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Role of Institutional Climate on Underrepresented Faculty Perceptions and Decision Making in Use of Work–Family Policies

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The authors examined the institutional challenges that underrepresented minority (URM) faculty perceive in higher education with use of family support workplace policies. Evidence reveals that faculty encounter differences in access to information and explanations of how to use workplace–family statutes. A qualitative study of 58 URM faculty members highlighted five particularly notable themes: (a) faculty perceptions of how the institution views their family caregiving responsibilities, (b) inadequate compensation matters in the utilization of formal policies, (c) informal policies are often inaccessible and invisible, (d) social networks affect the inclusiveness of work–family institutional practices, and (e) fear of being regarded as a "red flag" constrains decisions regarding the use of policies. Given the push in higher education to diversify its faculty ranks, if administrators are to successfully implement diversity, equity, and inclusion and retain URM faculty, institutions need to pay particular attention to how URM faculty experience the academic climate regarding work–family balance.

As academic institutions continue to grapple with the challenge of becoming more diverse and inclusive, it is increasingly important to consider the conditions that affect the recruitment,

retention, and success of historically under-represented minority (URM) faculty. URM professionals represent a segment of the domestic talent pool and are defined as individuals of African American, Mexican American, Puerto Rican, and Native American/American Indian ancestry with an intergenerational family history in the United States. Although these groups represent close to one third of the U.S. population, they constitute about 10% of all faculty in U.S. colleges and universities (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2014).

The extant research has examined the unique experiences of URM faculty in higher education in the areas of teaching and student mentoring (Umbach, 2006), tenure and promotion processes (Allen, Epps, Guillory, Suh, & Bonous-Hammarth, 2000; Cooper & Stevens, 2002), and first-generation class identity formation (Turner, González, & Wood, 2008). Furthermore, a significant body of scholarship demonstrates that URM faculty experience racial discrimination, racial microaggressions, stereotype threat, implicit bias, and powerful messages of not belonging in the academy (Antonio, 2002; Delgado Bernal, Burciaga, & Flores Carmona, 2012; Gutiérrez y Muhs, Niemann, González, & Harris, 2012; Turner, 2002). These experiences promote more hypervigilance and a greater sense of vulnerability among URM faculty, thereby affecting how they navigate their roles and institutional benefits. Yet how and when this group utilizes workplace–family supportive policies is an understudied area. Accordingly, in this study we examined the institutional challenges that URM faculty perceive in higher education with regard to the use of family-supportive workplace policies.

An extensively cited study published more than 30 years ago (Menges & Exum, 1983) demonstrates the need for more intersectional research that addresses co-constituted identities of race and ethnicity, class, and gender, as well as history and economic opportunity (Collins, 2000). We can deduct from Menges and Exum's findings that the economic conditions of URM academics will affect their work–family balance. As these researchers noted decades ago,

Financial circumstances are particularly hard on Blacks. Of doctoral recipients in 1978, most Blacks were dependent on their own earnings—59 percent of Blacks compared with 34 percent of Whites—or loans—13 percent of Blacks compared with 4 to 7 percent of Whites, depending on the type of loan. Financial awards to Blacks "are so low that comparative percentages would be deceptive." (p. 128)

Yet it is difficult to identify studies that have examined the intersections of race/ethnicity, economic assets, and microaggressions and the ways in which these factors affect perceptions of institutional climate and the use of work–family policies. Instead, the majority of scholarship focusing on work–family policies in academia has largely described the experiences of non-Hispanic White faculty members, especially White women (for a review, see Armenti, 2004, and Terosky, O'Meara, & Campbell, 2014). This is surprising given the multiyear efforts by many academic institutions to diversify their faculty ranks, some of which began their intentional efforts in the 1980s.

Despite these initiatives, many URM faculty report a fear of negative consequences for tenure and career progression when using work–family policies in instances of child care, the birth of a child, or a family emergency (Reybold, 2014). These fears are associated with high visibility within research-extensive universities, perceptions of being "affirmative action" hires, and oftentimes less availability of economic assets such as family assistance or savings to supplement their salary to enhance family quality of life (Castañeda & Isgro, 2013; Sotello-Turner & Myers, 2000). We argue that by having official policies in place and applied without bias, URM faculty can maximize the benefits associated with work–family policies, make decisions that are in their best interest, vocalize their requests, and meet the rising expectations of faculty productivity without becoming a "red flag."

