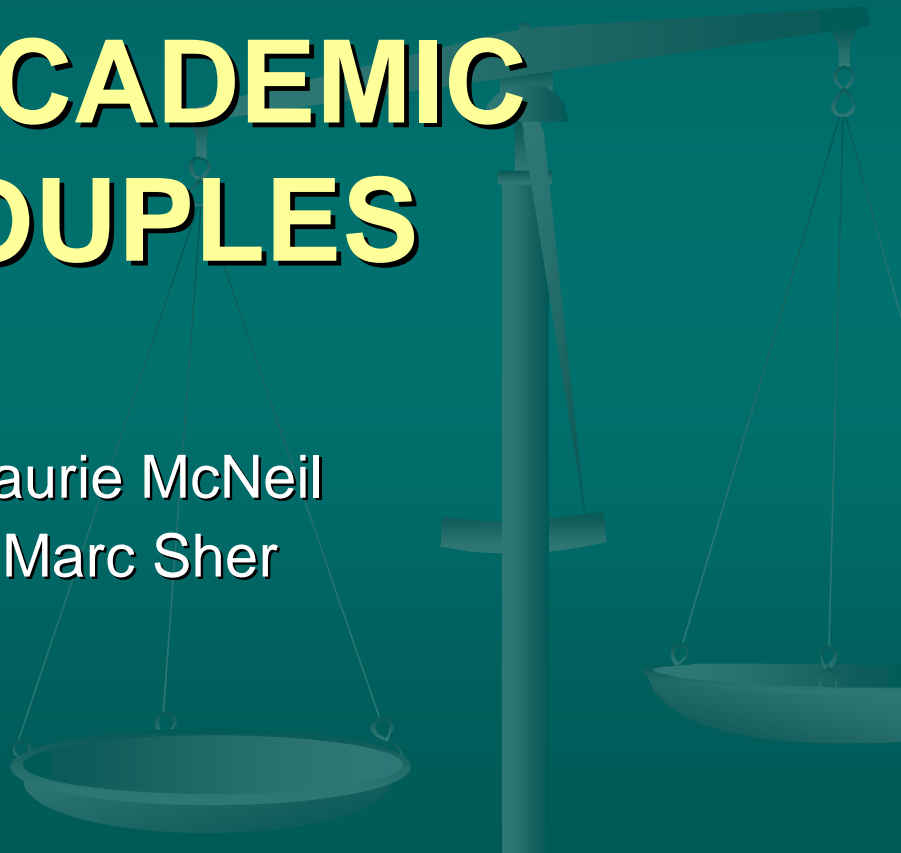


# DUAL CAREER ACADEMIC COUPLES

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# OUTLINE



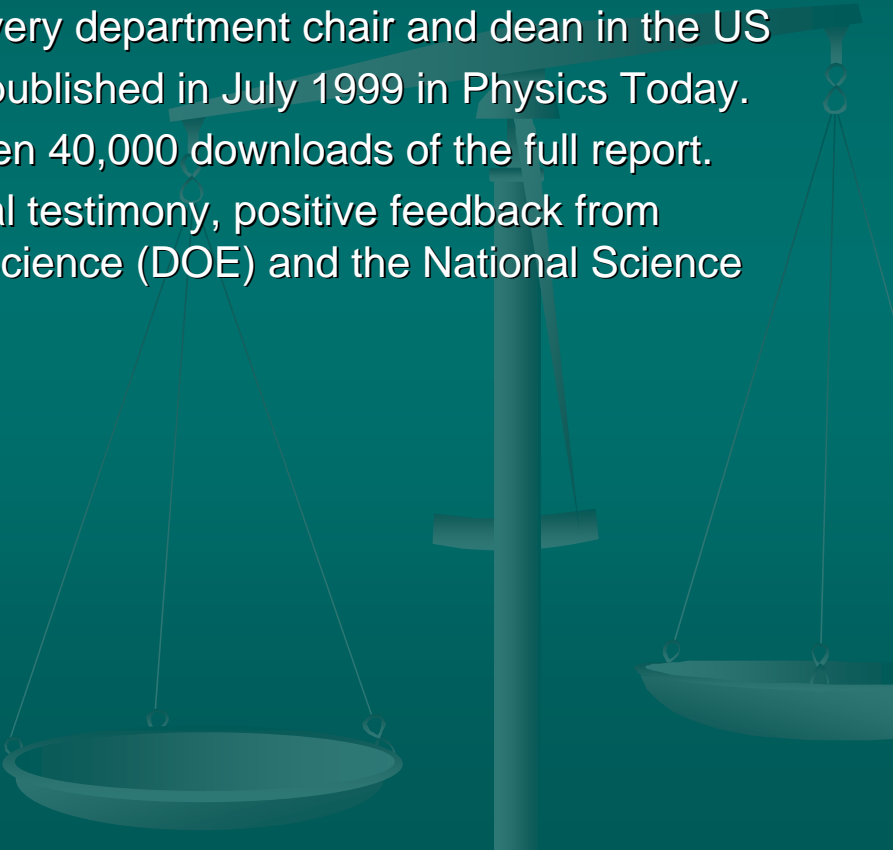
- Introduction
- The Dual Career Couple Survey
- “Problems”--how institutions can make the problem worse
- “Solutions”--positive responses, suggestions
- Recommendations
- Changes in the past few years

## WHY THE DUAL SCIENCE CAREER PROBLEM DISPROPORTIONATELY AFFECTS WOMEN

- 68% of married female physicists are married to scientists (45% to physicists)
- 16% of married male physicists are married to scientists (6% to physicists)
- Women, in our society, on average marry men who are somewhat older (~3 years). Thus men are farther along in their careers, and less likely to make career sacrifices.
- The most difficult choices are made by couples in their late 20's and early 30's, the prime child-bearing years.

