

Partner Accommodation Recommendations

(see Related article in Inside Higher Education: [Doing 'Dual Career' Right](#))

Do you have a “two-body” problem? Are you and your partner or spouse searching for academic positions in the same area, or even at the same institution? Or are you an administrator or department chair seeking guidance on sound policies and procedures for appointing an academic couple? Would you like to know what kinds of dual-career accommodation programs might be available to assist you, or what procedures an institution should follow to best accommodate your partner?

If so, the AAUP’s newly released “Recommendations on Partner Accommodation and Dual Career Appointments” is a must read.

The new recommendations were formulated by the AAUP’s Committee on Women in the Academic Profession in view of the increasing likelihood that faculty, especially women faculty, will have domestic partners or spouses who are also academics. The recommendations provide critical guidance on developing sound, equitable policies. In addition, they provide a comprehensive review of the types of partner accommodation programs already available to dual-career academic couples at many colleges and universities.

The recommendations recognize the diversity of academic institutions and their needs, rather than endorse a particular partner accommodation program or policy as appropriate for all institutions. Research universities, for example, may have a particular interest in accommodating partners to remedy the consistent underrepresentation of women among their tenure-track and tenured faculty. Smaller institutions or those with collective bargaining agreements, because they may have more difficulty accommodating dual career couples, may be less inclined to do so. Whatever their needs, colleges and universities can benefit from well-developed policies that, according to the recommendations, “meet the strictest tests for transparency and good governance practices.”

Included among the recommendations:

- Accommodation policies should be developed by appropriate faculty bodies.
- The policies should take into account local conditions and institutional particularities, departmental hiring priorities, and programmatic and budgetary needs.
- Any faculty appointments made as a result of their implementation should be driven by considerations of merit, and, whenever possible, appointments should be made to tenure-track positions.
- Dual career appointments should not be the occasion for increasing the number of contingent faculty members at an institution.
- Balancing the needs of departments and institutions with the needs of faculty members is of paramount importance to successful partner accommodation appointments.
- We hope these these recommendations will prove a useful tool to faculty and administrators seeking to harmonize sensitivity to the needs of academic couples with due attention to good governance and the protections of tenure long recommended by the AAUP.

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and
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