This study contributes to the emerging national conversation about the experiences of URM faculty, the use of work–family policies, and the impact that such (formal and informal) policies may have on their lives. Work–family policies clearly are not the only issues that affect the success of URM faculty, but as the implementation of family-supportive policies gain more ground in the broader social context, academic institutions are faced with the reality that faculty from all ranks and social statuses are increasingly taking notice of such policies and their implementation (Rosser, 2004). For URM faculty, family-supportive workplace

policies are increasingly becoming key factors in a university's ability to recruit and retain them successfully. This study fills a critical gap in family science studies by offering an examination of work–family support concerns among URM professionals. It seeks to inform interdisciplinary scholarship and higher education institutional practices while speaking to family science scholars and practitioners, such as marriage and family therapists, who directly interact with families.

Background: Significance and Literature Overview

Contextualizing our study in relevant family science studies research was a challenging task. Very little has been directly published on this topic; although some work–family-relevant articles have focused on race and work–family for nonprofessionals (Bass, Butler, Grzywacz, & Linney, 2009), none have explored work–family concerns and how policies may have an impact on URM faculty. For example, Rudd, Morrison, Sadrozinski, Nerad, and Cerny (2008) discussed the male advantage over women in art history careers and how marriage is the salient factor driving this advantage, yet they did not include race in this discussion. When race/ethnicity is implied, it is usually in relation to diversity programs and people of color. Koblinsky, Kuvalanka, and McClintock-Comeaux (2006) described a graduate education and professional development program that broadly seeks to prepare these students for academic careers in more diverse higher education institutions, yet specific mention of URMs, race/ethnicity, or class of the student or faculty body was not included. In an assessment of the literature on work–family policies, we have found that a majority of the studies primarily (a) neglect to examine race and/or ethnicity, (b) fail to include economic assets and resources, and (c) do not explore prestigious occupations such as the professoriate. For these reasons, we draw on a body of knowledge from sociology, policy, and higher education journals to describe prior work so as to inform family science scholarship with a deeper understanding of how work–family policies can enhance family well-being for URM professionals.

The role of socioeconomic status and wealth assets among high-prestige occupations is important in family well-being. For URM professionals, historical modes of incorporation and discrimination have been heavily associated with a significant and well-established racial/ethnic wealth gap (Lacy, 2012; Oliver & Shapiro, 1995). Moreover, discrepancies in compensation for URM faculty reflect underlying constraints that Baker and Merinda Simmons (2015) referred to as "the intensely complicated system of economic access" (p. 15) that defies simplistic notions of personal agency and meritocracy. In addition, a cycle of unstable intergenerational mobility often prevents URMs from taking advantage of the education attained by previous generations, and thus contributing to the stubborn wealth gap (Shapiro, 2004; Telles & Ortiz, 2008).

To apply an interpretive lens to our findings, we draw from the work of Bogenschneider and colleagues (2012), who used a family science perspective to investigate how policy and practice contributes to varied outcomes on diverse families. Although their study did not directly address higher education, these scholars recognized that implementation of policies and practices can produce different outcomes across varying types of family structure. Going one step further, the Policy Institute for Family Impact Seminars (n.d.) developed a checklist for conducting family impact analysis. Their definition of *family diversity* is more exhaustive and includes cultural, racial, or ethnic background; economic situation; family structure; geographic locale; presence of special needs; religious affiliation; and stage of life. We argue that the same premise may hold for URM professional families based on family structure, economic disadvantage and compensation, and effects of hypervigilance and implicit bias.

The development of institutional work–family policies as well as different forms of campus support have become important measures for alleviating some of the professional stress that all faculty experience. The effectiveness of these policies has revealed, however, that their existence is far from an established norm, and the use of these policies is severely limited by built-in restrictions and institutional cultural climate (Bristol, Abbuhl, Cappola, & Sonnad, 2008; Shollen, Bland, Finstad, & Taylor, 2009; Welch, Wiehe, Palmer-Smith, & Dankoski, 2011). To better understand the wider institutional workplace environment in

which URM faculty are experiencing differential impact of academic work–family policies in their lives, it is important to review three themes in the literature: (a) family leave in higher education, (b) tenure review extensions and other approaches, and (c) institutional cultural climate.

Family Leave in Higher Education

Since 1974, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) has advocated for the adoption of family-friendly policies by academic institutions. Noting the rising number of women as students, faculty, and staff, AAUP argued in particular for policies that would help recruit and retain White women and racial/ethnic minorities in the academic workforce (AAUP, 2001). The advocacy work of AAUP in the past four decades, along with that of other scholarly professional organizations, has created a context in higher education for the development and implementation of institutional family policies and benefits (e.g., American Psychological Association, 2004; American Sociological Association, 2004).

As a consequence, a growing body of knowledge on the application, use, and success of family-supportive policies at universities and colleges within and outside the United States has proliferated (Sagaria & International Association of Universities, 2007; Siemieńska & Zimmer, 2007; Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012). This issue gains more prominence as academic institutions grapple with increasing pressure by both female and male faculty to create more balanced work–family environments while also contending with the growing (state and trustee) demands to implement bottom-line corporate approaches to the management of universities. For instance, the American Council on Education's 2013 national campaign promoting work–life balance noted that "satisfied faculty perform at higher levels, which leads to increased grant revenues and improved quality of instruction" (American Council on Education, 2013, para. 2).

