University of Northern Iowa

# UNI ScholarWorks

2000

# Tenure impediments for women professors

Mary A. Traetow
*University of Northern Iowa*

Let us know how access to this document benefits you

## Recommended Citation

# Tenure impediments for women professors

## Abstract

Women have long been struggling for equality in the tenured ranks of academia. The rigid tenure system has historically sanctioned rules for all who wish to enter. Research into this persistent inequity has focused on the "chilly" structure of universities (Blum, 1991) and on the question of women's ability to produce scholarship (Cole & Zuckerman, 1987). However, gender related issues as possible impeding factors for women professors seeking tenure have not been researched fully. The research focus is on how women's issues can be detrimental to the tenure climb of women professors. The paper will begin with a literature review regarding tenure impediments for women. This will be followed by the methodology used in this preliminary case study, including participant selection and interview questions. Next, an analysis of the interview data from the case study participants will be overviewed. Summary and conclusions will then be drawn from the findings, and implications for the student affairs profession related to this research will conclude my paper.

TENURE IMPEDIMENTS FOR WOMEN PROFESSORS

———

A Research Paper

Presented to

The Department of Educational Leadership, Counseling,

and Postsecondary Education

University of Northern Iowa

———

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Masters of Arts in Education

———

By

Mary A. Traetow

December 2000

This Research Paper by: Mary Traetow

Entitled: TENURE IMPEDIMENTS FOR WOMEN PROFESSORS

Has been approved as meeting the research paper requirements for the Degree
of Master of Arts in Education.

Carolyn R. Bair

11-29-2000
_____
Date Approved

_____
Director of Research Paper


Michael D. Waggoner

11.29.2000
_____
Date Approved

_____
Advisor/Second Reader of Research
Paper


Michael D. Waggoner

11.29.2000
_____
Date Received

_____
Head, Department of Educational
Leadership, Counseling, and
Postsecondary Education

## Introduction

Women have long been struggling for equality in the tenured ranks of academia. The rigid tenure system has historically sanctioned rules for all who wish to enter. Research into this persistent inequity has focused on the "chilly" structure of universities (Blum, 1991) and on the question of women's ability to produce scholarship (Cole & Zuckerman, 1987). However, gender related issues as possible impeding factors for women professors seeking tenure have not been researched fully.

The research focus is on how women's issues can be detrimental to the tenure climb of women professors. The paper will begin with a literature review regarding tenure impediments for women. This will be followed by the methodology used in this preliminary case study, including participant selection and interview questions. Next, an analysis of the interview data from the case study participants will be overviewed. Summary and conclusions will then be drawn from the findings, and implications for the student affairs profession related to this research will conclude my paper.

## Literature Review

The historical disadvantage women have had since making their way into the academy relates to the tenure system. "The traditional system was based on an antiquated, exclusionary model designed for males with wives" (Finkel & Oslang, 1994, p. 22).

The rules of the tenure process were set long before women arrived on the scene. White males set the standards and requirements necessary to climb

the tenure ladder. When tenure and promotion procedures were put in place, virtually all faculty were white, middle-class men with wives at home managing the child care. There was no consideration for the child care issue because it was not an issue for the men who designed the guidelines. Men were, and in many instances still are, advantaged with a social structure that allowed them freedom to grow professionally as they moved through the tenure system without interruption.

In the past, male faculty members most often combined work activities with family life by marrying a woman who was helping his career as part of her job. Faculty wives generally took care of all the household duties, raising children, and entertaining. They also typed manuscripts, served as research assistants or editors and generally provided psychological, administrative and secretarial support. (Strober et al., 1993, p. 24)

These valuable services were taken for granted by male professors who in most cases gave only patronizing credit to their wives.

At the turn of the nineteenth century, women striving to gain academic tenure promotion had to either adapt their own behavior as wives and potential mothers to fit into the traditional male model of a professor or be forced out of the university. Few of the earliest women faculty members married or had children (Bernard, 1964). Then a revelation was introduced by Martha Carey Thomas, the president of Bryn Mawr from 1894-1922. "The next advance in women's education is to throw open to the competition of women scholars the rewards and prizes of a scholar's life and allow women professors, like men

professors, to marry, or not, as they see fit" (Frankfort, 1977, p. 35). This advancement became frustratingly tenuous to women at a time when the traditional tenure system gave no allowances for the childbearing or child rearing undertaken by these women. When "the care of that human being is not defined as work, but seen as a private, natural and essentialist enterprise" (Presidential Advisory Commission on Status of Women: University of Saskatchewan, 1995, p. 200), support or recognition by the academy, or society in general, is not given. The Presidential Advisory Commission (1995) indicated that this lack of support for child care directly reflects a gendered organization and illustrates a devalued status for women's work (p. 202).