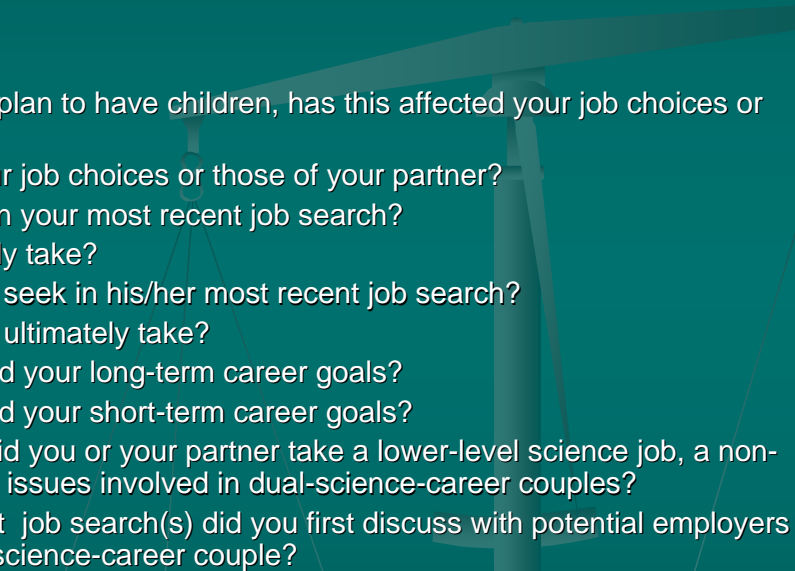
## HISTORY OF THE SURVEY

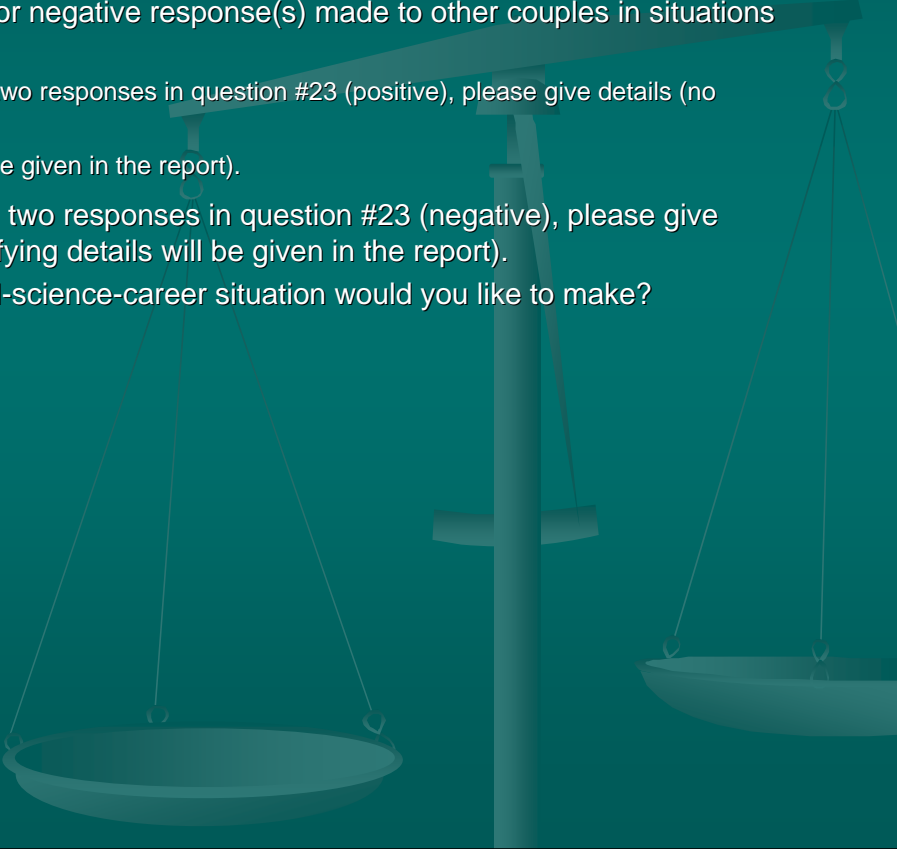
- In 1997, Laurie McNeil (then Chair of the Committee on the Status of Women in Physics) and I were discussing a problem involving a dual-career couple at a major national lab.
- We realized that this was a much more general problem, and decided to conduct a survey to see how the physics community was dealing with the problem
- We set up a web-based survey, with both quantitative and narrative responses.
- Did a trial run on the “wiphys” listserv to fine-tune questions
- Sent e-mails, flyers, notices in journals etc.
- Survey ran from January to August, 1998
- We originally expected 50-100 responses, and hoped to write a column about the issue in Physics Today

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- The response rate FAR exceeded our expectations (more later).
  - Report (50 pp) was written in the fall of 1998.
  - The APS sent copies to every department chair and dean in the US
  - An 8 page summary was published in July 1999 in Physics Today.
  - As of 2007, there have been 40,000 downloads of the full report.
  - Appeared in Congressional testimony, positive feedback from Directors of the Office of Science (DOE) and the National Science Foundation

### DUAL CAREER ISSUES QUESTIONNAIRE

- As the number of couples in which both members are trained in science increases, more and more people are facing issues in finding two science-based jobs in the same geographic location. In an effort to document the scope of the situation for physicists, and find examples of solutions to the problems which arise, we would like you to answer the following questions. Please give only one set of answers per couple. If you prefer not to answer over the web, you may print the survey and send it to the address given at the end. If you are part of a dual-professional couple in which the other member is not a scientist, please fill out the survey -- many of the same concerns will apply. In each question, "partner" refers to your current spouse or partner, or your most recent spouse or partner if you are not now married and do not have a partner. All answers will be held in confidence.