Currently, all U.S. academic institutions are required by federal law to abide by the Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978 and the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993. The AAUP Statement on Family Responsibilities and Academic Work (2001) noted that within this federal context academic institutional policies related to family benefits generally

fall into two categories: (1) general policies addressing family responsibilities, including family-care leaves and institutional support for child and elder care, and (2) more specific policies, such as stopping the tenure clock or granting a reduced teaching or service load, thus expanding the traditional parameters of leave policies. (p. 220)

Within these general policies, academic institutions have taken two approaches to the implementation of family leave. The first approach simply abides by the law and grants up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave as required by the Family and Medical Leave Act in workplaces with 50 or more employees. Although this leave can be supplemented by pro-rated sick, vacation, or disability leave and/or insurance, faculty carry the brunt of the financial burden because financial support at the institutional level is virtually nonexistent. In order to successfully create a family-friendly environment on college campuses, similar to the private sector, more needs to be done than the bare minimum that the legislation requires (Manuel & Zambrana, 2009). The second approach extends beyond federal and state law and provides faculty members with the opportunity for paid leave that is fully or partially financially supported by the institution.

In their study of paid family leave, Houser and Vartanian (2012) found that supplementing the income of female employees on leave strengthens their "workforce attachment and workforce stability [consequently benefiting] the woman, her family, and—by reducing turnover costs—her employer" (p. 7). Some private colleges and research universities, but not all, are adopting this approach toward parental leave and using this policy as a recruitment and retention tool, in particular for female and URM faculty (e.g., University of Massachusetts at Amherst, University of Denver, and University of South Florida). Yet, for the majority of colleges and universities, family leaves are unpaid or applied unevenly, and this places a heavier burden on faculty with limited financial resources (Euben & Thornton, 2002).

Tenure Review Extensions and Other Approaches

Another way that academic institutions are addressing the work–family environment for faculty is the development of low-cost institutional policies such as tenure-clock extensions,

modified service and/or teaching responsibilities, part-time faculty appointments, dual-career hiring, research assistance, and child care vouchers and/or on-campus day care centers. Within this broadened family-driven policy context, Ward and Wolf-Wendel (2004) found three types of environments for responding to faculty work–family matters: (a) campuses with no or limited (and useless) policies, (b) campuses with policies but minimal faculty usage due to fear, and (c) campuses with new policies but reaching a limited faculty pool.

In the first type of environment Ward and Wolf-Wendel (2004) described, universities with no or limited institutional policies were often those that failed to offer automatic tenure year extensions or family leaves with modified service or advising obligations. In the second environment, campuses offered the stoppage of the tenure clock, for instance, but faculty made little use of the policy because they feared being penalized, either through increased tenure expectations or dismissive treatment by colleagues. The last scenario relates to colleges with newly adopted policies that reached only a limited segment of the faculty because policy information was not widely publicized or administrators were uninformed about their application.

Quinn, Lange, and Olswang (2004) confirmed that inconsistent communication, implementation, and evaluation affect the success of institutional policies. On the one hand, work–family policies, including access to their procedures, are difficult to identify (Welch et al., 2011). On the other hand, formalized, well-explained policies that address barriers and have demonstrated effectiveness and acceptance by relevant institutional committees (e.g., tenure committees) are more effective (Sullivan, Hollenshead, & Smith, 2004).

Institutional Cultural Climate

One of the strongest barriers to successfully implementing work–family policies and practices is the institutional cultural climate. Failure to create a more positive cultural climate not only affects the retention and career progress of female faculty but also restricts the ability of male faculty members to participate in family caregiving responsibilities (Sullivan et al., 2004). These issues can be doubly intensified given that URM faculty often balance their racial/ethnic and gender status along with the demands of work and family (Rockquemore & Laszloffy, 2008). The extant research on URM faculty show that higher institutional demands for diversity service, stereotype threats, and less access to informal networks represent unique characteristics that oftentimes conjointly produce an unwelcoming climate for both men and women (Turner et al., 2008).

