

CREATING A MORE FAMILY-FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT FOR GRADUATE STUDENTS

A Report of the Working Group Convened by Greg Sterling, Dean of the Graduate School

Members of the committee: Barbara Turpin (Associate Dean, Graduate School), Jessica Collett (Assistant Professor, Sociology), Kathie Newman (DGS and Professor, Physics), Amber Handy (Graduate Student, History), Catherine Rastovski (Graduate Student, Physics), Michael Driessen (Graduate Student, Political Science), Nathan Elliott (Rector, University Village and Cripe St. apartments).

Introduction

Why this report? By an accident of serendipitous timing, three faculty members and one graduate student simultaneously recognized the need for the Graduate School to create more family-friendly policies for graduate students at Notre Dame. Kathie Newman became interested in the topic after participating in a Gender Equity Workshop in the Physics Department in the fall of 2009; she brought her concerns to Dean Greg Sterling. Associate Dean Barbara Turpin became interested after attending a meeting of the Council of Graduate Schools in December of 2009 and hearing compelling presentations on this topic by the Dean of Cornell's graduate school and the former Dean of UC-Berkeley's. Jessica Collett had developed professional research interests in the topic, and worked with Dean Sterling and the Graduate School in the fall of 2009 to survey graduate students on issues related to how they balance personal life with their development as professional scholars. Her report on this topic to the University Committee on Women greatly interested a member of that Committee, Amber Handy of the History Department and the Graduate Student Union. With the encouragement of Dean Sterling, Dean Turpin convened a working group of these people, and added graduate student parents for balance of perspective.

A woman receiving her Ph.D. in the 1940s needed to be Superwoman. One such role model of that generation told one of us that she had all four children by scheduled C-section on Friday afternoons, so that she could return to work on Monday. While that woman's daughter and women like her, receiving their PhDs in the 70's and 80's, didn't have to go to such extremes, they still often felt that they could not take a leave of absence for a semester or two after their children were born, even if their advisers had thought to mention this possibility to them. Taking that leave, they knew, would have rendered them invisible, and sent the message to their advisers and departments that they were not "serious." That leave would have activated in everyone's mind (including, more often than not, the woman's) the almost instinctive, if erroneous, assumption that motherhood was incompatible with a career. Women felt that they

must perform ten times better than men in order to command even a minimal level of respect. It was as if respect was freely given to men, while women had to earn it.

Societal attitudes towards women have changed dramatically over the last 40 years. Today, the children of those women of the 70's and 80's, who may be new graduate student mothers themselves, are less shy about taking that leave (although that's not always so.) They don't feel as obliged as their mothers were to hide their identities as women in order to be accepted in the academy.

Today, the issue is family. As the research presented in the report below shows, both male and female graduate students, both here at Notre Dame and elsewhere, are less inclined to accept the "monastic" lifestyle – i.e., the sacrifice of everything, including one's family, on the altar of one's career. They are very concerned about achieving a healthy balance between career and family. The issue for the academy, then, is how we can help them.

Our job, it seems to us, is two-fold. We need to articulate a statement of commitment to this objective and post it on the Graduate School's website, and we need to make structural changes to support our graduate student families.

It is important to note that nothing we propose below is out of line with what most of our peer institutions have already done.

Background

A recent NRC report showed that women who receive PhDs in the sciences are less likely than men to seek academic research positions, and they were more likely than men to drop out before attaining tenure if they did. The report did not address the issue of why women were more likely to drop out; it didn't explore the impact of children and family obligations on women's willingness to pursue faculty positions or postdocs at research-intensive universities.

This issue has been addressed in the last two years by Prof. Mary Ann Mason, formerly the dean of the Graduate School at UC-Berkeley, and now co-director of the Center on Health, Economics and Family Security at Berkeley's Boalt Hall School of Law. Mason identifies when and why women and men with care-giving plans or responsibilities drop out or opt out of the academic science career path.

Mason based her study on data from the annual Survey of Earned Doctorates (a survey that all doctoral granting institutions, including ND, compel their graduating doctoral students to complete). This alone provided a pool of 170,000 respondents. She also based it on the results of surveys sent to all doctoral students, postdocs, academic researchers and faculty throughout

the UC system. Another survey was sent to the 62 members of the AAU. And finally, a survey went to 10 of the largest federal granting agencies.

Her most important finding was that marriage and childbirth account for the largest leaks in the pipeline between receipt of the PhD and acquisition of tenure for women in the sciences. Married women with children were 35% less likely to enter a tenure-track position after graduation than married men with children, and they were 27% less likely than their male counterparts to reach the tenure stage if they did take on such a job.

Her survey of the various groups in the UC system showed that the choice to shift their career goal away from academia was made while still in graduate school or in a postdoctoral position. Career-life issues accounted for four of the top five reasons why graduate students changed their career goals, with women more likely than men to cite these issues as very important.