- 
- 1. Is your partner also trained in science?
  - 2. Are you both trained in physics?
  - 3. What is your partner's scientific field
  - 4. What is your age?
  - 5. What is your partner's age?
  - 6. Are you female or male?
  - 7. Is your partner female or male?
  - 8. If you and/or your partner have or plan to have children, has this affected your job choices or those of your partner?
  - 9. In what way did children affect your job choices or those of your partner?
  - 10. In what type of job did you seek in your most recent job search?
  - 11. What type of job did you ultimately take?
  - 12. What type of job did your partner seek in his/her most recent job search?
  - 13. What type of job did your partner ultimately take?
  - 14. Have you or your partner changed your long-term career goals?
  - 15. Have you or your partner changed your short-term career goals?
  - 16. In your most recent job search, did you or your partner take a lower-level science job, a non-scientific job (or no job) as a result of issues involved in dual-science-career couples?
  - 17. At what point in your most recent job search(s) did you first discuss with potential employers the fact that you were part of a dual-science-career couple?

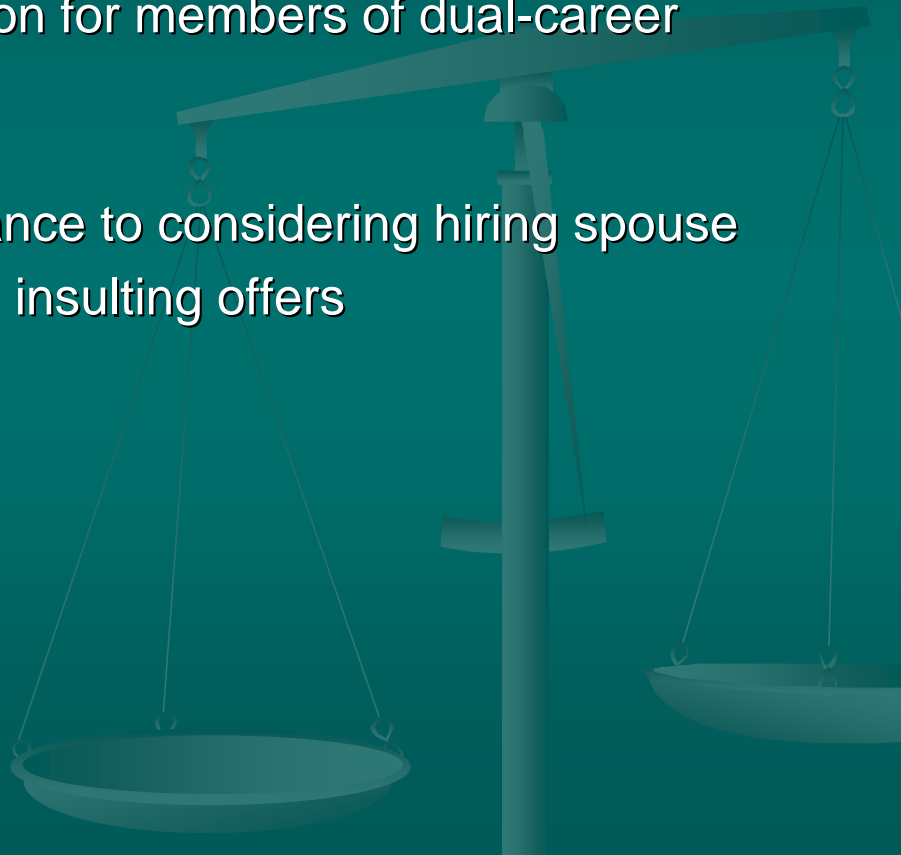
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- 18. What responses did your potential employer(s) make to your situation? Please include all recent job searches.
  - 19. What aspects of this response did you find to be particularly positive?
  - 20. What would you have liked the potential employer to have done that was not done?
  - 21. At what point in your partner's most recent job search(s) did she/he first discuss with potential employers the fact that she/he was part of a dual science-career couple?
  - 22. What response(s) did your partner's potential employer(s) make to your situation?
  - 23. Do you know of specific positive or negative response(s) made to other couples in situations of this type?
  - 24. If you selected one or both of the first two responses in question #23 (positive), please give details (no individual names or identifying details will be given in the report).
  - 25. If you selected one of the second two responses in question #23 (negative), please give details (no individual names or identifying details will be given in the report).
  - 26. What other comments on the dual-science-career situation would you like to make?

## RESULTS

- THERE WERE 620 RESPONSES!!
- 89% had partners who were scientists (the others were generally in academia).
- 45% had partners who were physicists.
- 57% were women.
- Average age of females-- 37.1 years
- Average age of males -- 40.1 years
- (Median ages were 3 years lower)
- Average male age minus average female age: 2.1 years
- Most respondents presented very long, detailed narratives. A few gave us their names, and we would call them for more information.