In a study of employee perceptions of work–family balance in corporate and university workplaces, Anderson, Morgan, and Wilson (2002) found that university environments were rated more negatively than corporate work environments, which "runs counter to the impression of the university as a positive place to work due to the supposed flexibility in work schedule and the public's perception of low workloads at universities" (p. 85). Furthermore, their data show that men are less supportive of family-friendly policies than women. This may help explain the slow adoption of broadened institutional policies in academic contexts because more men are hired and tenured than women, and men hold the majority of leadership roles on campuses (Castañeda & Isgro, 2013). This context frequently drives non-URM female faculty to devise informal, personal systems for addressing family issues, which is also done in response to the fear that faculty who make use of family leave and tenure year extensions will be perceived negatively or through a biased lens (Varner, 2000; Young & Wright, 2001). However, these informal network options are usually less likely to be available to URM faculty. Ultimately, what is needed is a critical analysis not only of how institutions develop, promote, and apply institutional policies but also of how intersecting identities are associated with bias and discrimination that are potentially interwoven in those same policies and practices, limiting the potential for creating a meaningful family-friendly environment.

In sum, the current body of knowledge sheds limited insight into the intersecting challenges of URM faculty, who may have limited economic assets (Kochhar, Fry, & Taylor, 2011), experience microaggressions on a regular basis (Pittman, 2012), and have more barriers to overcome in managing and achieving work–family balance. The study contributes to a larger corpus of family science studies on the work–family nexus that have neglected the inclusion of URM

professional workplace challenges in the use of work–family policies.

METHOD

In this study we drew on qualitative data obtained from focus groups ($n = 21$) and in-depth interviews ($n = 37$) combined with descriptive-linked survey data. Six focus groups were conducted by gender and race/ethnicity (e.g., one focus group would have five African American men); each group included on average five respondents. We drew on work–family narratives to describe potentially significant social, economic, and institutional factors associated with use of work–family university policies. Eligible respondents included U.S.-born/raised women and men of African American, Mexican American, and Puerto Rican descent who held a tenure-track assistant or associate professor faculty position at Carnegie-defined high and very high research-extensive, predominantly White institutions. We selected these groups because they share involuntary historical incorporation into the United States via slavery, colonization, or land takeover that have shaped avenues of economic and social opportunity. These modes of incorporation have created a legacy of exclusion, marginalization, and social interactions and experiences in higher education that are associated with marked stereotypic attributions.

Given that the focus of this study is on URM career paths and retention, we selected early career faculty (assistant and associate professors). Focusing on early career faculty is important in understanding potential reasons for severe underrepresentation in comparison to their percentage of the U.S. population and low retention in higher education institutions. Respondents were identified through network sampling techniques using existing academic listservs, personal contacts, and respondent referrals, among others, to ensure representation by racial, ethnic, and gender characteristics as well as rank and geography. Because of an insufficient sample size of respondents who self-identified as Native American/American Indian, members of that group were not included in this study. Adjuncts, lecturers, and full professors also were excluded. The research was reviewed and approved according to the institutional review board procedures at the University of Maryland for research involving human subjects. All respondents provided written consent and were compensated for their time via small gift incentives.

The respondents were 58 faculty recruited at 22 research-extensive institutions. The sample included 23 (39.7%) self-identified African Americans, 21 (36.2%) Mexican Americans, and 14 (24.1%) Puerto Ricans. There were more female (33, 56.9%) than male (25, 43.1%) respondents. The mean age of the total sample was 41.2 years. The majority of the respondents ($n = 39$, 67.2%) were assistant professors, with the remainder associate professors ($n = 19$, 32.5%). In terms of marriage and/or partnership, 24.1% of the sample had never been married, 67.2% were married or living with a partner, 8.6% were divorced, and 54.4% ($n = 31$) had children. In terms of parental education, 56.9% of the respondents were the first in their families to graduate from high school ($n = 13$) or college ($n = 20$). Disciplines were re-coded into broad areas to avoid any potential violation of confidentiality and anonymity (Espino, 2014; O'Meara & Campbell, 2011); they included arts and humanities (18.9%), social sciences (34.5%), STEM/health/medicine (29.3%), and education (8.6%).

The interview and focus group guide consisted of 20 open-ended questions. For the purposes of this study, we focused on four questions: (a) What types of supports and resources would you need to balance the demands of work–family life? (b) Can you tell me about a work–family experience in the last 5 years that was especially difficult? (c) How responsive has your academic home been to your need to deal with planned or unexpected family problems? (d) What types of policies do they have that support work–family balance?

In addition, a descriptive survey with a linked identification number was administered on completion of interviews or focus groups (100% response rate). Survey items included (a) demographic indicators (e.g., age, marital status), (b) employment and educational background, and (c) family size and number of children. Interviews and focus groups were conducted in private locations either on or off the informant's home campus. The second author conducted the majority of interviews and focus groups. A high level of rapport was established that could not have been accomplished with the use of graduate research assistants. As many respondents observed, they broke a "silence." Although a shared racial/ethnic identity can be an asset,

common experiences were not assumed, and the interviewers asked for full explanations of any experience. The racial/ethnic background of the interviewers (senior Puerto Rican and African American faculty at research-extensive universities) and the use of a scholarly network of mentors to identify respondents created a sense of trust that facilitated the interview process and allowed for more transparent discussion of the issues.

