

Work-Time, Housework, Carework, and Work-Life Balance Executive Summary

Joya Misra, Abby Templer, and Jennifer Lundquist

During the 2008-2009 year, the Joint Administration-Massachusetts Society of Professors (MSP) Work-Life Committee carried out a study focused on work-life balance issues, including carework, for faculty at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. The MSP, the Provost's Office, and the Office of Faculty Development funded the study. The study included a survey of all faculty, who were not serving in administrative roles, and focus groups with associate professors, assistant professors, and lecturers. The survey had 349 respondents and included personal and professional time-use measures. Men were somewhat underrepresented and women somewhat overrepresented in the sample although faculty ranks in the sample were similar to the population. Sixty-five faculty participated in focus groups, where they discussed work-life balance challenges and what types of support would be most helpful to navigate work-life balance.

The key findings regarding work time include:

- UMass faculty report working, on average, more than sixty hours each week and feeling overwhelmed with work-life balance. These findings are *not* confined to assistant professors, but actually peak among associate professors, particularly women.
- Women in all ranks and disciplines are spending more of their work time on mentoring and service than men, while also balancing much higher loads of housework and care time. Men, on the other hand, spend less time on care at home, and focus more of their work time on research. When work time, housework time, and care time are totaled, UMass faculty women at every rank put in much longer days than men.
- Faculty of color report spending, on average, ten more hours a week on work than white faculty and disproportionately spending their time on research, mentoring, and service.
- White men are more likely than women or faculty of color to report that their professional goals and their work-life balance are supported.

Recommendations include:

Programs requiring financial investment:

- (1) *Expand University Childcare.* Many faculty parents, especially those with infants, have difficulty accessing and affording childcare costs. Afterschool childcare programs, drop-in childcare, and summer childcare would also be beneficial.
- (2) *Hire Additional Faculty.* When possible, faculty-student ratios need to be brought down to earlier levels, and lost faculty should be replaced.
- (3) *Expand Care Leave Policies and Develop Modified Duties Policies.* Suggested policy modifications include offering care leave sooner than six years after a faculty contract begins, providing the option to take parental leave within *two* semesters of the birth/adoption of a baby, and offering the option of a reduced workload to those with intense caregiving responsibilities.

Programs requiring cultural changes:

- (4) *Develop a Flexible Tenure-Track System and Expand Tenure-Delay Policies.* Allowing parents of young children, assistant professors that enter UMass with a child younger than 5, and faculty with intense caregiving responsibilities to step on and off the tenure track or take part-time tenure-track appointments would be beneficial.
- (5) *Equally Distribute Teaching, Service, and Mentoring among the Faculty, and Value all of these Efforts in Making Promotion and Tenure Decisions.* Department chairs should be aware of the distribution of these duties and should review expectations for their departments, so that faculty know "how much is enough."
- (6) *Give Greater Support for Work-Life Balance.* The administration could set certain policies so that important meetings are held during school hours and could ask chairs to schedule teaching slots within school/childcare hours for parents of young children.