## PROBLEMS----HOW INSTITUTIONS CAN MAKE THE PROBLEM WORSE

- Reduced consideration for members of dual-career couples
- Ignoring the problem
- Nepotism and resistance to considering hiring spouse
- Captive spouses and insulting offers
- Egregious remarks



## REDUCED CONSIDERATION FOR DUAL-CAREER COUPLES

- *The department chair called me at home and asked me several questions about my marital status. He said that he knew these questions were illegal but that he was going to ask them anyway and I could decline to answer them if I wanted. When he found out I was married to a physicist, he said there would be no opportunities for him to be employed in the area. He also said that they now screen all candidates because they have offered jobs many times only to be turned down in the end because a spouse could not find a job. A week later I called and found out I was totally off the list.*
- *In several places, I was asked, even before the actual interview, if I would consider accepting the position even if my husband did not get an offer. My husband, on the other hand, never got this kind of question.*
- *I was asked where my husband would be working. It was made clear to me that if my husband did not have a job nearby, I would not be considered for the job.*
- *Interview was cut short when discovered husband was a scientist.*
- *I was told that they had already decided not to pursue my application because they “knew” that I wouldn’t be interested in moving since my husband wasn’t moving to a position in the area.....*

## IGNORING THE PROBLEM

- *One university simply expressed annoyance.*
- *My manager had felt that it wouldn't be so difficult for my husband to find a job there, he commented that his wife (a stenographer) had been able to find jobs anywhere.*
- *They said, "there are a lot of potential jobs in this geographic area--she should look for them".*
- *One chair said "if women in physics want jobs, they shouldn't marry scientists".*

## NEPOTISM, RESISTANCE TO HIRING SPOUSE

- *I remember one senior male faculty member telling me how hard it is to get new professors, because so many of them had spouses who were scientists. The faculty member said he was not about to “burn” a tenure slot just for somebody’s spouse.*
- *At my institution, a manager stated that he would not consider dual career couples in his section because it “always leads to trouble”*
- *One cited anti-nepotism rules as making it impossible to consider both of us (the rules hadn’t existed for years....)*
- *When the trailing partner is female, employers assume she’s less qualified and will accept a substandard position*
- *We both made the short lists for several faculty searches. In every case, we told the search committee about our situation before we agreed to visit. In two cases (where the male was the candidate), the search committee seemed to indicate that the two-body problem was too complicated for them to solve. In two cases (where the female was the candidate), the committee indicated that they could help.*
- *One dept. chair said that trying to find two jobs was a bad strategy and that things worked best if one partner took the best job available and the other stopped working.*
- *They suggested that I might consider giving up my career.*

## CAPTIVE SPOUSES

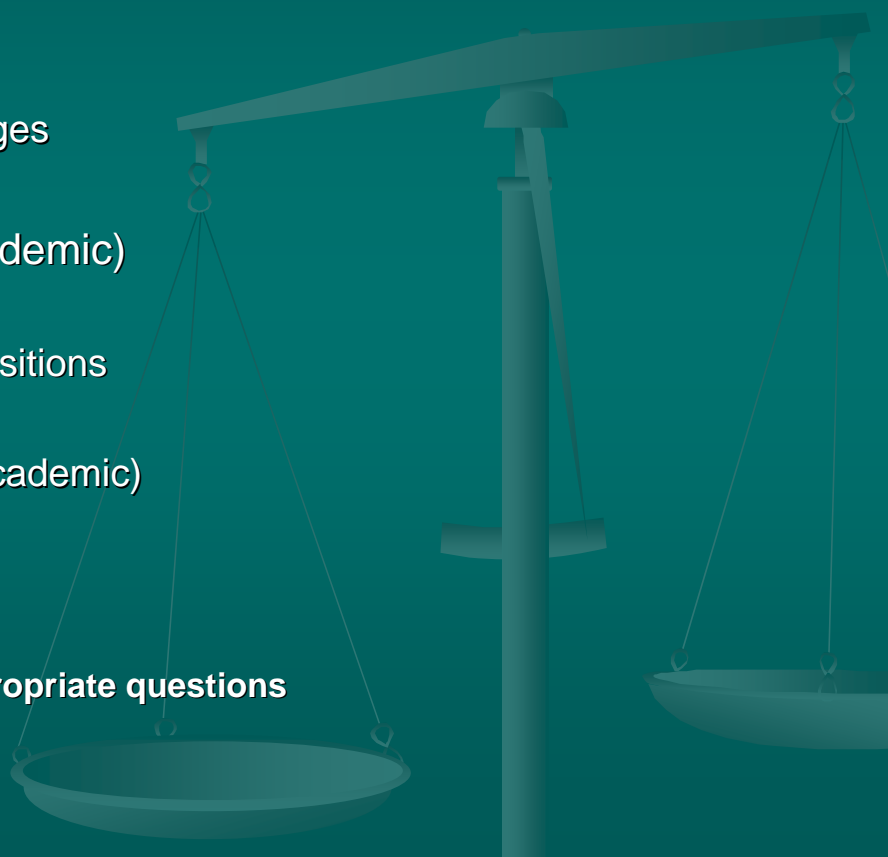
- *Two extremely talented scientists. The husband, a little ahead chronologically in his career, has tenure at a large university. The wife is doing research and teaching at the same university on soft money. Despite her glowing teaching and publication records, she has been constantly passed over on recent job searches. Documents, secretly released to her, seem to indicate the search committee hopes she will just stay, on her soft money, “after all, her husband has tenure. Why waste a real job on her?”*
- *They gave her a desk, and ultimately a title, though no salary (although the university takes overhead on her grants). She is forbidden to use the department secretaries for grant preparation, however.*
- *She has been an instructor for 15 years now, with low pay and a heavy teaching load, and despite this she has been successful at attracting grants and publishing papers. She recently led a successful fight at our university to win the right to submit grant proposals under her own name rather than having the chair as her P.I.*
- *My institution has a long history of hiring the wives of professors into soft money positions with no possibility of independent research or of consideration for hiring into a tenure-track position.*