All data were collected during 2010–2012. Interviews and focus groups were recorded digitally and professionally transcribed. The interview time was, on average, 1 hour and 51 minutes, and focus groups lasted, on average, 2 hours and 42 minutes. All coding was completed in Atlas.ti 6.2—a qualitative analysis software program—to allow for more efficient coding, analysis, and interpretation of the interviews. There were four main coders, and they received 6 hours of training regarding the purposes of the study and interpretations of main codes in the codebook. The initial coding scheme, developed by the second author, was based on pilot interviews and a comprehensive literature review. Each transcribed interview and focus group was coded, line by line, by two trained qualitative coders independently, and then disagreements in coding were reconciled by a third independent coder. Descriptive survey data were analyzed using SPSS (Version 17.0) to describe the distribution of demographic, employment, and family characteristics. Verification techniques included triangulation, the use of multiple sources of data to establish reliability (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998), and peer review/debriefing (Cohen & Crabtree, 2008). (A fuller description of methods is reported elsewhere; see Zambrana et al., 2015.)

The study is limited by its cross-sectional design and the voluntary nature of the respondents' information. Respondents may have provided socially desirable responses due to fear of consequences of disclosure because the interviewers were senior faculty members. Data were not collected on spouse/partner factors, and thus we were unable to determine whether financial strain existed because of unemployment, underemployment, illness, or other economic factors relative to their spouse/partner. The use of nonrandom sampling procedures and the sample size do not permit causal inference and thus our results may not be representative of all URMs in higher education institutions, or even those in research-extensive universities.

Nonetheless, on the basis of prior evidence, the study captures the experiences of URM in geographically diverse academic institutions and their particular concerns regarding work–family balance.

Results

Five themes were notable with regard to work–family policies and practices in higher education: (a) faculty perceptions of how the institution views their family caregiving responsibilities, (b) inadequate compensation matters in the utilization of formal policies, (c) informal policies are often inaccessible as well as invisible, (d) social networks affect the inclusiveness of work–family institutional practices, and (e) the fear of being regarded as a "red flag" limits the use of policies. Institutional resources mentioned by respondents centered on family/parental leave, work accommodations, and child care.

Faculty Perceptions of How the Institution Views Their Family Caregiving Responsibilities

Respondents' perceptions of benefits of institutional policies showed barriers that are linked with the role of institutional climate and its support of family caregiving responsibilities, types of resources, and knowledge of and access to those resources. The use of family support resources was associated with respondents' perceptions of how institutional gatekeepers and colleagues communicated messages regarding caretaking roles and family concerns. Thus, the perceptions for fulfilling caregiving responsibilities and utilizing work–family resources revealed conditions that are neither consistently equitable across all faculty nor experienced equitably.

For instance, a respondent mentioned how his racial identity influenced how he was perceived as a parent, which also affected how he was treated as a colleague. Although the perception was not entirely negative, there was an undertone that was rooted in racialized notions of parenting and caregiving responsibilities, especially within academic contexts:

No one [else] has small children. So I thought it might be somewhat problematic because it's not really part of the [academic] culture but, you know, I guess maybe some people are shocked that a Black man is taking care of his kids, so let him

do that. At least, you know, his kids are living with him. (African American, male)

Department heads and chairs in particular wield significant power in promoting how inclusive institutional cultures are, especially regarding the integration of work–family responsibilities. One African American woman noted, "But bringing kids in, like I felt hesitant [… because] I was told that our chair did not like it." For URM faculty, the failure to adhere to the normative perceptions of institutional culture and caretaking roles can consequently further marginalize them and place them at risk, especially during faculty reviews and work performance evaluations. In addition, most study participants reported having knowledge about their university's resources concerning work–family life, but some mentioned difficulties with navigating and utilizing such resources, especially child care, because of concerns over how their racial/ethnic, class, and gender social status might be perceived in that context. Despite the best intentions by the institution to establish work–family benefits, the reactions of departmental colleagues and chairs played a key role in how URM faculty proceeded with caretaking decision making and its integration with their careers. Another respondent observed:

> I don't like to bring my son to campus … because you just never know what people's reactions are going to be. So if he does come to my office, it is after hours. I feel like a thief in the night. It is ridiculous. (African American, female)

Last, an African American female respondent described how a child care center on campus was not only expensive but also "among other problems [it was] not hospitable to diverse children at all. … If we had better child care, I think a lot of people's lives would be easier." These examples provide some insight into how the intersectional social status of URM faculty affects not only their perception of how the institution views their caretaking responsibilities but also their decision making regarding the use of institutional work–family resources and policies available on their campuses. Such factors have the potential to influence the quality of family life of URM faculty, produce alienation from valued colleagues, and ultimately contribute to a sense of heightened visibility that can negatively affect their academic careers.

