

# **The Arc of the Academic Research Career at Princeton: Issues for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

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**Workshop on the Arc of the Academic Research Career: Issues and  
Implications for U.S. Science and Engineering Leadership  
National Academy of Sciences**

**September 9-10, 2013**



# **A Snapshot of the Princeton Faculty**

**(April, 2013)**

**Faculty headcount: 1068**

**% full-time: 84% (894: 30% women)**

**% tenure-track: 84% of full-time: (747: 26% women)**

**Professor: 474 (20% women)**

**Associate Professor: 75 (35% women)**

**Assistant Professor: 180 (38% women)**

**But academic careers start earlier**

**Graduate students in Ph.D. programs: 2309 (36% women)**

**Graduate students in Master programs: 339 (42% women)**

**Postdoctoral fellows: 766 (30% women)**

# The World Has Changed

- A little over a decade ago, we realized that we needed to expand how we supported the academic research careers of our faculty
- We discovered that more than 70% of both tenured and tenure-track faculty were partnered and more than 75% of those had working partners
- Furthermore, more than half our faculty – male and female -- reported having ongoing care responsibility for children under the age 18
- Consequently, we decided that we needed to develop a two-pronged approach, with supports for both career and family life, if we wanted our faculty to be able to do their best work
- We also realized that academic careers do not begin with the first Assistant Professor appointment but with the first year of graduate school.

# **The Early Years: Graduate Students and Postdocs**

- **The two-pronged approach**
  - **Close working relationships with faculty members on research, along with increasing independence, something for which Princeton has a long and distinguished history**
  - **A recognition that graduate students and postdocs, like faculty, are often trying to integrate a productive work life with family formation, something that we have come to recognize as important only recently.**

# **Family-Focused Programs for Graduate Students and Postdocs at Princeton**

- **Maternity leave (GS and P)**
- **One additional term of financial support for the primary caretaker of each child (GS)**
- **Backup care program (GS and P)**
- **Dependent care travel fund (GS and P)**
- **Spousal Travel Program (P)**
- **Employee Child Care Assistance Program (P) and Student Child Care Assistance Program (GS)**
- **Expanding on-campus childcare (GS and P)**
- **Employee Assistance Provider Work/Life Program (GS and P)**
- **LotsaHelpingHands (GS and P)**

# **The Crucial Years**

## **Assistant Professors: A Two-pronged Approach**

- **The career prong**
  - **Careful mentoring by colleagues and department chair**
  - **Generous start-up funding; availability of yearly research funds, travel funds, etc.**
  - **One semester of leave with pay in first three years; in the Humanities and Social Sciences, many preceptorships with one semester of leave with pay in second three years**
  - **Not all assistant professors will get tenure but the working assumption is that tenure is possible and Princeton will do all that it can to help assistant professors flourish**
  - **Men and women Assistant Professors receive tenure at the same rate at Princeton**

# **The Crucial Years continued: Assistant Professors**

- **The family prong**
  - **One size does NOT fit all: so we have tried to provide as many different policies and programs as possible**
  - **Dual-career issues have been and continue to be the most challenging, both for faculty members and for the university**
  - **We are providing financial counseling for incoming Assistant Professors to introduce them to the benefits of supplemental retirement accounts and the benefits of beginning to plan for retirement at the start of their careers**

# **Family-Focused Policies and Programs for Faculty at Princeton**

- **Maternity leave**
- **Automatic one-year extension of the tenure clock for each child**
- **Work-load relief for the primary caretaker**
- **Backup care program**
- **Dependent care travel fund**
- **Employee Child Care Assistance Program**
- **Expanding on-campus childcare**
- **Employee Assistance Provider Work/Life Program**
- **Partner placement assistance**
- **LotsaHelpingHands**
- **Tuition grants for college-aged children**

[http://www.princeton.edu/dof/policies\\_procedures/family\\_friendly/](http://www.princeton.edu/dof/policies_procedures/family_friendly/)



# **The Middle Years: Associate Professors**

- **Research support programs continue: regular sabbaticals, yearly research funds, travel funds, etc.**
- **Family support programs continue; dual career issues continue to be particularly challenging**
- **All Associate Professors at Princeton have tenure, but women spend longer as Associate Professors than men do: possible reasons**
  - **Women are more reluctant to ask to be considered**
  - **Women faculty are more likely to postpone having children until they have tenure**
- **We believe this is when it is crucial that faculty begin seriously planning for retirement**

# **The Final Phase: Professor at last**

- **A time to give back: department and university service**
- **Research support programs continue: regular sabbaticals, yearly research funds, travel funds, etc.**
- **Family support programs continue, with different ones becoming important**
- **Dual-career issues are crucial for faculty being recruited from other universities**
- **Retirement planning moves to the forefront: we are providing individual financial counseling as people are promoted to full professor or come to Princeton in that rank**

# **The Final, Final Phase: Retirement**

- **We have more recently begun to think about this phase of the arc of an academic research career**
- **Three years ago, Princeton instituted a new retirement program that was designed to:**
  - **Incentivize the tenured faculty, through bonuses, to embrace 65-70 as an appropriate retirement age**
  - **Be transparent and clear about the available options, and ensure that everyone has access to the same options**
  - **Allow individual faculty members to determine the path toward emeritus status that works best for them**
  - **Allow faculty members to continue to be productive members of the University community after retirement at the level that seems right for them.**

# The Final, Final Phase continued: Retirement

- **Characteristics of the new retirement plan**
  - Available to faculty who are at least 55 years old and have at least 10 years of service at Princeton
  - Retirement agreement must be signed between ages of 65 and 69
  - Faculty member is paid a bonus that is a multiplier of the faculty member's salary or the average salary of all faculty at that rank, whichever is greater: the latter has been particularly popular
  - Bonus is 1.5 times salary at age 65 and declines by .25 times salary each year after that through age 69
  - After signing a retirement agreement, faculty members may continue to teach half-time for half pay for up to three years, with the number of years dependent on the age at signing
  - Alternatively, faculty members may sign an agreement before age 67 and continue to teach full-time until age 70, receiving a bonus equal to one year of salary

# **Supports for Continuing Research and Scholarship for Retired Faculty at Princeton**

- **Appointment as Professor or Associate Professor Emeritus**
- **Office Space provided when possible**
- **Secretarial and computer support provided when possible**
- **Retention of computing privileges and faculty email address'**
- **Use of library on same basis as active faculty**
- **On-campus parking permits**
- **Opportunity to teach up to three courses depending on departmental needs**
- **Appointment as Senior Scholar for research-active retired faculty**
- **Eligibility for grants from University for Humanities and Social Science retired faculty**
- **Continuing availability of research accounts and an infusion of \$5000 at beginning of retirement**
- **Ability to accept new postdoctoral fellows and other researchers (but not new graduate students)**

# **The Final, Final Phase continued Retirement**

- **Acceptance of the new retirement plan**
  - **There were 98 faculty members eligible for the new retirement plan when it was initially offered**
  - **35 (36%) of these took up the plan and signed retirement agreements; uptake was higher among those who received a bonus based on the average salary at their rank**
  - **A survey showed Princeton faculty to be very satisfied with what Princeton provides for financial planning and medical insurance, phasing and transitioning supports, and ongoing supports and opportunities in retirement.**
  - **Nonetheless, we believe we have work to do to encourage faculty to see financial planning for retirement as something they should be doing throughout their academic careers and to help those faculty who are not interested in continuing their research lives to build fulfilling retirements.**