## EGREGIOUS REMARKS

- *One professor suggested to my husband at his interview that one way to solve the two-body problem was to divorce me.*
- *“told candidate that spouse shouldn’t be working anyway”*
- *One suggested that I should be available to do “volunteer” scientific work, because it was my partner’s role to support the family.*
- *I was told that I should be able to find a lab work in, as long as I was willing to change fields and didn’t expect to be paid; if I “needed to be paid”, I might be able to teach introductory calculus.*
- *Her last request for a raise was met with the response that she didn’t need a raise because her partner was well-paid as a full professor.*

## SOLUTIONS--POSITIVE RESPONSES, SUGGESTIONS

- Shared/split positions
  - Definition
  - Advantages/disadvantages
- Spousal Hiring Programs
- Alternative positions (academic)
  - Short-term postdocs
  - Soft-money research positions
  - Adjunct professorships
- Alternative positions (non-academic)
- Commuting
- Legal Responses
  - **Anti-nepotism laws**
  - **How to respond to inappropriate questions**



## SHARED/SPLIT POSITIONS

- Definition: A single FTE position is broken into two positions. In a split position, each person has a 0.5 FTE position and is evaluated separately. Requirements for promotion, merit and tenure are half of a regular faculty position. In a shared position, the two people fill a single FTE, sharing the salary, workload, etc. The single position is evaluated for promotion, merit and tenure.
- Obvious question: why would a couple think about doing this? It seems to be the financial equivalent of one quitting completely.

## ADVANTAGES TO SHARED/SPLIT POSITIONS

- Although the institution pays 1.0 salaries, they can each get summer salary, and they can make additional salary by adjunct teaching (or doing consulting or something else) during the off-semester. Total salaries of 1.5-1.6 FTEs are not atypical.
- This may be the only way that both can stay active in science, continuing research and teaching.
- Much more flexibility with scheduling, child-rearing, etc. Most in these positions feel that the 0.4-0.5 FTE salary loss is well worth the extra time available for children.
- Institution gets two faculty members for the price of one, with more options for research funding.
- The faculty members are MUCH more likely to stay; stability and loyalty are valuable.
- Role models for female students.

## Jane Lubchenco, recent President of AAAS

- *We both wished to be active participants in raising our children and to spend significant amounts of time with them. However, neither of us wanted to give up teaching or research. Moreover, we understood that traditional part-time positions in academia take scientists out of the mainstream with little opportunities to reenter. We wanted to have it all but not go crazy in the process. We sought not what later came to be called “the mommy track” in which career goals would be sacrificed, nor the so-called “fast track” which we were already on and for us would have precluded having sufficient time with our children, but rather what we intended as a “sane track”. The ideal arrangement seemed to be one in which we could each work part-time but do so in mainstream positions.*

## DISADVANTAGES TO SHARED/SPLIT POSITIONS

- Obvious financial disadvantages. Will not get 2.0 salaries.
  - There is a tendency for institutions to exploit the situation, assigning more than 0.5 FTE worth of teaching, committee work, etc.
  - Potential pitfalls if one is worthy of tenure and the other is not.
  - Most institutions have no knowledge of these possibilities.
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- In the report, we discuss these positions in much more detail, including a couple of sample contracts.

