



## **Dual-Career Academic Couples: What Universities Need to Know** **Frequently Asked Questions**

### ***1. Where does the data come from in the Dual-Career Academic Couples report?***

In 2006, the Clayman Institute for Gender Research distributed a detailed online survey, “Managing Academic Careers”, to 30,000 full-time tenured/tenure-track faculty at thirteen leading research universities in the US. The survey was completed by 9,043 faculty (30.4%), and 1,027 people provided detailed comments in addition to their survey responses. We also interviewed administrators and faculty at 18 universities (the 13 participant universities plus five more) in order to collect information about dual-hiring practices. For a more detailed description of the survey methodology, see Appendix A of the report.

### ***2. Which universities participated in the “Managing Academic Careers” survey?***

Five private institutions and eight public institutions participated in the study, selected to represent major geographic regions across the United States as well as metropolitan areas and college towns. Their names are confidential. Mention of a university in the report does not imply that it was involved in the survey.

### ***3. What are the report’s key findings?***

Our findings include:

- over a third of faculty in the institutions we surveyed are partnered with another academic;
- ten percent had been recruited as part of a dual hire;
- 93% of dual hires work at the same institution;
- women are more likely than men to have academic partners;
- 83% of women scientists in academic couples are partnered with another scientist, compared to 54% of men;
- 88% of faculty who had successfully negotiated a dual hire at their current institution indicated that the first hire would have turned down their job offer had his or her partner not also found appropriate employment.

For a full list and explanation of the report’s key findings, with policy recommendations, see the Executive Summary.

#### **4. *What's new about the data in Dual-Career Academic Couples?***

This report provides a unique snapshot of the academic workforce at the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, providing detailed information on partnering patterns, workplace culture, and employee attitudes. The data spotlights trends and makes recommendations that will particularly interest universities seeking to recruit and retain talented women and members of underrepresented minorities.

#### **5. *What is a “dual-career couple”?***

In a “dual-career couple”, each partner is actively engaged in developing and maintaining their professional career (i.e. the career requires a high level of commitment above and beyond everyday employment). A “dual-career academic couple” is one in which both partners are employed in academia, typically as professors. There are, of course, dual-career couples wholly outside academia, and also many who straddle the boundaries of academia and other professions, such as law and medicine.

“Dual-career” is not used to describe the situation of a person pursuing multiple careers simultaneously (e.g. professor and choreographer), which is sometimes also referred to as a “slash career”.

#### **6. *What's special about academic dual-career couples?***

As the *Dual-Career Academic Couples* report shows, over a third of full-time faculty are partnered with another academic, very often in the same field. It may be challenging for two software engineers or physicians to find appropriate employment in the same location, but it is much more so for two astrophysicists or two linguists who have highly specialized skills and interests. Finding two suitable employment opportunities in the same place can be so difficult that many academics spend a portion of their careers either commuting long distances or living apart from their partners and families. The market for academic talent is national - even global - which has implications for the health of universities that cannot assist dual-career academic couples.

#### **7. *There are dual-career couples in many professions: What do they do?***

Employers of professionals in many areas are waking up to the need to offer assistance to partners who also have careers, especially in business areas which require mobility for success. The US military, for example, has the Married Army Couples Program which aims to provide married, regular army couples with assignments that allow them to establish a common household; and also maintains the online Military Spouse Career Center providing job postings and career advice. Some large companies provide in-house dual-career advisers or retain an external job-search agency. Other employers (e.g. The United Nations, Shell, Danone) use online job-finding resources to assist their dual-career couples, such as [www.partnerjob.com](http://www.partnerjob.com).

*Dual-Career Academic Couples* looks specifically at the dual-hiring process in the university sector, and does not consider – or comment on - dual-career issues in other professions.

#### **8. *Does this report recommend that universities should hire more dual-career couples?***

No. *Dual-Career Academic Couples* suggests that universities should be open-minded about dual-career hiring, as it is one way to attract top quality talent, especially among women and underrepresented minorities, but it does not suggest that dual-career hiring is always appropriate in all circumstances. The report recommends that universities create protocols and processes for dual-career hiring to increase consistency, transparency, and confidence for everyone affected.

**9. Does dual-career hiring compromise open competition for academic searches? Does it result in the hire of under-qualified spouses?**

The majority of respondents to our survey were open to the idea of dual-career hiring, many had experienced or witnessed it, and most thought that dual-career hiring generally resulted in qualified spouses being hired. Analysis of the publication output of “second hires” (i.e. the partner who was hired as a full-time faculty member as a consequence of the other partner’s hire) showed that they were just as productive academically as other faculty. *Dual-Career Academic Couples* recommends that all potential partner hires should be interviewed and their application files be reviewed in whatever is the usual way for an appointment in a particular university and department to ensure that they are properly qualified for appointment.

**10. How does Stanford University handle dual-career couples?**

Stanford University does not have a published protocol for dual-career hiring. Robert Weisberg, Professor of Law, is Special Assistant to the Provost for Faculty Recruitment and Retention, with responsibility for facilitating partner hires as appropriate within the university. See the *Stanford Report*, August 20, 2008, for further details.

**11. How should this report be cited?**

L. Schiebinger, A. Henderson, S. Gilmartin, *Dual-Career Academic Couples: What Universities Need to Know* (Stanford: Clayman Institute, 2008).

**12. What is the Clayman Institute for Gender Research?**

Founded at Stanford University in 1974, the mission of the Michelle R. Clayman Institute for Gender Research is to promote gender equality through innovative research and public education. It is one of the world’s oldest centers for research into women’s and gender issues. Professor Londa Schiebinger, lead author of *Dual-Career Academic Couples*, has been Director of the Clayman Institute since 2004. The Clayman Institute is named for Michelle R. Clayman (Stanford alumna, MBA ’79) who was the lead donor in our endowment campaign that was completed in 2006.

Find out more at the institute’s website, <http://gender.stanford.edu>

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