Inadequate Compensation Matters in the Utilization of Formal Policies

Respondents mentioned how institutional policies may provide some time off for childbirth or sickness, but often they do not provide adequate paid leave. The issue of inadequate compensation is even more complicated for URM faculty with children, who may not have supplemental economic resources or partner support to fully take advantage of available family leave policies. For instance, one participant stated, "There's just not a good mechanism for really taking time off. And it's unpaid [so] if you don't teach … that's a bit of a problem if you're a single parent" (Mexican American, female).

Another participant highlighted the economic privilege that universities and colleges often assume about the faculty ranks and the salary differentials that exist. These salary inequities become intensified when the high costs associated with child care on campus are taken into account; as one African American female participant stated, "If I had more money, then I could afford to hire help that would help me take care of my son."

Another respondent discussed costs and importance of proximity to child care: "I pay an insane amount of money for that day care, despite that fact that I couldn't afford it, because I wanted to be able to walk down [to daycare] and breastfeed my child for two years" (Puerto Rican, female).

For these respondents, their compensation packages make a big difference as to whether they are able to utilize formal work–family policies or unpaid parental leaves and ultimately remain in the profession. A Puerto Rican female respondent noted, "I think one of the major challenges was that the university did not have an appropriate maternity leave policy, nor … appropriate compensation for a faculty that went on leave."

For many respondents, inadequate compensation affects who is—and is not—able to take advantage of a university's leave policies because going weeks without pay is not feasible for faculty with limited financial resources.

Informal Policies Are Often Inaccessible and Invisible

Our data suggest that few study participants were aware of how to access institutional support resources for work–family well-being. In

addition, positive experiences were few and far between, something that points to the reality of differential access to and implementation of institutional resources across the higher education landscape. This was especially evident in the ways in which both formal and informal policies were sometimes invisible and inaccessible:

> Our second son was born a week before I started [at the university]. And then [my other child] was born in my first spring. So I didn't realize that I could have taken time from [the] Family Medical Leave Act. I had just negotiated time off thankfully, but … I could have figured out some other stuff. I never knew. (African American, male)

Although this participant negotiated a leave, he was still not informed of other possible benefits he was entitled to access. Although some URM faculty may be aware that such policies are available, there is a serious lack of information about how work–family policies can be accessed.

Ultimately, this is a critical problem when only some segments of the faculty population are clearly informed about their rights to family benefits. The following quote demonstrates the notion that utilizing formal and informal policies is an individual practice when in fact institutions need to be more responsible for making policies equitable, visible, and accessible. An African American female participant observed, "And after all, I could have stopped the clock. Why didn't I? And I'm thinking, I didn't know that option was available considering I was on bed rest." Thus, URM faculty are at risk of not utilizing work–family policies, especially informal ones. Furthermore, race/ethnicity influences one's social networks; who is given information; and knowledge of whom to ask about accessing family supportive policies, resources, and programs.

Social Networks Affect the Inclusiveness of Work–Family Institutional Practices

Inclusivity is increasingly becoming an issue in the application of work–family institutional policies and resources, in particular as to whether informal practices and policies are being applied across the board or if they are accessible to only a sector of the faculty population. For example, one respondent explained, "There's clearly a culture that exists there that is very informal and you don't know about it unless you have these kind of

very informal personal conversations with people that are senior to tell you, okay, this is what you should do." (Puerto Rican, female)

It is often through social networks that faculty become aware of formal/informal policies as well as strategies for developing a successful work–family balance. One respondent described a strategy for getting the most out of parental leaves and the academic calendar, which are not always openly discussed by university administrators, in part because of anti-discrimination laws. However, social networks encourage these kinds of conversations that in fact can help successfully navigate work–family issues. One respondent:

> I mean, if you're strategic about it like this other faculty member I mentioned, she's taking hers in the fall and so she had those eight months. You know, she gave birth I think at the end of May and so had the entire summer and then the fall semester to spend with her newborn. (African American, female)

Some respondents noted the positive efforts that institutions are making toward developing work–family practices. They reported having knowledge and positive experiences about using institutional resources to better manage work–family life. Other respondents mentioned how their university assisted their partners with finding employment, akin to dual-career practices and policies:

> I think one thing this university was extremely helpful in—I was impressed—is helping my wife make some contacts in this area that we have no contact in, the whole social network. It showed me this university was, in a lot of ways, in the big leagues. (Mexican American, male)

As a consequence, informational access and the inclusivity of work–family institutional practices and policies can positively affect URM faculty if they have access to a culture of care at their universities and colleges, which would increase their perceptions of support and the quality of family life and individual well-being.