## SPOUSAL HIRING PROGRAMS

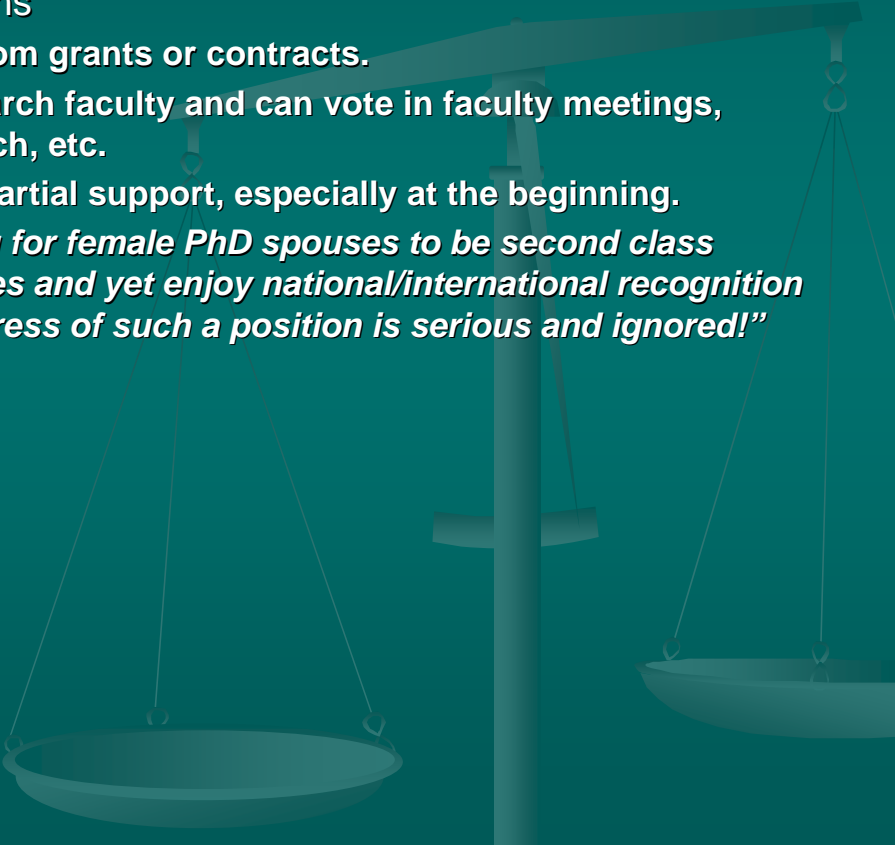
- If the two candidates are in different disciplines (very often two different sciences), split/shared positions are not an option.
- There are spousal hiring programs (for couples both at faculty rank in different departments) at Wisconsin, Davis, Purdue, UIUC and others.
- Typically (with wide variations), the spouse's salary is split, with 1/3 coming from the original department, 1/3 from the spouse's department and 1/3 from the Provost's office. This lasts for 3-5 years, and then if tenure is likely, it reverts to the spouse's department.
- Details are given in the survey report.
- **CONGRATULATIONS.** UTK has a new Spousal and Domestic Partner Hiring Program (memo of August 24th). It seems to be similar to the above, with a multi-year phase-in of funding. It is suggested that ALL candidates on the short-list for a position be advised as to the existence of this program.

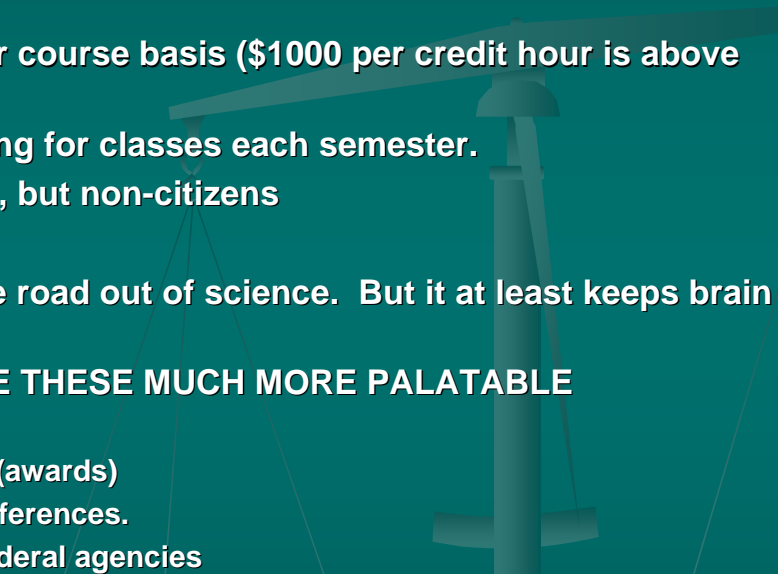
## SPOUSE/PARTNER HIRING

- If the spouse is not suitable for a faculty position, then it is ESSENTIAL for large institutions to have a permanent staff member whose primary role is to find employment (both on and off campus) for a spouse/partner.
- Purdue has a 3/4 time staff member who does this. She finds positions for roughly 50 spouses/partners of newly-hired faculty per year. These positions are sometime on-campus (post-docs, adjunct, etc.) or off-campus.
- She will also facilitate arranging for “spousal bridge programs” for a spouse/partner who is suitable for faculty rank but for whom no position in their discipline’s department is currently available. These programs can provide bridge positions until the next retirement occurs (often the department will be interested in hiring a spouse, but will not have a position in the appropriate subfield that particular year).
- These spousal hiring programs are usually only possible for large (>15,000 students) universities---smaller institutions generally don’t have the resources for a formal program.

