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In recent years, dual-career couples have emerged as “the next great challenge” in academia, according to an influential report published by Stanford University.[[1]](#footnote-1) Since the mid-twentieth century, when it became relatively common for women to enter the workforce and enroll in doctoral programs, the number of partnerships in which both partners work, and at least one is in academia, has increased sharply. Today, about 72 percent of academics have partners who are employed, and 36 percent are romantically committed to another academic.[[2]](#footnote-2) Given this marital shift in the American professorate, institutions have increasingly found that, in order to recruit and retain academics, it is critical to address the employment needs of their partners. Indeed, the Stanford report found that 88 percent of faculty recruits who negotiated a position for their partner would have rejected the offer had their partner not found appropriate employment.[[3]](#footnote-3) As noted by both the Stanford report and the American Association of University Professors, accommodations for dual-career couples have also become an important strategy to recruit and retain female faculty members. Women in academia are more likely than their male counterparts to be married to an academic, and the primary reason that they decline an offer is because their partner has not secured satisfactory employment either at the institution or nearby.[[4]](#footnote-4)[[5]](#footnote-5)

This report examines how 15 of the top research universities in the United States have addressed dual-career couples in recent years. All prestigious, these institutions compete for faculty. However, they represent a wide range of endowments, number of faculty members, department sizes, and geographic locations. These factors, along with institutional values, influence how a university approaches dual-career couples. The 15 institutions include Brown University, University of California at Berkeley, University of Chicago, Columbia University, Cornell University, Dartmouth College, Duke University, Harvard University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, University of Michigan, Northwestern University, University of Pennsylvania, Princeton University, Stanford University, and Yale University.

A summary of the dual-career process at Johns Hopkins University is first provided, followed by an overview of findings at the fifteen universities and a summary of how each institution has accommodated dual-career couples. A conclusion will briefly examine dual-career efforts at Johns Hopkins relative to its peer institutions. Finally, a summary of policy recommendations from the Stanford report is provided.

Dual-Career Process at Johns Hopkins

Johns Hopkins addresses dual-career couples on an *ad hoc* basis. When potential recruits seek employment for their partners, recruits are put in contact with their divisions’ dean or director, whose office then identifies appropriate contacts, either from within the University or in the Baltimore area, and attempts to facilitate a hire.[[6]](#footnote-6) Because these accommodations are made on a case-by-case basis, the University tends to assist the partners of ladder-ranked, “superstar” faculty members more often than it does junior faculty, as observed by former Dean of Faculty David Bell.[[7]](#footnote-7) Currently, the only official service that Johns Hopkins offers in the way of partner employment assistance is its membership in HERC (explained below), which it joined in 2009.

Overview of Findings

While dual-career couples are a relatively recent phenomenon in academia, each of the 15 institutions examined in this report has begun to address partner hires in at least one respect. Along with 600 institutions across the United States, all but two of the 15 universities are members of HERC, an online search engine that lists open positions at its member institutions. HERC helps to facilitate dual hires between these institutions, enabling partners to find work in the same geographic area. Northwestern and MIT are the only institutions examined in this report whose sole resource for dual-career couples is HERC, as is the case with Johns Hopkins.

Five of the institutions have established some sort of centralized administrative fund to support partner hires, which allows a university “the agility to move quickly to make deals” and thus to secure faculty recruits.[[8]](#footnote-8) Others, however, have made a conscious effort not to appropriate such funds. Elizabeth Ancarana, a senior administrator at Harvard who is involved with dual-career issues on both a national and institutional level, noted that partners of faculty members who obtain a faculty position as a second hire are often placed in stigmatized positions, and that a department will be able to secure resources of its own if the partner is an appropriate fit. The administration, she believes, should not meddle in departmental decisions.[[9]](#footnote-9)

Six of the institutions have formal dual-career programs, which provide career assistance to the faculty partner. At some institutions, dual-career programs are limited to ladder-ranked faculty and senior administrators, and at others they are open to faculty and administrators of all ranks. While Cornell and Dartmouth, both located in rather remote areas where employment is otherwise scarce, have long had such programs, institutions such as Columbia and U. Chicago, both situated in major cities, have recently established programs of their own. Only one of the institutions features both a dual-career program and a budget for partner hires, while the others have one or the other. A few institutions that do not have dual-career programs employ at least one administrator whose role is to assist faculty partners with employment. These dual-career coordinators tend to be involved in all facets of partners’ job searches, engaging in and helping to negotiate searches as well as hires.

