Spouses/partners were treated as second class citizens and a liability, especially if hired as NTT research or lecturer
 - Current UVa faculty assumed candidate’s wives did not have a career, which was part of a pervasive environment of chauvinism that normalized stay-at-home wives and traditional family roles
 - Many spouses/partners sacrificed their career to avoid living apart or because they could not find a professional position in the area
 - Spouses/partners with jobs tend to be under-employed, took a large pay cut to move here, or can only find temporary or short-term work. This status makes them less connected to UVa and Charlottesville
 - Research and lecturer positions do not have any job security; respondents described spouses/partners losing jobs when they (faculty) went on sabbatical
 - Faculty living apart report that they are penalized during P&T processes because they commute on the weekends and cannot participate in departmental social activities
 - Respondents noted that spouses/partners must work because of the low pay for faculty and high cost of living in Charlottesville; some noted that the spouse/partner must work outside of Charlottesville to receive a decent salary
 - The few respondents with positive dual career experiences at UVa reported their experience was the reason they accepted the offer and the reason they remain at UVa.

Positive dual career experiences included: support and a coordinated/transparent effort by the department and others; spouse was treated like a professional; position was at the spouse/partner's career level/not under-employed; child care that accommodates physician schedules (nights and weekends).

- As a result of these experiences and continued lack of support, the following groups of faculty are looking for positions elsewhere: faculty living apart from their spouse; faculty whose spouse/partner is under-employed or constantly on the job market, or faculty whose spouse/partner sacrificed their career
- Lack of childcare that accommodated physician and professor schedules, and minimal/inflexible dependent care leave are also reasons for leaving UVa

Needs of Dual Career Couples

- The top three services respondents would like to see for dual career couples:
 - A formal/transparent process for academic and non-academic dual career hires (53%, n=350)
 - Dedicated positions at UVa for dual career spouses/partners (45%, n=350); such as NTT or staff positions according to qualitative data
 - A central/consolidated dual career office that supports hiring academic and non-academic spouses/partners (41%, n=350)
- A central dual career office should provide the following services:
 - Work with all spouses/partners, academic and non-academic
 - Career counseling and matching spouses/partners to positions inside and outside UVa, including K-12 teaching
 - A database of spouse/partner resumes; organize car/van pools to DC, Richmond, and apartment shares in DC
 - Have established networks with other universities, business, government, other dual career couples, local schools
 - Coordinate and communicate across UVa schools; establish an accountability system
- When describing a formal/transparent process, respondents most often described a policy change:
 - Create spousal preferred hiring status and job sharing
 - Create dedicated lecturer/researcher positions that have benefits like other faculty and are not “treated like second class citizens”
 - Create a policy that makes it easier to transfer from NTT to TTT; remove the restrictions that require a PhD to reach
- Faculty with commuting and under-employed spouse/partners suggested their dual career situation would be improved with better transportation options:
 - Early morning rail/bus service from Charlottesville to DC, Richmond and Baltimore and late night return service from those cities to Charlottesville
 - Extend the VRE from Manassas to Charlottesville and have the university invest in car/van pool options for spouses/partners
- Respondents frequently described the need for flexible childcare:
 - Physicians need childcare on nights and weekends, especially if both spouses/partners are clinicians

- Professors need childcare during travel and after hours, especially to work in labs, and if the other spouse/partner is commuting long distances
- All of these respondents also recommended that UVa synch its calendar with the state and local school calendars for holidays/snow days or provide childcare to all staff and faculty on those days when schools are closed but UVa is open.