## ALTERNATIVE POSITIONS (ACADEMIC)

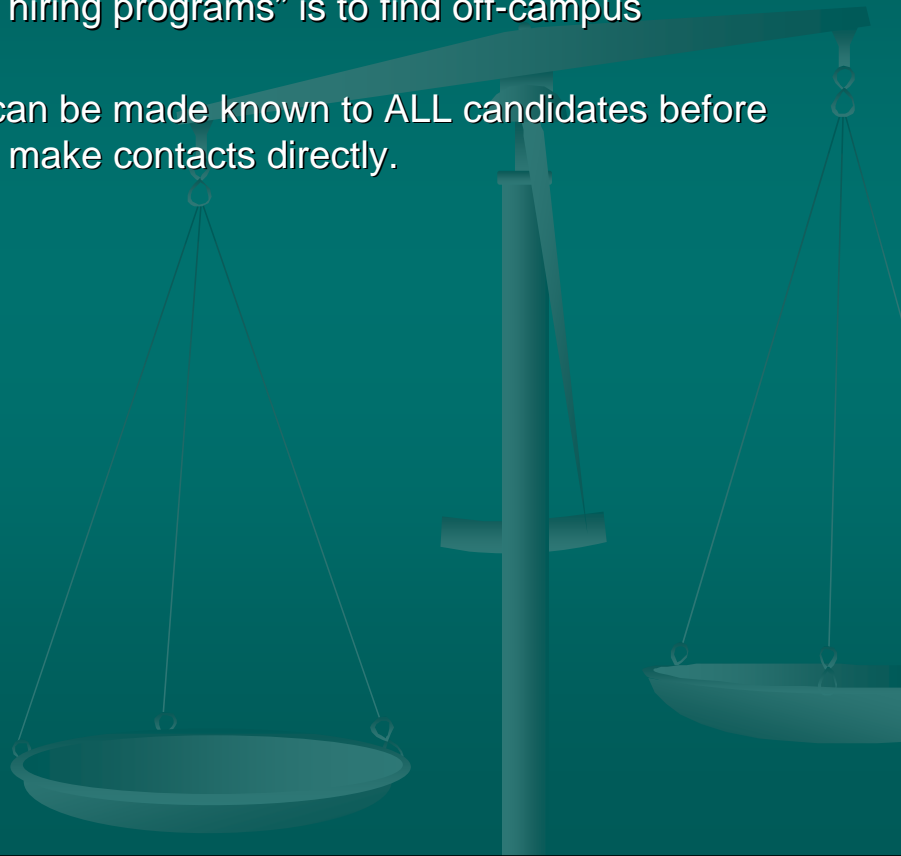
- These are generally needed in the more common instance in which there is a disparity in the respective stages of the couple's careers.
- Short term postdocs
  - Not particularly difficult to arrange, departments can provide full or partial funding for a few years.
  - After the postdoc, department will be aware of the potential of the spouse (especially if they've volunteered to teach).
  - They will then have an incentive to either create a long-term position, or risk losing both partners.
  - *Initially for the first five years, I had a part-time job at the University and therefore our department knew about my teaching and research abilities. Thus when they had a tenure-track opening, they hired me.*
  - *The institution was very helpful. They spoke with my partner's department to locate a part-time position. This turned into a full time tenure-track position later on.*

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- Soft-money research positions
    - All of the salary comes from grants or contracts.
    - Sometimes they are research faculty and can vote in faculty meetings, serve on committees, teach, etc.
    - Institutions can provide partial support, especially at the beginning.
    - But -- *It is very frustrating for female PhD spouses to be second class citizens at home campuses and yet enjoy national/international recognition by peers globally. The stress of such a position is serious and ignored!*

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- Adjunct positions
    - Part-time, usually on a per course basis (\$1000 per credit hour is above average).
    - Unstable, requiring begging for classes each semester.
    - Not second-class citizens, but non-citizens
    - Little chance for research
    - Often, the first step on the road out of science. But it at least keeps brain cells metabolizing.
    - **UNIVERSITIES CAN MAKE THESE MUCH MORE PALATABLE**
      - Longer term contracts.
      - Institutional recognition (awards)
      - Funding for travel to conferences.
      - Re-entry funding from federal agencies

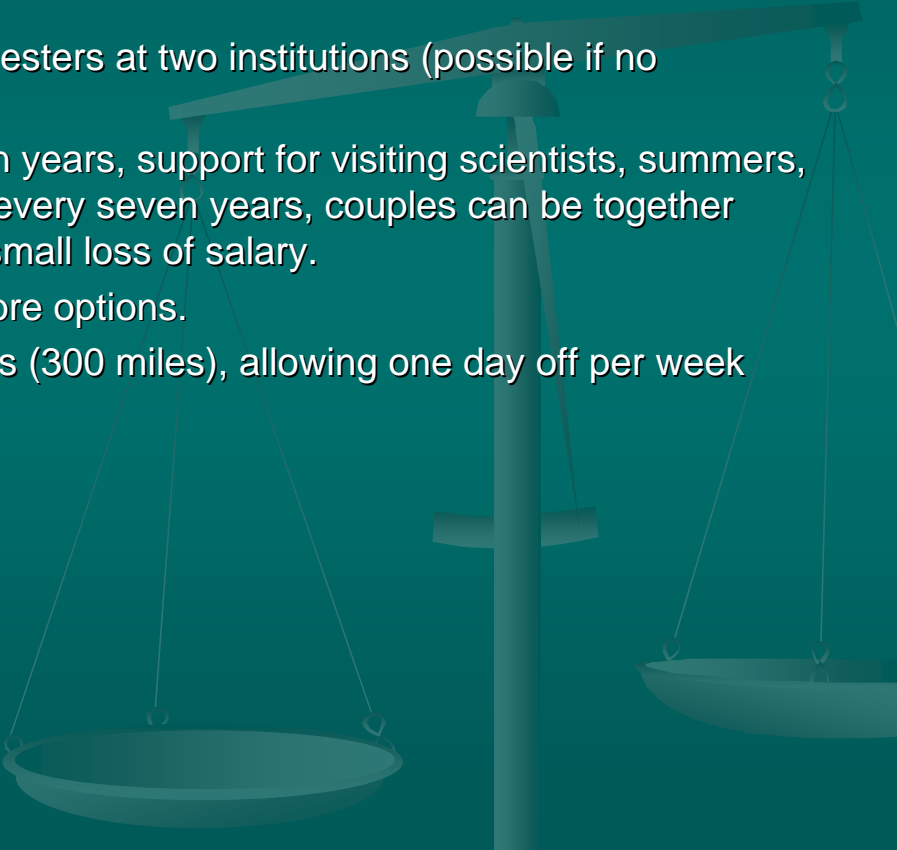
## ALTERNATIVE POSITIONS (NON-ACADEMIC)

- Primary function of “spousal hiring programs” is to find off-campus employment.
- Availability of this resource can be made known to ALL candidates before they interview, and they can make contacts directly.
- Details in report.