At nearly all of these institutions, partner hires are negotiated through senior administrators, deans, and department chairs. However, both Princeton and Stanford have appointed a distinguished faculty member to broker partner hires, which may help to mitigate any sense of administrative overstep among faculty.

Regardless of their policies or available resources, nine of the institutions express their commitment to dual-career couples on the Internet. Typically, these webpages summarize any policies or protocols for partner hires and list any relevant resources. While they are not necessarily detailed, these webpages help to demystify how the institutions approach what is widely considered the “two-body problem.” They may be intended to assure potential candidates that the employment needs of their partner will not interfere with their candidacy, and that the institution is committed to their professional and personal life.

Brown University

At Brown, dual-career hires occur on an *ad hoc* basis. When a recruit has a partner who is also an academic and seeks employment at the University, the Office of the Dean of Faculty assists a couple to find vacancies.[[10]](#footnote-10) If no appropriate positions are available, the Dean will attempt to negotiate with departments to secure what is typically a three- to five-year teaching contract. Brown makes “every effort to accommodate dual-career couples,” often through facilitating visiting positions and other short-term arrangements, networking partners to the faculty of other nearby institutions, and negotiating with departments.[[11]](#footnote-11)

University of California, Berkeley

At Berkeley, unlike most other institutions, dual-career accommodations exist only for ladder-ranked faculty. A partner who is hired without an open search must qualify for a waiver, and all hires are contingent upon available funding. While the University does not designate specific funds to support partner hires, the administration often contributes resources. The primary and secondary departments typically support the hire financially as well. The terms of the appointment vary depending on the duration of this support, renewal criteria, and “other factors that concern the relationship” between the two departments. Faculty partners can also find career support through the “CALcierge” Program Manager, a service dedicated exclusively to relocation and dual-career couples. Berkley is also a member of its regional HERC.[[12]](#footnote-12) It is important to note that all of this information is readily accessible on the Internet.

University of Chicago

At U. Chicago, Dual Career Services provides career assistance to the partners of faculty and faculty recruits to help them secure nearby employment. Additionally, the University allocates “significant resources” through the Office of the Provost, in order to help partners secure positions within the institution. Decisions as to how these resources are distributed are made between the deans and chairs of the schools and departments in question, and “in accord with appropriate search processes.” U. Chicago is also a member of its regional HERC.[[13]](#footnote-13) This information is readily accessible on the Internet.

Columbia University

At Columbia, situated in an area where employment opportunities abound, Dual Career Services provide career assistance, both academic and otherwise, to faculty partners. Faculty partners can access services for only up to a year after the initial faculty hire.[[14]](#footnote-14)

Cornell University

At Cornell, located in a remote area of upstate New York, the Dual Career Program provides career assistance to partners of some University employees. Resources are restricted to the partners of senior administrators and ladder-ranked faculty.[[15]](#footnote-15) Cornell is also a member of its regional HERC. A largely decentralized institution, Cornell does distribute some financial resources to secure positions for partner hires through the Office of the Provost. Otherwise, decisions regarding partner hires are made within each of the individual schools, some of which allocate funds of their own for partner hires. The Dual Career Program also helps to facilitate these hires, in collaboration with the appropriate deans and departments. [[16]](#footnote-16)

Dartmouth College

At Dartmouth, the Dual Career Network provides faculty partners with career assistance. Located in rural New Hampshire, Dartmouth has a well-established Dual Career Network, which networks with employers in Hanover and elsewhere.[[17]](#footnote-17) The College is no longer a member of its regional HERC, as there were no other members within close proximity. Hires within the College are brokered between the appropriate deans, department chairs, and other members of the search process.[[18]](#footnote-18)

Duke University

At Duke, negotiations for partner hires occur between department chairs, senior administrators, and others typically involved in search the process. Human Resources personnel also provide assistance, although there is no office whose specific purpose is to serve dual-career partners.[[19]](#footnote-19) While the University is no longer a member of its regional HERC due to the lack of other member institutions, it used to maintain a partnership with two nearby institutions whereby, if one of those institutions hired a faculty partner, Duke would pay a significant portion of their salary for up to three years.[[20]](#footnote-20)