Mason also discovered that research-intensive institutions have a bad reputation with both men and women. They considered such institutions to be the least family-friendly of a range of possible career choices, including teaching-intensive institutions, non-tenure-track faculty positions, managerial careers outside of the academy and research careers inside and outside the academy. 28% of doctoral women and 44% of doctoral men view tenure-track careers at research-intensive institutions to be family-friendly (meaning that 72% of women and 56% of men perceive them to be family-unfriendly.)

In her essay “Balancing Act: Role Models and Mentors,” Mason added that the more women with children a particular department had on its faculty, the more family-friendly the department was perceived to be.

Mason also found that America’s researchers receive limited benefits when it comes to family-friendly policies such as paid maternity leave and parental leave. Young scientists, early in the pipeline, are the least likely to have these benefits. Her survey of the AAU institutions demonstrated that only 13% of them offered at least **6 weeks** paid maternity leave to their graduate students. (See **Table 1** on pp. 4-8 for a comparison of the various childbirth accommodations offered at some AAU privates and three Catholic non-AAU institutions, and p. 8 for a brief analysis of this data.)

Mason argues that today’s graduate students want balanced lives. They require institutions to be flexible. But because of the way graduate education is structured, and has always been structured, inflexibility is the name of the game. It demands full-time devotion to education and employment, and a linear, lockstep career trajectory.

**TABLE 1: FAMILY FRIENDLY POLICIES AT SELECT
AAU AND CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**

UNIVERSITY	ACCOMMODATION	FT/PT ENROLLMENT	FUNDING	ELIGIBILITY	PATERNITY LEAVE
BERKELEY	For women undergoing childbirth, an extension of up to one extra year on taking the OCE and on normative time completion while in candidacy. Women and men experiencing extraordinary parenting demands (illness of a child) can receive an extension of up to 6 months on the OCE and normative time completion. Total additional time granted by policy can't exceed 2 years regardless of number of children.	Student either withdraws or registers for a modified schedule	6 weeks paid ; those on external funding that doesn't pay for a 6-week interruption of duties will be paid by the Graduate School. Grad student parent grants available to low income grad students with dependent children living with them	Research doctoral students undergoing childbirth or coping with other serious parenting demands. Non-doctoral grad student instructors also eligible.	Yes, under this policy
BROWN	Teaching/lab duties suspended	for 8 week leave, student remains enrolled FT; unpaid leave=> student responsible for health ins premiums	8 weeks paid or can take unpaid family leave for up to 2 semesters (family leave stops the clock)	female PhD std giving birth; male or female co-parent who is the primary caregiver of newly born baby; male or female student adopting child; master's students can use the accommodation but are not paid.	Yes

**TABLE 1: FAMILY FRIENDLY POLICIES AT SELECT
AAU AND CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**

UNIVERSITY	ACCOMMODATION	FT/PT ENROLLMENT	FUNDING	ELIGIBILITY	PATERNITY LEAVE
CHICAGO	one quarter extension for dept, prog, or Univ. milestones that come after birth of child; does not extend student's eligibility beyond the max # of years to degree; OR acad. modification for 1-2 semesters	one quarter extension = leave of absence; academic mod = FT but with reduced load and adjustment of due dates for assignments	funding addressed on an individual basis with the PI and the area dean of students	both master's and PhD students who are new birth or adoptive parents	Yes
CORNELL	1) relief from all acad/research responsibilities 2) reduced-load reg. for up to 1 yr w/o enrolling in courses at a reduced tuition rate (to maintain access to facilities). In exceptional circumstances, students may be eligible for both options	Option 1: FT; option 2: reduced load reg. (PT)	For option 1) 6 weeks paid ; if grant will not pay, Grad School will. Both options allow continuation of health insurance benefits	All students in good acad standing; those self-funded eligible only for option 2). Must have been enrolled as FT grad student for 2 consec. AY semesters prior to request. May request option 2 once per child; must be enrolled FT for 2 consec acad year semesters between requests; time spent in option 2 doesn't count toward time-to-degree	Yes, under this policy (not leave of absence); in the case of two eligible grad student parents, both are entitled to equal accommodation under the policy.
DUKE	relieved of full-time grad studies/duties and of official academic exams, research deadlines, coursework; accommodation not a LOA- students expected to remain engaged even if at a reduced level	must remain FT to protect benefits and access	Grad School works w/ dept to figure out cost-sharing arrangement for 7 weeks ; 2 of the 7 weeks may be taken prior to birth or adoption	PhD student in good academic standing	father may be relieved of grad studies/duties for up to 1 week

