



# **Women Mentoring : Hot Issues**

---

**Ruth Litovsky**  
**Univ. of Wisconsin, Madison USA**

**litovsky@waisman.wisc.edu**



# General issues most in need of focus

---

1. Work/life balance
2. Grants/funding
3. Early academic careers: post-docs, tenure-track and “soft money”
4. For people in clinical areas: Transitioning from clinic to research
5. Seeking mentoring
6. Negotiating terms of jobs in medicine and academia



# Women often:

---

- Are far less likely to negotiate
  - Ask less frequently and ask for less
- Are likely to view the world as more fixed
- Are more apt to worry more about the impact of their actions on relationships
- Are more collaborative and less likely to take credit for their accomplishments
- View the world as a meritocracy, expect fairness and feel they must “deserve” advancement
  - Don’t express interest in new opportunities, wait for an invitation



# Job seeking issues

---

- “Standing Out” = Positive & Negative
  - You want to be remembered...for the right reasons
  - Keeping an up-to-date CV
  - Proactive about investigating opportunities
  - Asking for what you need
  - Find out about women faculty at the institution and their job satisfaction
  - Pay equity



# It is not just about money

---

- Many employers respect candidates who ask to be paid what they are worth
- Women are less likely to ask for resources they need (e.g. research assistant)
- Idiosyncratic employment agreements (I-deals) permit different arrangements for same job are more common today



# DURING the Campus Visit...

## Words of Advice

---

- Presenting oneself as confident and competent is a *balancing act*
- “*Knowing your stuff*” is NOT the same as “*Knowing how to talk about the stuff you know...*”



# Tips for Women During Job Interview:

---

- ❑ Don't discuss gender issues
- ❑ Develop and practice justifiably proud statements of your accomplishments
- ❑ Be prepared to neutralize any worries about your marital or family status



# The Good News for DCCs

- You and your partner understand each other's challenges well
- You both are probably passionate about your work
- You have the ability to understand and help each other through the rough spots
- Flexibility and compromise can open up new pursuits and challenges





# The Two-Body Problem

---

- 80% of the workforce is comprised of “dual earner” couples
- Dual career couples (DCCs) have careers, not just jobs, so will likely have a two-body problem sometime
- This presents both unique opportunities and challenges to career, couples and families



# The Good News for DCCs

---

- You and your partner understand each other's challenges well
- You both are probably passionate about your work
- You have the ability to understand and help each other through the rough spots
- Flexibility and compromise can open up new pursuits and challenges



# The Bad News

---

- Disagreements can arise over:
  - When or if to have children
  - What part of the country to live in
  - How to balance work, family and play



# The “Trailing” Partner

---


- If one partner is clearly trailing, s/he may
  - Experience less professional success,
  - Become resentful, if that partner has made significant sacrifices for the sake of the other’s career



# Living Together vs. Living Apart

---


- Living apart provides better job options, but creates:
  - Financial stress: 2 rents/mortgages, travel, etc.
  - Emotional stress on the relationship/children
  
- If living apart is not an option, then one or both partners may have to take less than optimal positions
  
- In academia, shared positions may be possible
  - More flexibility, less stress and less effort of two jobs
  - Less income, meaning it may not be a viable option



## Solving the Problem will take Hard work, Patience and a Little luck

---


- Both partners need to be and stay competitive in the job market
- Location does matter – a large city or large university may provide more opportunities
- Staggering careers may help - internships or postdocs can be easier to find than a more senior position



## Solving the Problem will take Hard work, Patience and a Little luck

---

- Flexibility is important – the more restrictions put on professional opportunities, the harder it will be
- Different skill sets and diversity of interests helps, i.e., don't compete with each other
- Don't wait to tell the search committee about your partner's need for employment



## Specific questions for you & your partner

---

- ❑ Whose career takes priority in what circumstances and time frames?
- ❑ How will family responsibilities be balanced with your career(s)?
- ❑ Do you agree about the area of the country, size of city/town and type of community you are comfortable living in?
- ❑ How will you negotiate job offers (with each other)?





## Specific questions for you & your potential chair

---

- Is there job placement assistance for your spouse/partner?
- Is there a precedence for dual career couple hires?
- What are the policies on maternity and paternity leave?
- What are the policies on stopping the tenure clock?
- Is there a precedence for job sharing?



## Advice from those who have been there, done that...

---

- Communicate with each other well ahead of time and during the job hunt process
- Talk about what would be ideal and what you could live with
- Negotiate as much as possible for your partner even if there is no immediate fit
- Be flexible and open to possibilities that arise
- Think long term – commuting might seem fine at first but it will get old fast and will get difficult if you have children