Harvard University

At Harvard, the Office of Faculty Development and Diversity works with the partners of ladder-ranked faculty to provide career assistance and to identify employment opportunities, whether at the University or in the greater Boston area.[[21]](#footnote-21) The Office of Faculty Development and Diversity also provides online resources and tutorials to assist dual-career couples with job searches. A decentralized institution, Harvard does not provide any central fund to secure partner hires within the University. Each of the ten schools must come up with those resources on its own in order to ensure that the faculty partner is indeed a fit within the department. These positions are brokered between deans, department chairs, and others involved in the search process.[[22]](#footnote-22) HERC serves as an additional resource for regional employment opportunities.[[23]](#footnote-23)

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

At MIT, there are no formal protocols or resources for dual-career couples, other than its regional HERC membership. However, in late January, University officials announced internally their intention to pilot a program, but have not yet publically provided any details.[[24]](#footnote-24)

University of Michigan

At Michigan, there are three full-time Dual Career Coordinators who provide job search assistance to the partners of ladder-ranked faculty, except in certain cases, as identified by a dean or the Provost. In the School of Medicine, services are offered to clinical-track faculty while limited services are provided to research-track faculty. The Dual Career Coordinators help faculty partners to identify opportunities both on the Ann Arbor campus and beyond. There is no time limit on when these services can be utilized.[[25]](#footnote-25) For faculty partners who do not qualify for this assistance, the University provides career assistance resources on the Internet through the Dual Career Website. Positions offered within the University are negotiated between search committee chairs, deans, and department chairs, with assistance from the Dual Career Coordinators. Michigan is also a member of its regional HERC. [[26]](#footnote-26) All of this information is easily accessible on the Internet. Additionally, the University supplies job candidates with a printed brochure on dual-career couples.

Northwestern University

At Northwestern, HERC serves as the primary resource for dual-career couples. Relocation services are also offered through the University. While these services focus primarily on identifying realtors, schools, healthcare, etc., relocation personnel link faculty recruits and their partners to internal recruiters or the temporary employment center should the question of partner employment arise.[[27]](#footnote-27) Positions for partner hires are negotiated internally within each of the schools.

University of Pennsylvania

At Penn, the Office of the Provost helps faculty partners to identify employment opportunities both within the University and in the greater Philadelphia area, and to secure funds to support a faculty partner position at Penn. The Provost offers a limited funding option for these hires, and is careful not to financially support a position if it is in the same school as that of the primary hire. The University is also a member of its regional HERC.[[28]](#footnote-28)

Princeton University

At Princeton, a distinguished member of the faculty serves as the broker for faculty partner hires. This faculty member negotiates with the administration and appropriate departments to secure a position for the partner within the University. Funds to support this position are available on a case-by-case basis, and are only used when a department does not have adequate resources of its own.[[29]](#footnote-29) Princeton is also a member of its regional HERC.

Stanford University

At Stanford, a distinguished member of the faculty acts as the broker for faculty partner hires. This faculty member negotiates with the administration and appropriate departments to secure a position for the partner within the University. A diversity fund supports partner hires when the primary hire is either female or an ethnic or racial minority.[[30]](#footnote-30) Stanford is also a member of its regional HERC.

Yale University

At Yale, there are no formal procedures for dual-career hires.[[31]](#footnote-31) However, the Office of Human Resources offers a Dual Career Coordinator. Yale is also a member of its regional HERC.[[32]](#footnote-32)

Conclusion

Johns Hopkins is decidedly behind its peer institutions with respect to dual-career issues, with HERC as its only resource for faculty partners. Of the 15 schools examined, Northwestern and MIT are the only others to offer HERC as its only official resource, and the former has recently announced that it will pilot a program to formaly address dual-career couples. At all of the institutions, partner hires occur on an individual basis, and employment is never a guarantee. However, most of them have developed protocols and appointed administrators or faculty members to negotiate hires. Moreover, information about these procedures and other resources are easily accessible online, while at Johns Hopkins, this information is difficult to come by. Even a Google search of the words “Dual-Career Couples Johns Hopkins” generates no meaningful results.

Policy Recommendations from *Dual Career Couples: What Universities Need to Know*

Below is a summary of the policy recommendations endorsed by the 2008 Stanford report (pages 6-8):

*Develop a procedure for hiring dual-career couples*. A known and agreed-upon protocol can help to enhance accountability and fairness within the university, and also may allow an institution to move quickly on partner hires. In addition, official policies can help to increase departmental reciprocity—that is, a department may be more willing to take on a second hire with knowledge that, in the future, their department will be owed a favor.