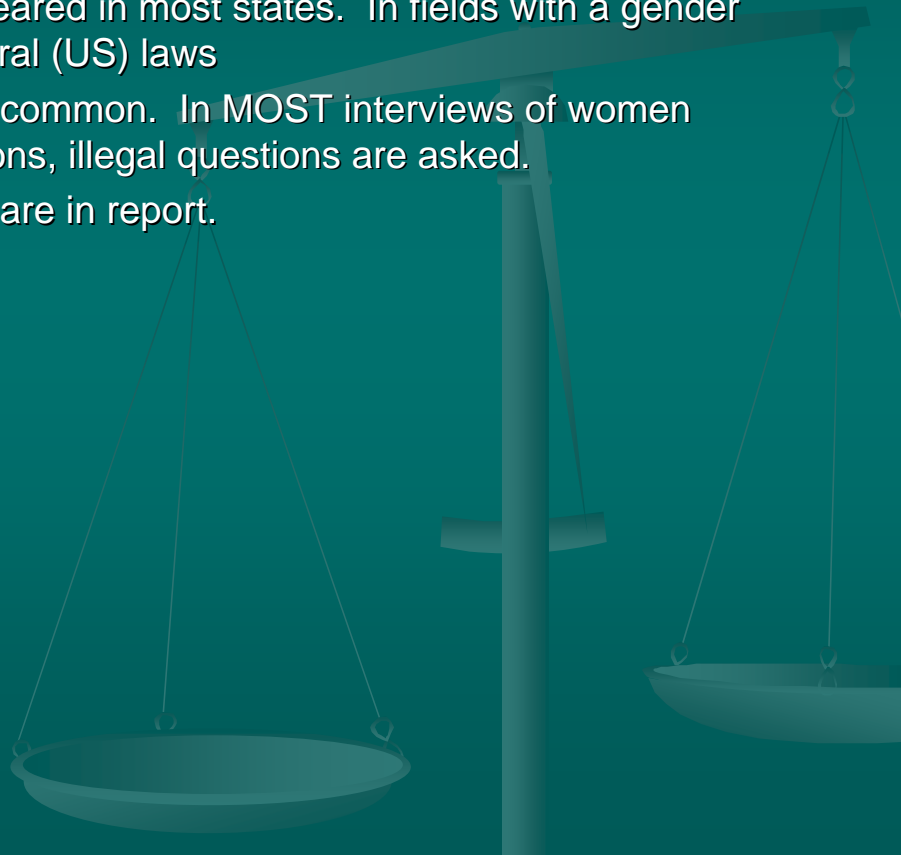
## COMMUTING

- A sizable percentage of dual-career couples spend some period commuting. (“commuting” means two residences, far apart)
- *He was a postdoc in Europe and later worked on the East Coast while I finished my degree in California. These long term and long distance separations may be bearable (but unpleasant) when there are no family obligations.*
- *We were a cross-country commuter marriage for 3.5 years. My impression was that most male colleagues did not approve of this living arrangement. It could have terminated our marriage; in the end, not without effort, it made it stronger.*
- *We are currently living 1000 miles apart. She has been told that there are at least 5 other science faculty at the institution who are living away from their spouses.*
- *Being tenure-track at two different universities separated by 900 miles, we have had to postpone having children. Like many academics, neither of us had children during graduate school. So we are now facing the situation of having children at a time in our lives when most people choose to stop having children*
- *We decided to try to get pregnant, but we each have tenure at institutions separated by 270 miles. We’ve been otherwise doing well with “the Commute” but the decision to have children changed this---we began applying for jobs elsewhere.*
- *My wife left a very nice teaching position at an outstanding University which was 3 hours away by car to start a family.*

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- No easy solutions
  - Some couples alternate semesters at two institutions (possible if no children)--Weber/Trimble
  - With sabbaticals every seven years, support for visiting scientists, summers, one additional unpaid leave every seven years, couples can be together 80% of the time with only a small loss of salary.
  - Telecommuting opens up more options.
  - For relatively short commutes (300 miles), allowing one day off per week can help greatly.

## NEPOTISM LAWS AND INAPPROPRIATE QUESTIONS

- Nepotism laws have disappeared in most states. In fields with a gender imbalance, they violate federal (US) laws
- Inappropriate questions are common. In MOST interviews of women candidates for faculty positions, illegal questions are asked.
- Suggestions for responding are in report.



## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recognize the existence of the problem and prepare to deal with it.
- Establish (*before* searches begin) policies regarding split/shared positions and spousal hiring programs. These do not have to be formal policies, but the University Administration may need to move very quickly when the situation arises (on a time scale of days or weeks).
- Establish an office with someone dedicated to finding positions for spouses/partners. An institution with over 20,000 students would need at *least* a half-time, and preferably a full-time, position, filled by someone who knows both the institution and the surrounding area very well.
- Inform short-list candidates about this office and other possibilities. If *all* candidates, regardless of marital status, are informed, this is legal. It is best done in a form letter (so inappropriate questions aren't asked).
- Watch carefully for inappropriate questions, and take disciplinary action against repeat violators.