



MICHELLE R. CLAYMAN INSTITUTE  
*for* GENDER RESEARCH  
STANFORD UNIVERSITY

## News Release

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### **Stanford conference to spotlight the needs and challenges of dual-career academic couples**

**Stanford, CA.** – R. Richard Banks, Jackson Eli Reynolds Professor of Law, and Jennifer Eberhardt, Associate Professor of Psychology, live a dual-career life at Stanford. “Working at the same institution is critical,” says Banks, “or more precisely, being able to live in the same place is critical.” But achieving this wasn’t easy.

Like many academics, Banks and Eberhardt met at graduate school. Their commitment to supporting both careers – while maintaining a single household – was tested as job opportunities brought cross-country moves. At one point Eberhardt held a faculty position at Yale University while Banks “made a habit of commuting to other states” with a fellowship at Harvard and a federal clerkship in New York. Banks entered the faculty job market and received several offers. When Stanford offered his partner a faculty position as well, they decided to head west.

Meeting the requirements and expectations of dual-career academic couples – while ensuring the high quality of university faculty – is one of the great challenges facing universities today. On June 16 this challenge will be addressed as representatives of both sides of the negotiating table come together at a conference at Stanford University.

The conference, hosted by Stanford University’s Clayman Institute for Gender Research, will tackle challenges like the ones presented in Banks’ and Eberhardt’s story. The conference, titled

“Dual-Career Academic Couples: Strategies and Opportunities”, will bring together administrators, faculty, and graduate students to consider questions like:

- How can universities attract and retain the best talent?
- Does couple hiring help build a more diverse, equitable, and competitive workforce?
- How can couples best negotiate a dual-career path?
- What policies or practices have universities put in place surrounding this issue?
- What role can the Higher Education Recruitment Consortium play?

In August 2008, the Clayman Institute for Gender Research published a national study, [Dual-Career Academic Couples: What Universities Need to Know](#) (PDF). The study surveyed 30,000 faculty at 13 of the nation’s leading public and private research universities. Academic couples (couples in which both partners define themselves as academics) comprise 36 percent of the American professoriate – representing a deep talent pool that universities cannot afford to overlook. These couples face a number of challenges including negotiating their positions and living dual-career lives on campus.

The difficulties of managing dual careers impact everyone, but they often hit women harder than men. According to the Clayman Institute’s Director, Professor Londa Schiebinger, “Women more often than men actively refuse job offers if their partner cannot find a satisfactory position. In order to recruit top women—especially in science and medicine (where they partner at a very high rate with other scientists and medical professionals), institutions need to have a clear process in place to vet partners for hire.” Other key findings from the study:

- Women academics are more likely than men to have an academic partner - 40% vs. 35%, respectively
- Men academics are more likely to have a stay-at-home partner – 20% vs. 5% of women
- 10% of faculty enter the academy as a couple; of which 80% are hired sequentially (one partner or “first hire” negotiates for the “second hire”)
- 40% of women academics will not accept an offer if their partner is not offered a suitable position

The conference will feature a panel of academic couples at Stanford. View an interview with Stanford Professors of Education Christine Min Wotipka and Anthony Lising Antonio on [YouTube](#).

The conference will also highlight university administrators in a panel discussion titled, “Navigating Practices, Policies and Programs”. Speaking on this panel are Joan Girgus, Professor and Special Assistant to the Dean of the Faculty at Princeton University; Robert Weisberg, Special Assistant to the Provost for Faculty Recruitment and Retention at Stanford University and Abigail Stewart, Director of the ADVANCE Program at the Institute for Research on Women and Gender at the University of Michigan.

The conference will take place on June 16, 2009 at 1:00 pm at Wallenberg Hall, Stanford University. For the full program and free registration, please visit:  
<http://www.stanford.edu/group/gender/ResearchPrograms/DualCareer/Conference2009.html>.

Conference registration is free and open to all.

Note to Editor: Hi-Resolution photos of Professors Jennifer Eberhardt and R. Richard Banks are available upon request. Please contact Lori Mackenzie at [lorim@stanford.edu](mailto:lorim@stanford.edu) for files.

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Founded in 1974, the Clayman Institute for Gender Research at Stanford University is one of the nation's most distinguished research organizations devoted to the study of gender. The Clayman Institute creates knowledge and seeks to implement change that promotes gender equality at Stanford, nationally, and internationally. Our current focus is on gendered innovations in science, medicine, and technology. For more information, please visit:  
<https://gender.stanford.edu>