**TABLE 1: FAMILY FRIENDLY POLICIES AT SELECT
AAU AND CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**

UNIVERSITY	ACCOMMODATION	FT/PT ENROLLMENT	FUNDING	ELIGIBILITY	PATERNITY LEAVE
NORTHWESTERN	extension of academic milestones for 2 academic quarters; postpone course assignments, exams, etc	FT or PT Even if on family leave, must register for certain course (called "continuous registration")	6 weeks paid ; no funding if on family leave	FT or PT female grad students in master's or doctoral programs	No
NOTRE DAME (currently does not have specific maternity policy, only medical separation)	Teaching and other academic obligations suspended; academic deadlines not automatically extended	Student remains enrolled FT	6 weeks paid	full-time female doctoral students who are birth mothers	No
PRINCETON	Teaching and other academic obligations suspended; extension of academic deadlines	Unclear.	In addition to 12 weeks of funding during the leave, the student is eligible for an additional semester of financial support to complete his/her studies for each child she gives birth to or adopts If student on a grant that doesn't cover student while on leave, the Grad School will pay	full-time female doctoral non-ABD students who are birth mothers or who have adopted; full-time non-ABD male doctoral students who are the primary caregiver; in the case of two grad student parents, only one of these options can be applied for. Master's students MAY be eligible; applications reviewed on a case-by-case basis	Yes

**TABLE 1: FAMILY FRIENDLY POLICIES AT SELECT
AAU AND CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**

UNIVERSITY	Accommodation	FT/PT enrollment	Funding	Eligibility	Paternity leave
STANFORD	postpone course assignments, exams and other acad req. Stops acad clock wrt assignments due and other class/research-related requirements. Doesn't waive class attendance or participation in seminars to the extent possible. Grants one quarter extension of univ. and dept. req with possibility of up to 3 quarters under unusual circum.	FT - can maintain access to facilities; no visa or student loan issues; can choose PT option for up to 2 quarters	If supported by TA or RA, get 6 weeks paid ; if not funded, still eligible for acad. accomm. If supported by ext. grant that does not allow for period of reduced activity or absence, Univ. will pay for the 6 week absence	all reg and enrolled women grad students anticipating childbirth	No. Use leave of absence policy
U PENN	Relief from academic requirements such as postponement of exams and course requirements	Student remains enrolled FT	8 weeks ; if student funded by grant, support determined by granting agency	All doctoral students	Yes
YALE	Academic clock stops during the semester of relief; dept expectations modified	Student remains registered & enrolled	1 semester paid; students who take only 8 weeks may receive an additional 8 weeks of stipend funded by the Grad School in a later semester	Full time doctoral students; MA/MS students are eligible for academic accommodations	Yes
CATHOLIC UNIV	no policy				
BOSTON COLLEGE	no policy				

**TABLE 1: FAMILY FRIENDLY POLICIES AT SELECT
AAU AND CATHOLIC SCHOOLS**

UNIVERSITY	Accommodation	FT/PT enrollment	Funding	Eligibility	Paternity leave
GEORGETOWN	flexibility about attendance and assignment deadlines; if RA or TA, will be relieved of service requirement during leave period	open to all graduate students; they remain registered and enrolled; can attend class and work on assignments to the extent possible.	6 weeks paid; policy does not grant additional semesters of funding or change the T-T-D deadlines; students may request medical leave instead of, or in addition to, parental leave. These options will have consequences for health insurance.	must be primary and FT caregiver of newborn child or child < 5 yrs old newly placed in the home	If primary and FT caregiver

COMMENTS ON TABLE 1

Currently, like Catholic University and Boston College, Notre Dame has no specific policy for childbirth or adoption; we have a 6-week medical separation policy that is supposed to cover all medical issues, from maternity to depression. If you compare this policy to what is offered by the other AAU schools on the list, you see that we are woefully behind. The committee reviewed the policies at those AAU schools and tried to create a competitive policy that would not break the bank. We cannot possibly match Princeton’s policy, which is just a part of a much larger (and richer) initiative that covers elder care and emergency back-up care for children, just to name two.

Some commonalities exist among the policies at all schools. They are all to be used for both childbirth and adoption. Moreover, at no school is this accommodation considered to be a leave of absence; in every case, although students are granted relief from teaching or lab duties during the accommodation period and extensions on candidacy exams and/or coursework assignments, students are expected to remain registered and enrolled full-time and to attend classes and participate in seminars, etc., to the extent possible. Full-time status is necessary to secure access to university facilities, health insurance, and maintain visa status for international students. If approved, this will be Notre Dame’s position as well.

In addition, while the accommodation period varies from school to school and is open to all, only doctoral students are eligible for the financial benefit. And while some schools open the accommodation to fathers as well as mothers, others choose to open it to the primary caretaker, whether that is the mother or the father. Notre Dame chose the latter option because of a GAO report on a review of NASA’s compliance with Title IX in which it was noted that fathers who took advantage of paternity leave did not spend their time providing child care; they spent it furthering their research. In an effort to avoid furthering inequities in attrition and time-to-degree between men and women in graduate school, our committee thought it best to simply open the policy to whomever serves as the primary caretaker. We encourage departments to be flexible with fathers during the first week or two after a child’s birth or adoption.

