



Position(s) Wanted

There is nothing more stressful than looking for a job—except looking for two jobs. And looking for two jobs has become a norm in higher education over the last decade. Newly-minted PhDs looking for their first academic positions frequently despair of finding a position that is close to an available position for their spouses or partners. Senior faculty members feel locked into their current positions because they cannot imagine how to create opportunities, not only for themselves, but for their partners as well.

For their part, colleges and universities struggle to recruit the faculty they want to appoint because often they don't have the resources to make more than one appointment in a similar field and/or the same department. If the partner or spouse of the recruited faculty member is not an academic, colleges and universities are even more baffled about how to help him or her find a job.

This is a particular problem for women who are academics, since a higher percentage of women than men have spouses or partners who work full-time. For example, at Princeton University in 2002, the proportion of men and women faculty who were married was nearly identical, but 85% of married women had husbands who worked full-time while 48% of married men had wives who worked full-time.

It was in this context that Princeton and Rutgers joined together to invite the colleges and universities in New Jersey to create The New Jersey Higher Education Consortium¹, a higher education job bank to include not just faculty positions but all higher education

positions available in the state. All 44 colleges and universities in the state were invited to participate; to date, 28 are active. The New Jersey initiative was preceded by and guided by two similar efforts in California². The site

seeks to offer frequent updates and useful search and notification tools. One unique feature is that couples can register linked descriptions and be notified when two positions matching their needs appear.

It is the objective of the site organizers to broaden and deepen the reach of member institutions and enrich the candidate pools for all levels of positions, as well as serve two-career

couples and help academic institutions to become more family-friendly. A particularly important aspect of the site is that it serves to bring together representatives of the participant institutions semi-annually. This enables broad discussion not

only about the site but about a range of recruitment and retention issues.

Unfortunately, institutions and individuals can tend to view dual-career couples as a "problem." Indeed, this recruitment challenge is often referred to as "the two-body problem." Equally unfortunate is the tendency of colleges and universities to refer to the partners of faculty members they are trying to recruit as "trailing spouses." A more positive and accurate formulation is to see each

dual-career couple as representing not one but two opportunities for the institution, offering two highly-educated, talented people who can contribute to the life of a college or university. ■

—Joan S. Girgus

The proportion of men and women faculty who were married was nearly identical, but 85% of married women had husbands who worked full-time while 48% of married men had wives who worked full-time.

Unfortunately, institutions and individuals can tend to view dual-career couples as a "problem." Indeed, this recruitment challenge is often referred to as "the two-body problem."

¹www.njherc.org

²www.norcalherc.org