

Dual-Career Programs

For Non-Academic Partners

Non-Academic Partners: What is Available?

The Clayman Institute report focuses on dual-career academic couples and does not set out to investigate in depth the issue of relocation assistance for non-academic working partners. That is a large topic worthy of a dedicated study of its own. However, we received a number of comments pleading for universities to offer more employment assistance for partners working outside academia. One scientist noted that his wife, a software engineer, received no assistance finding employment within the university that hired him (where she now works). Finding her an appropriate position, he commented, “took considerable time and we lost considerable money” as a result. In light of the importance of this issue, we briefly discuss dual-career programs that assist faculty with academic and non-academic partners.

Support Staff for Quality-of-Life Issues

Most universities assist all faculty to a greater or lesser degree with quality-of-life issues, such as locating good-quality housing, daycare, elder care, and schools. These overarching faculty relocation and retention programs are typically housed in an Office of Vice Provost for Faculty Development, Human Resources, or the equivalent (either at the university level or, for large institutions, at the school/college level). The most developed offices have full-time or part-time staff, depending on the size of the university, dedicated to these issues.

Support for Non-Academic Partners

Dual-career programs form one part of these larger offices and specifically assist with partner relocation and job searches. A dual-career office may offer a variety of services ranging from referrals to staff positions within the university to information about the local job market, direct contact with local firms, career counseling, resume preparation, job search strategies, and the like. The most developed of these offices employ a dual-career specialist to work with



Non-Academic Partner Support



non-academic partners. Other universities, by contrast, contract an independent local career management company or employment agency that assists partners with their off-campus job search. Many universities find this latter option less costly than establishing comparable on-campus services. In the absence of such offices, partner advising may fall to department chairs who rarely have the time or resources to help in a systematic fashion.

It is important to note that dual-career programs clearly state that they do not guarantee job placement but seek to aid partners in their overall relocation. Assistance may be limited to partners of tenure and tenure-track faculty and is often available for a period of one to two years.

Programs for Non-Academic Employed Partners

Six of our 13 schools offer programs for non-academic employed partners. Program staff devoted to these issues tend to develop close working relationships with on- and off-campus employers over the course of the years. Both Cornell University and Pennsylvania State University have well-developed programs. This may not be surprising given that both schools are located in areas with few employment opportunities outside the university. In more recent years, however, schools in less isolated areas are following suit.

Harvard University and the University of California, Berkeley, among others, are currently establishing such programs. Programs like these may prove to be critically important to recruiting faculty with employed partners. Universities need to collect data and evaluate their programs to (1) assist universities in strategic planning and (2) ensure equitable treatment of all faculty partners—both academic and non-academic.

Overview of Partner Support

Dual-career programs tend at some point to bifurcate into staff assisting non-academic partners, and faculty or academic staff assisting academic partners (Figure 22). Although all dual-career couples require assistance when relocating for new jobs, in this report, we confine our analysis to the many complex issues surrounding academic partners.

FIGURE 22: DUAL-CAREER PROGRAMS ASSIST BOTH ACADEMIC AND NON-ACADEMIC PARTNERS