*Think of the university not as disjointed but as a single unit*. Given the interdepartmental collaboration necessary to facilitate partner hires, it may be wise for faculty to think of the institution not as discrete parts, but as an “intellectual and corporate whole.”

*Use partner hires as a means to increase gender equality*. Women disproportionately comprise second hires, and are often placed into stigmatized positions within the university. This can exacerbate existing gender biases. Thus, the Stanford report recommends that institutions recruit women not as second hires but as the primary candidates.

*Appropriate funds for partner hires*. Allocating funds for the specific purpose of hiring a partner allows institutions to move quickly on hires and places less pressure on departments to secure the money necessary to finance an additional salary.

*Communicate with faculty about dual-career couple policies*. Communication will increase both cooperation and transparency, and may help to mitigate the stigmatization of second hires.

*Make it easier for candidates to broach the topic of partner hires*. Candidates worry that discussing their partners’ employment needs will jeopardize their chances. At the same time, institutions are able to act quickly on second hires when candidates have this conversation early on in their recruitment process. Both parties will benefit from a system that allows candidates to discuss partner accommodations.

*Interview possible partner hires*. Partners should undergo the full review process in order to ensure that they are suitable fits.

*Negotiate partner positions in advance*. This leads to increased satisfaction, both in regard to the hiring process itself and the general experience at the institution. Promises and conditions should be put in writing before either party signs the contract.

*Collaborate with nearby institutions*. HERC is an important tool and should be advertised as a key resource.

*Create dual-career programs*. Institutions should hire staff members who can assist with all matters regarding relocation. A senior faculty member should work with partners seeking a faculty position of their own, while program staff should assist with partners looking for non-academic work, either on or off campus.

*Evaluate dual-career programs, and adjust accordingly*. Collecting and evaluating data will help ensure equitable treatment of all employees and assist with strategic planning.

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2. Ibid, 15. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Ibid, 40. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Ibid, 35. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. “Recommendations on Partner Accommodation and Dual-Career Appointments,” American Association of University Professors. Accessed February 6, 2015, http://www.aaup.org/report/recommendations-partner-accommodation-and-dual-career-appointments. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Beverly Wendland, Dean of the Krieger School of Arts and Sciences, Johns Hopkins University. Email message to author, February 9, 2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. David A. Bell, “The Intricacies of Spousal Hiring,” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, May 13, 2010. Accessed February 12, 2015. http://chronicle.com/article/The-Intricacies-of-Spousal/65456/ [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Schiebinger, Henderson and Gilmartin, *Dual-Career Academic Couples*, 46. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Elizabeth Ancarana, Assistant Provost for Faculty Development and Diversity, Harvard University. Phone call to author, February 3, 2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
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14. “Faculty Recruitment and Relocation Service,” accessed February 6, 2015, http://worklife.columbia.edu/faculty-recruitment-relocation. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. “Dual Career Program,” accessed February 6, 2015, https://www.hr.cornell.edu/jobs/dual\_career.html. [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Kelly Wagstaff, Dual Career Program Manager, Cornell University. Phone call to author, February 2, 2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. “Dual Career Network,” accessed February 6, 2015, http://jobs.dartmouth.edu/families/dcn/. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Miriam B. Benson, Senior Recruiting Consultant, Dartmouth College. E-mail message to author, February 2, 2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. “Dual/Partner Careers,” accessed February 6, 2015, http://provost.duke.edu/faculty-resources/advantages/dualpartner-careers/. [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Nancy Allen, Vice Provost for Faculty Diversity and Faculty Development, Duke University. E-mail message to author, February 2, 2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. “Dual-Career Assistance,” accessed February 6, 2015, http://www.faculty.harvard.edu/work-life-benefits-and-perks/dual-career-assistance. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
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23. “Dual-Career Assistance,” accessed February 6, 2015, http://www.faculty.harvard.edu/work-life-benefits-and-perks/dual-career-assistance. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
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30. Ibid, 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)
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32. Human Resources Staff Directory, accessed February 6, 2015, http://www.yale.edu/hronline/directory/. [↑](#footnote-ref-32)