The lockstep culture of academia is unforgiving. Parents, but particularly women, experience significant care-giving responsibilities up through the age of 50, making it hard for them to keep up with academic career pressures. Mason's research showed that faculty in the sciences work an average of 50 hours/week, up to the age of 62. Univ. of California women faculty between the ages of 30 and 50 who have children report a weekly average of 100 hours of combined activities. (Men report 86 hours). And women faculty with children provide an average of over 30 hours/week of care-giving up through age 50. Family-responsive policies rarely address this long term career-life issue.

The central issue here is that a woman's prime child-bearing years coincide with her years in graduate school. They always have, but it's becoming more of an issue now. In 1985, the average age for receipt of tenure was 36; in 2003, it was over 39. Women cannot wait until they get tenure to start a family. That means starting families either in grad school or when they become assistant professors, when the pressures on them are even greater than in grad school.

Why should we care if the pipeline for women in science is leaky? Mason argues that, while our pipeline is leaking, we are experiencing increasing competition from Europe and Asia, meaning that by losing women in the sciences, we are losing our highly-trained US workforce and global pre-eminence in the sciences.

Something needs to be done to help *all* of our students with families, not just those in the sciences; they are all dealing with the same pressures.

The Situation at Notre Dame

What is the situation like at Notre Dame? Do we need to worry about this brain drain?

The PhD completion project conducted last year showed that attrition among women across all the doctoral programs in the University (not just the sciences) was 10% higher for women than for men. This attrition occurred largely in the physical sciences (not biology, math or engineering.) So we do have a bit of a problem here to address.

Quite independently of the PhD completion project, but going on at the same time, was Prof. Collett's survey of Notre Dame doctoral students. The survey, largely based on Mary Ann Mason's work, explored various facets of graduate student life, including how graduate students balance their personal and professional lives. The survey was sent to all students currently enrolled in a PhD program. Of 1415 students, 653 returned completed surveys, a response rate of 46%. While we have no way of knowing whether these respondents are representative of the student population, given how little information on students Notre Dame

tracks, the 653 students who completed the survey appear representative of the breakdown of total students by college and gender.¹

Consistent with Mary Ann Mason's findings, Prof. Collett showed that 39% of graduate students at Notre Dame see a tenure-track job at a research university as family-friendly for women and 62% of graduate students see a tenure-track job at a research institution to be family-friendly for a man. This perception may be a factor in women's higher attrition in grad school; it may also explain why women are more likely to question their post-graduate plans than men.

In Prof. Collett's ND survey, women with children spend 8 fewer hours/week on their education than men with children. (They spend 15 fewer hours/week than both childless women and men.) And women with children spend 17 more hours/week on caregiving than men with children. Care-giving responsibilities, for both children and parents, still fall with greater force on women than on men.

Prof. Collett's survey also showed that women, both with and without children, experience more conflict between their personal responsibilities and those associated with graduate school than men do, and are significantly more distressed by this conflict than men are. She examined the stress levels experienced by married men and women in their various roles as parent, spouse, student, friend and son or daughter. She found that while both groups identified the role of student as producing the most stress, married women experienced a 12% higher level of stress in this role than married men.²

Thus, Notre Dame has experienced some of the brain drain, and the married women among its Graduate School population are under significant stress. Unfortunately, the PhD completion study was unable to tie the 10% higher attrition rate for women to the stresses married women experience, or to any other factor since the Graduate School hasn't done a very good job of

¹ 83% of respondents were 25-35 years old (what respondents see as prime childrearing years); 16% of respondents were parents (13% women; 18% men); 56% of respondents with children had 1 child; 44% of respondents had more than 1 child.

Among the respondents to this survey, there were a total of 158 children. 71% of these children were under 5 years old; 33% are under 2 years old. If the sample is representative across family demographics, extrapolating to the entire graduate student population, there were approximately 300 children with grad student parents, of whom about 100 are under the age of 2.

² A recent study by the Center for Work and Family at Boston College, however, argues that fathers now feel as stressed as mothers. There are several reasons for this. In 1970, roughly two-thirds of married couples had a spouse at home (usually the wife); today, only 40% have a spouse at home to handle the domestic chores. Moreover, couples are working longer hours. In 1970, they worked a combined average of 52.5 hours per week; today, they work a combined average of 63 hours per week. Men have had to take on more responsibilities at home, including child care, and hence experience more stress. They are now facing the same clash of social ideals that women have faced since the 1970s – how to be a good worker and a good parent. A new ideal has arisen – the father as nurturer and not just provider.

tracking why students leave. Conducting exit interviews with withdrawing students is among the recommendations of our committee.