The Fear of Being Regarded as a "Red Flag" Limits the Use of Work–Family Policies

Although the label of "red flag" has historically been used in work environments to refer to so-called problem employees, unquestionably

all early career faculty wish to avoid the label whenever possible. However, for URM faculty the red flag label is especially disconcerting given that URM constitute a small percentage of all tenure-track appointments at U.S. colleges and universities. Because their representation at research-extensive universities is measurably lower, leading to hypervisibility, more is at stake when they are so labeled, which may have adverse effects for tenure, promotion, and retention.

Respondents reported fear of negative consequences for tenure and career progression when dealing with child care, the birth of a child, or a family emergency. For example, an African American woman revealed, "I could have stopped the clock. … And if I would have they would have talked about me. They're already talking about me." This participant's statement that "they would have talked about me" reveals two perceived vulnerabilities: (a) a sense of hypervisibility and (b) consequences associated with using institutional polices.

In addition, although respondents mentioned negotiating time off at the time of their hire, others disclosed the importance of staying silent. They said they worried that if they asked for too much they might be perceived as interlopers and unfit for the academy. The following participant spoke more directly to this issue:

> I think you can ask for things like that, but from my understanding, you really don't want to ask for anything extra because that just raises red flags. So, like, when I was dealing with my dad's illness and—people told me that I could ask for more time if I needed it. [… But] they said don't ask for it or don't bring it up, unless you really, really, really need it. So because then it sends up like a flag that you're not doing what you're supposed to be doing or you're not making progress, and it puts a little question mark next to your name if you bring these kind of things up. (Mexican American, female)

In effect, the perceived consequences, or the fears of URM faculty about raising a red flag, constrain decision-making processes regarding use of available family workplace resources that could alleviate family caregiving responsibilities. Yet decisions not to use policies, or lack of knowledge about policies, may have detrimental consequences on their career path and retention.

Discussion

Our data provide rich insight into URM faculty perceptions of institutional climate and decision-making processes regarding the use of family workplace policies and resources. Five themes illustrated several important and relevant issues that should not be overlooked. First, URM faculty perceive barriers that are linked to role of institutional climate in the use of work–family policies and resources. Similar to Laden and Hagedorn (2000), we found that for many URM faculty those perceptions are colored by a "type of hostile but mostly subtly racist work environment [that they] encounter daily at their institutions" (p. 61). Such encounters ultimately affect decisions about family caregiving responsibilities and the effective use of work–family policies. Second, URM faculty experience a compounded wealth disadvantage from having the largest wage gap within and outside of the professoriate (Porter, Toutkoushian, & Moore, 2008; Renzulli, Grant, & Kathuria, 2006). Economic indicators, such as family wealth and socioeconomic status of family of origin, greatly influence access to resources for child care and housing (Kochhar et al., 2011; Shapiro, 2004; Vallejo, 2012). Thus, inadequate compensation matters more for URM faculty with limited resources and can negatively influence their retention and promotion.

Despite the existence of institutional policies, these policies can often be ineffective if the institutional climate discourages faculty from using them. Our data suggest that URM faculty are most deeply affected by their perceptions and institutional putative interpretations of work–family policies and practices. Fear is especially compounded with the rising expectations of faculty productivity in universities and colleges, which ultimately lead faculty to carefully consider whether taking family leave for their children, their partner, or their own parents is worth the marker of a red flag in the workplace. Ultimately, this affects not only their ability to successfully integrate work–family responsibilities but also the long-term recruitment and retention of URM faculty, which can downsize diversity gains from the past decade (see, e.g., Wingfield, 2010).

Although all universities must adhere to federal law regarding parental leave, most provide the bare minimum, and the failure to develop more extensive work–family policies

and information protocols creates the context for inequitable implementation of options. On a related note, we observed barriers (formal and informal) in how knowledge of policy and the practices of accessing family benefits may be particularly difficult for URM faculty because they are not included in informal social networks on their campuses (Ward & Wolf-Wendel, 2012). Last, the so-called red flag and other negative perceptions may compel URM faculty to behave in ways that could influence decision making that does not maximize work–family policy benefits or potentially is not in their best interest (Drago, Colbeck, & Stauffer, 2006). This silence is based on their belief that their status at the university is fragile (Castellanos & Jones, 2003; Sotello-Turner & Myers, 2000). Fears of raising a red flag demonstrate that in some universities a culture of fear and privilege, rather than a culture of care, is the dominant approach to work–family life (Thompson & Louque, 2005). The findings of this study have the potential to inform academic administrators as well as broaden the body of knowledge in family sciences regarding the challenges that URM faculty and their families face. As Bogenschneider et al. (2012) attested, family-supportive workplace policies and practices are not experienced by all families in the same ways. Thus, we argue that in understanding URM faculty experiences and perceptions of the work–family nexus, family structure, economic disadvantage and compensation, and effects of hypervigilance and implicit bias must be considered in order to more effectively create inclusive environments.