When we contacted the Graduate Student Union to find out what graduate student parents think the most important issues are, we discovered four that need to be addressed. First, graduate students need clarification about the maternity leave policy. The fact that they even refer to it as that – the current policy is just a general six-week medical separation that grad students happen to use as a maternity policy; it isn't even a leave – shows that they're confused as to what it is and that the Graduate School needs to create a policy specifically for pregnant students.³ Second, grad student parents want and need more information about alternatives to hospitalized childbirth, childcare options for children under the age of two, and affordable alternative health care coverage for their children (such as Hoosier Healthwise). A centralized source for this information is lacking but is particularly acute for those families who do not live in University Village. Third, students would like more institutional support from the University, especially in terms of child-friendly spaces on campus. The new lactation rooms were very well received and students hope for further rooms to be installed in LaFortune and the major lab buildings around campus. Students also expressed a desire for a space on campus where a parent could take a noisy infant or energetic toddler without disrupting other students but allowing the parent to remain near campus resources and work while supervising his/her child. The need for an indoor space during the winter months is especially important. Finally, students expressed anxiety about how marriage, pregnancy, and parenthood affected their departmental standing and relationship with their adviser. The range of difficulties was very similar to those Prof. Collett discovered during the interview stage of her survey, which is described below.

Need for Improvement of Climate

In addition to collecting survey data on our graduate student population, Prof. Collett spent many hours interviewing students individually. She selected male and female students from across colleges and departments, married and unmarried, with and without children. She found that beyond the struggle with personally balancing graduate school and personal obligations, many graduate students face difficult situations with their advisers and departments related to their personal lives.

Both male and female students recount instances where advisers took them less seriously because they were parents. Advisers passed them up for opportunities to travel for data collection or conferences, or took a more hands-off approach than with other advisees, which

³ Prof. Collett's survey revealed that only 24% of women and 12% of men were familiar with the current policy.

was interpreted by the students as “giving up” on them. Some advisers insisted that students put work before family. Advisers would call them at home late at night or on Saturdays, asking, “Why are you not at work?” Some have created a hostile atmosphere where students were reluctant to announce pregnancies or ask for extensions or time off after the birth of a child. Many of these students ultimately switched advisers, seeking out individuals whom they saw as more supportive. They described the difference a supportive adviser can make, including the positive influence a sympathetic adviser can have for motivating them and helping them succeed. However, they see these transitions as slowing down their progress and causing them to make sacrifices in pursuing their academic interests.

Students who are not yet parents but are thinking about having children are also concerned about the lack of family friendliness in their departments and the views of their advisers. Both parents and non-parents wonder if it is really possible to have both a career in academia and a family – particularly for women. Men and women at Notre Dame both feel that they lack role models for how to successfully balance it all. Many men want something different than what they see as a traditional Notre Dame male academic model – a life of long days and weekends in the office with a wife who stays home and takes care of everything else – but lack examples of involved fathers. Women are convinced that there are women on campus who are successfully juggling work and family, but suggest that discussing how it’s done is taboo. As one graduate student said, “I understand why my adviser doesn’t talk about her family and her struggles, but I sure wish she would.”

What Can be Done?

After our proposed statement of commitment, we divide our recommendations into four categories. First, we make specific and concrete policy recommendations. Second, while “changing the climate” of any institution is a Sisyphean task, we offer a road map for doing so based on a University of California initiative on creating family-friendly departments. Third, we offer *many* recommendations in the area of support, an indication of how much there is to be done. Finally, in response to so many pleas for information, we offer a number of recommendations in the area of communications.

Some recommendations, if accepted, require funding; these recommendations are prioritized on p. 17. Many recommendations simply require thoughtful reflection and initiative on the part of departments and the University. It is our hope that the University as a whole will recognize the timeliness of the report and that Notre Dame will lead as a family-friendly Catholic research university.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Statement of Commitment for Graduate School website

As a Catholic University, Notre Dame is committed to fostering a family-friendly environment for its graduate students, one that makes it possible for those students to balance successfully their parenting responsibilities and their academic pursuits. To that end, the Graduate School at the University of Notre Dame offers the following services.

Policy Recommendations (prioritized)

- 1. Create a childbirth accommodation policy and distinguish it from the medical separation policy. See Appendix A. (\$100K)**
- 2. Create a policy on pregnant women in labs. See Appendix B.**
- 3. Make the cost of on-site child care at conferences an “allowable expense” in the GSU-administered Gordon Travel Fund. Departments should honor this policy in funds it disperses to students for conferences.**

Climate Recommendations

- 1. Make departments more family-friendly to graduate students. Distribute this report and the following list of recommendations to deans, DGSs and department chairs (in a separate document).⁴**
 - Make becoming a family-friendly environment for graduate students a major priority and goal for departments. Departments are family-friendly when they offer support policies, resources, and cultural practices that allow graduate students to successfully integrate work and family needs.
 - Review and assess departments’ current practices and climate around family friendliness.

⁴ These recommendations are adapted from “Creating a Family Friendly Department: Chairs and Deans Toolkit,” an initiative developed by Mary Ann Mason and others at the University of California system, 2007.

- Become conscious about unconscious bias issues concerning care-giving and gender. Encourage faculty and students to take the Implicit Associations Test at implicit.harvard.edu. We also recommend Malcolm Gladwell's book, *Blink*.
- Know the family accommodation policies and resources that apply to graduate students.
- Actively highlight, advertise, and support family accommodation policies and procedures for all graduate students. This helps assure students that they won't be arbitrarily disadvantaged in assignment of T.A. or teaching duties, internal fellowship competitions, departmental and travel funding, and advancement toward degree.
- Make use of family accommodations the standard for conducting departmental business rather than viewing them as exceptions or "special privileges."
- Maintain a zero tolerance policy for discriminatory and disparaging comments and behaviors from faculty, staff, and graduate students. Make it clear to all members of the department that hostile comments and behaviors are unacceptable and violate the ideals of professional conduct. Be sure that graduate students are familiar with departmental grievance policies and know that they can contact the University Ombudsperson or the Graduate School if they prefer to speak with someone outside of the department.
- Encourage faculty members with families to be open to discussing with graduate students how to balance the demands of an academic career with a family. A clear and fair family-friendly policy for faculty goes a long way toward modeling how graduate students can aspire to balance their own commitments.
- Establish and maintain transparency in the departmental expectations for student performance during coursework, examinations, and the dissertation period.
- Implement small changes that can have a significant impact on departmental culture. These might include family-friendly scheduling for required meetings or colloquia, flexibility in T.A. or teaching assignments, allowing reimbursement for care-giving when travelling for conferences or research, inviting families to

attend departmental social events when appropriate, and acknowledging the diversity of graduate student needs. Faculty should take into account the likelihood that some of their graduate students have children when constructing their course schedules, avoiding evening classes when possible.

Support Recommendations (prioritized)

- 1. Conduct exit interviews with all students withdrawing from the University to determine the reason(s) for their attrition.**
- 2. Continue to work towards 90% subsidy of student health insurance. (\$460K increase required)**
- 3. Provide a part-time campus-wide family advocate for grad student parents. (\$20K)**
 - This person would be available for individual counseling, and would work with the Graduate School, the DGSs, Career Services, the rector at married student housing, the international students' office, and even the Medicare office downtown in the implementation and coordination of some of the recommendations that follow.
- 4. Provide workshops on time management, how to balance work and family, how to negotiate job interviews when the illegal but inevitable question of family comes up.**
- 5. Provide modeling/mentoring for graduate parents.**
 - Get faculty and grad student parents together on a regular basis to share stories on balancing career and personal life. Provide babysitting for such events to encourage students to attend.
 - When speakers are brought in, think of encouraging them to meet with graduate students informally to discuss work/life issues; invite graduate students from across campus.
- 6. Provide supervised play groups so that parents can get together to talk about shared concerns. (Possible GSU initiative)**
- 7. Initiate more family-friendly events on campus.**
 - Include children in department holiday parties or summer picnics; welcome them to student/faculty sports events such as softball games; encourage DPAC

to have matinée showings of child-appropriate films, and to reduce price of admission for children; take advantage of family times at RecSports.

8. Revisit the counseling options for graduate students at St. Liam's.

- Work towards a policy whereby grad students can meet with a practicing professional and not another grad student in Psychology.

9. In future building projects, plan for additional lactation rooms and for lounges that are family-friendly. (Cost unknown)

10. Work toward reducing the cost of insurance for spouses. (It will cost \$2,170,000 to cover spousal insurance.)

- Our committee also conducted an insurance survey at University village in an attempt to determine how many spouses and children are uninsured.⁵ We found that 91% of the children (about 95) in the village are insured by Hoosier Healthwise, and 5% (roughly 15) are uninsured. 28% of women (about 90) are uninsured; 26% are on Hoosier Healthwise, and 23% are on University insurance. At the time of the survey (last spring), there were 10 pregnancies in the Village, all of them insured by Hoosier Healthwise. The biggest problem is, therefore, spousal insurance.

11. Establish a schedule to renovate or replace married student housing. This facility was designed to last forty years. It is now almost fifty years old (it was built in 1962), and while upgrades have been made over the years (e.g., air conditioning), the buildings need much more than routine maintenance. **(\$50 million)**

Communication Recommendations

1. Promote HR's family-friendly website.

- HR, in conjunction with the ECDC-ND committee, the University Committee on Women and the Graduate School's "family-friendly" committee, is creating and maintaining a website that will provide information on family-friendly resources available to faculty, staff and graduate students, both on campus and in the South Bend community. This website will include information on local schools,

⁵ 308 surveys were sent out and 129 were returned, for a response rate of 42%. We assumed that these responses were representative of the whole, and extrapolated to get the numbers presented here.

support groups, maternity options (including doulas and midwives), infant and child care and emergency back-up care. Someone should be designated to maintain the pages for relevant resources for graduate students, e.g., on Hoosier Healthwise, the location of lactation rooms on campus, upcoming workshops of interest to grad student parents, the availability of the play room at RecSports, etc.