In addition to providing rich insight into URM faculty, this study also raises two additional relevant and necessary directions for future research: (a) URM faculty singlehood and childlessness and (b) URM lesbian, gay, bisexual, and/or transgender (LGBT) faculty. The overwhelming majority of work–family policies have focused on dual-career couples and mothers with children. However, the growth in the single households and individuals who live alone is occurring for all racial/ethnic groups (Klinenberg, 2012; Marsh, 2007). In higher education, women are even less likely to be partnered and have children compared to their peers in other high-prestige and professional careers, such as lawyers and physicians (Mason, Wolfinger, & Goulden, 2013). Almost one quarter of women faculty (22.7%) in research-extensive universities are

single without dependent children compared to their male counterparts (11.5%). Among single female faculty without children, almost 80% are non-Hispanic White, 10.3% are African American, 3.6% are Hispanic, and 5.3% are Asian (Forest Cataldi, Fahimi, & Bradburn, 2005). Single study respondents with no dependent children reported high levels of caregiving responsibilities with parents and/or siblings. Thus, the way single and childless URM faculty are perceived by their colleagues, and how these faculty use family-work polices for extended family caregiving, merits investigation. A related line of inquiry for scholars is to explore how peers and administrators view the time allotted for service for URM faculty absent of a spouse/partner and children. In essence, are these faculty asked and expected to provide more of their time to the workplace than are URM faculty who are partnered and/or parents? In addition, several issues remain to be explored among URM LGBT faculty. Similar to single and childless URM faculty, an important question is this: In what ways might LGBT faculty fit into the broader discussion of access to and use of family-supportive policies, especially if they have not disclosed their sexual orientation and/or whether they have children? Also, how are they included or excluded in institutional formal and informal social networks relative to URM faculty?

The study affirms that the implementation of institutional family policies needs to be transparent, equitable, and fair if URM faculty families are to equally benefit from such policies. Administrators at academic institutions need to ask themselves if all faculty are being informed of the benefits they have a right to access. Institutions of higher education need to be attentive to ensuring that developed protocols are inclusive of social status issues, economic disadvantage, and discriminatory practices, including sensitivity to how surrounding neighborhoods are accepting (or not) of racial/ethnic differences. Also, department chairs and deans can engage in reflexivity to ensure that informal practices and policies are being applied across the board and not merely accessible to only a sector of the faculty population who are a part of existing social networks and normative institutional culture.

Moreover, universities can adopt more inclusive practices that illustrate a commitment to making excellent, diverse child care and housing more accessible and affordable in addition to

adopting work–family best practices such as flexible work schedules and tenure review extensions. By adopting policies and practices such as affordable or subsidized child care, developing dual-career spousal hiring, and offering fully paid semester-long parental/family leave, universities can create contexts in which all faculty can successfully progress in their careers without sacrificing the needs of their families. The University of Massachusetts at Amherst paid-semester parental-leave policy, for instance, is an excellent example of institutional policy that goes above and beyond federal mandates. Other practices that broaden the culture of care in academic institutions are child care provisions during evening events and dependent-care travel grants for faculty, which have the added benefit of potentially increasing retention for URMs (University of California Hastings College of the Law, n.d.). Data confirm that early career faculty of color are significantly more likely than White faculty to report that they found or would find affordable quality child care, financial assistance with housing, and stop the clock family reasons and personal leaves during their probationary period to be helpful (Trower & Bleak, 2004, p. 21).

However, most universities and colleges have yet to implement such generous protocols, despite the movement by professional academic associations to advocate for on-site child care services at annual meetings, or the U.S. Office of Management and Budget's regulatory approval of the inclusion of child care expenses on federal grants.

Yet it is not enough for institutional policies to simply be implemented; this study shows that an institutional climate must also create conditions to support inclusivity of URM faculty and extend social networks in order for work–family policies and practices (both official and unofficial) to be effective. One method for developing more inclusive environments is to institute mutual mentoring networks, which the National Education Association (2009) noted is a productive way "to understand expectations for performance, develop substantive collegial relationships, and create a balance between work and life."

At a time when U.S. universities are struggling to recruit and retain a diverse workforce that reflects the nation's demographic shift, it is imperative that institutions address how they can ameliorate the differential practices that can negatively affect URM faculty. Given the push in higher education to diversify its faculty ranks, if administrators are to successfully implement diversity, equity, and inclusion and retain URM faculty, U.S. institutions need to pay particular attention to how URM faculty experience the academic climate regarding work–family balance.

Note

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