- 2. State clearly on the Grad School's website and in admission letters that the health insurance subsidy is 75%.**

- 3. State clearly on the website that Hoosier Healthwise is the default option for insurance for children.**

We rank those recommendations that have a cost associated with them in the following order:

- 1) The childbirth accommodation policy (\$100K)
- 2) Campus-wide family advocate (\$20K part-time)
- 3) 90% subsidy for student health insurance (\$460K increase needed)
- 4) Spousal insurance (\$2,170,000)
- 5) Additional lactation rooms and family-friendly lounges in future buildings (Cost unknown)
- 6) Establish schedule to renovate or replace married student housing (\$50 million)

APPENDIX A (revised November, 2010)

GRAD SCHOOL CHILDBIRTH AND ADOPTION ACCOMMODATION POLICY

RATIONALE

The following policy is intended to assist graduate students who are new parents. It is a supplement to the six week medical separation policy. Unlike the medical separation policy that covers any medical condition, this accommodation policy addresses a single set of circumstances: new parenthood. It is not a leave of absence; it is *an accommodation*. Students maintain their standing as students and are eligible for financial support.

Departments are encouraged to work out specific arrangements with students, on a case-by-case basis, within the broad framework of this policy.

ELIGIBILITY

All full-time students in good academic standing **who are primary and full-time caregivers** of a newborn child or a child less than 5 years old newly placed in the home are eligible. Students must have completed one semester and have been registered and enrolled for at least another semester prior to the request. Students may make use of the policy up to two times provided that at least one semester of full-time enrollment occurs between requests. Parents who are not the primary and full-time caregiver may apply for a leave of absence, but are not eligible for accommodation.

ACCOMMODATION IN COMPARISON TO LEAVE

This accommodation is intended to provide relief from full-time responsibilities while providing continuing financial support. It differs from a leave of absence in three ways.

First, in a leave of absence students are relieved of all responsibilities. If a student wishes to devote full-time care to a newborn or a newly adopted child, the student should request a leave of absence. Under this accommodation, students are relieved of **full-time** graduate studies/duties (such as teaching and research), of official academic exams (e.g., oral candidacy exams, master's comprehensives, etc), and of coursework deadlines for **one semester** (16

weeks) during or immediately following the semester in which the birth or adoption occurs.⁶ The choice of the semester is the student's. Students are expected to register and enroll full time and to remain engaged, if at a reduced level. Departments are encouraged to be as flexible as possible with the student seeking accommodation. This parent's assignments should allow for maximum flexibility in his/her schedule during the first 6 weeks after the child arrives. The amount of engagement and reduction in workload during the entire accommodation period (both prior to and after the birth or adoption of a child) should be specified **in writing** prior to the onset of the accommodation period. This agreement should then be approved and signed by the student, the student's adviser, the departmental DGS *and* the chair or the graduate studies committee, and sent to the Associate Dean of Students in the Graduate School for review. In the event that the student and department cannot reach a decision about an appropriate workload, the Associate Dean of Students in the Graduate School should be consulted. The details of the agreement may be re-assessed and revised after childbirth or adoption. Accommodated students should submit a brief written progress report to their advisers at the end of the accommodation period.

Second, a leave of absence stops the student's eligibility clock; the accommodation extends it. In the case of a leave, a student still has eight years to fulfill all requirements and must meet all of the normal program and Graduate School deadlines. In the case of accommodation the student's academic eligibility clock is extended by a semester, effectively adding a semester to the student's eligible time to meet all degree requirements.

Third, students who elect to take a leave of absence forego financial support from the University. Students who elect to take accommodation will continue to receive financial support (see below) and the health insurance subsidy.

If, after the end of the accommodation period, the student wishes to have more time, he/she can apply for a leave of absence. The clock will stop, but so will funding. Students on leave may still enroll in the health insurance plan at their own expense.

FUNDING

Students who are fully-funded and who have not yet completed their 5th year of study will continue to be supported financially. They will continue to receive a stipend at the same level for the length of the accommodation (see below for possible exceptions), receive a tuition scholarship, and receive the health insurance subsidy from the Graduate School. **There are two**

⁶ Students may take incompletes in courses or take a reduced course load; departments may still define these students as full-time, despite the credit hour reduction.

important limits: the total number of years of funding will not be extended and funding is for the academic year only.

- ✚ Teaching Assistants will be relieved of all teaching duties.⁷ As stated above, they must continue to be intellectually engaged in the activities of the department and their research. Details of this engagement should be worked out in writing between the student and the department prior to the start of the accommodation.
- ✚ Students on research grants who wish to continue to receive full funding must follow the following guidelines. If the student is funded by a grant, the level of support is determined by the granting agency. If the student is expected to devote 50% or 75% of his/her former working hours to his/her research, the grant will pay 50% or 75% of her former stipend, **assuming he/she works at full capacity during those reduced hours.** The Graduate School will make up the difference between what the grant pays and the former stipend, up to 50% of the former stipend. If the grant funding is reduced below 50%, the Graduate School will still pay 50%.

Details of the final arrangement should be worked out in writing between the student and the department prior to the start of the accommodation.

- ✚ If a student is funded by an external fellowship, the level of support is determined by the foundation. If the fellowship is reduced or eliminated as a result of a new child, the Graduate School will fund up to 50% of the student's former stipend under the fellowship. Questions should be directed to the Graduate School.

Parental relief cannot be combined with other funding.

Terminal master's students, and students who have completed their 5th year of study, are eligible for the accommodation only, not for funding.

Notification: Eligible students must notify their adviser, Director of Graduate Studies and the Associate Dean of Students in the Graduate School of their intent to use the accommodation policy at least 60 days prior to the expected date of childbirth or adoption. A form (see p. 21 below) will be placed on the Graduate School website for this purpose.

⁷ Those students for whom serving as a TA is a requirement must fulfill the requirement in a later semester.

REQUEST FOR CHILDBIRTH AND ADOPTION ACCOMMODATION

Students who wish to use the Childbirth and Adoption Accommodation Policy should complete this form. In the case of childbirth, the form should be accompanied by a physician's note indicating the approximate birth date. Once the form is approved by the student's adviser, the Director of Graduate Studies (DGS) and the Associate Dean for Students in the Graduate School, the student will be entitled to maintenance of full-time student status, reduction of academic responsibilities, and continued stipend support.

Please submit this form to the DGS at least 60 days prior to the beginning of the academic semester in which you request the accommodation.

After the form is signed by the DGS, it should be submitted to the Associate Dean for Students in the Graduate School, 502 Main Building. It may also be submitted electronically to turpin.1@nd.edu.

Last Name: _____ First Name: _____ Middle: _____

Address: _____
(street, apartment, state, country postal code)

Phone: _____ ND ID: _____ Department: _____

Matriculation Date: _____

I attest that I will be the primary and full-time caregiver of my child. _____
Student's signature

I am requesting policy coverage beginning _____
(fall or spring/year)

Stipend funding source (to be completed by the DGS) _____

Adviser (indicating that the student and the adviser have agreed to expectations during the accommodation period)

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Director of Graduate Studies (certifying that details of the accommodation have been accepted by the department and that the student is in good academic standing)

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Associate Dean for Students, The Graduate School

Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX B

POLICY FOR PREGNANT GRADUATE STUDENTS IN LABS

Exposure to certain chemicals, biological agents and radiation has proven harmful to fetuses, especially in the first three months. For those pregnant graduate students whose research requires them to be present in laboratories where there is a potential biological, chemical or radiation risk to her unborn child, the Graduate School strongly recommends that they immediately inform their advisers of their pregnancy, and then contact the Office of Risk Management. This Office is dedicated to providing professional advice in the areas of safety, occupational health, environmental protection and risk management. Safety professionals can advise the student (and the adviser) about the effects of harmful materials on the development of the fetus, particularly in the critical first three months, and recommend that the woman avoid the laboratory for a certain period of time.

REFERENCES

- Collett, Jessica L. 2009. *Individuals in Institutions: Graduate Student Struggles and Success*. Working paper, University of Notre Dame.
- Goulden, Frasch and Mason. "Staying Competitive: Patching America's Leaky Pipeline in the Sciences," Berkeley Center on Health, Economic & Family Security and The Center for American Progress, November 2009.
- Harrington, Van Deusen and Ladge, "The New Dad: Exploring Fatherhood Within a Career Context." Boston College, Center for Work and Family, 2010.
- Hill, Corbett and Rose, "Why So Few? Women in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics." AAUW, 2010.
- Johnson, Jenna. "Graduate Students Juggle Parenthood with Academic Politics," *The Washington Post*, March 22, 2010
- Mason, Goulden and Frasch, "Why Graduate Students Reject the Fast Track," AAUP.org, Jan-Feb 2009.
- Mason, Mary Ann. "Why so Few Doctoral Student Parents?" *Chronicle of Higher Education*, October 26, 2009.
- Parker-Pope, Tara. "Now, Dad Feels as Stressed as Mom," *The New York Times*, June 18, 2010.
- Pieronek, Cathy. "Title IX and Gender Equity in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics Education: No Longer an Overlooked Application of the Law." *Journal of College & University Law*, volume 31, Number 2, pp. 291-350.
- "Title IX & STEM: Promising Practices for Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics." Available at http://odeo.hq.nasa.gov/documents/71900_HI-RES.8-4-09.pdf.
- "Women's Participation in the Sciences Has Increased, but Agencies Need to Do More to Ensure Compliance with Title IX." GAO Report to Congressional Requesters, July 2004. Available at <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d04639.pdf>