When reporting shrinking numbers of women professors in the 1950s, Newcomer (1959) concluded that women would contribute "a decreasing share to the advancement of knowledge in this country" – not because of prejudice against women, which had decreased, or lack of opportunities, which had increased, but rather because "women are now faced with a new handicap of their own choosing—increasingly early marriages and larger families" (as cited in Finkel & Olswang, p. 124, 1996). Women were, in essence, forced out of the academy by their own choosing, because of an inflexible tenure system that made no allowances for child care.

Although most Americans have moved past the "Cleaver" mentality of mom always being at home to provide for the needs of the father and children, "the academic profession in its structure and expectations does not reflect the

reality of our post-housewife era. There is no 'essential angel' at home for women in academia trying to reach tenure" (Coiner & George, 1998, p. 239).

The inequity arises when the rigorous demands of a tenure-track position which include publishing, teaching, committees, and community service are considered for women. It is an evaluative system which does not take into consideration the female perspective (Henzel, 1991). The seeming incompatibility of tenure with childbearing and raising a family make it a struggle for women. "A successful professional career requires timing based on the male pattern—that is, early achievements and uninterrupted competition." (Chliwniak, 1997, p. 31).

The constraining work structures of academia have changed little since the seventies (Coiner & George, 1998). Depending on the type of university, there is little allowance given to women who wish to have a child or children. To succeed in academia, tenure-track assistant professors have to "hit the ground running" (Whitt, 1991).

A common gender stereotype is that women are less motivated than are men by a need for achievement, but research has not supported this notion. What research does suggest is that women... are faced with pressures to balance their achievement needs against their desire for relationships... (Lips, 1989, p. 208)

According to Ruffins (1997), getting tenure means having a small group of people, predominately white men, decide if you are good enough to become a member of their club forever. Since tenure is deliberately designed to cement a

long-term, permanent relationship, "Being accepted for tenure is very much like getting married...the question of who is smart enough or good enough is very subjective" (Ruffins, 1997, p. 21).

This tenure "marriage" becomes more complicated for married women with children who are already deeply committed to their family values and priorities. Ruffins' (1997) research shows that "people tend to think that the people who are the brightest are those most like themselves and because judgements tend to be unconscious, people may [believe they are] being honest when they say they are not prejudiced" (p. 21). Thus, the academy "comfortably reproduced itself for several centuries and a male-dominated patriarchal culture has been solidly established" (Chliwniak, 1997, p. 13). The influence this repeating cycle of institutional norms carries can not be emphasized enough.

The rigorous tenure requirements and guidelines are equal for men and women. This is anticipated equity, but the inequity surfaces when the responsibilities of family are factored into the life equation. The pursuit of tenure is a stressful journey for both men and women, but the tilt of the playing field makes the trek even more difficult for women.

One female professor in a tenure-track position remarked that the price one pays for tenure is typically several years of one's life spent working (on academics), to the exclusion of almost everything else. "For a woman, raising a family and trying to get tenure is a clash of absolutes" (Strober et al., 1993, p. 24). The tenure system rigidifies their career path at a time when they (women) need maximum flexibility. Their probationary period is during the same time that

most women desire to marry and have a family (as cited in Finkel & Olswang, 1994, p. 8). The 1973 Carnegie Commission study related that "the very age range in which men are beginning to achieve a reputation through research and publication, 25 to 35, married women are likely to be bearing and rearing their children" (p. 139-40).

"Both families and professional careers are 'greedy' institutions, but until changes occur, women who want both can expect to face conflicting and overwhelming demands" (as cited in Chliwniak, 1997, p. 30). In order to meet traditionally sanctified and fixed tenure requirements, women professors had to either modify their own behavior as wives and potential mothers to fit into the traditional male model of a professor or they would be forced out of the university. This happened over and over again as many women dropped out of the tenure track positions prior to coming before committee (Finkel & Oslang, 1995).

The gender inequity begins with rules that are historically in place, but it does not stop there. Part of the external disadvantage women face within the tenure process, is the assumption of freedom from primary responsibility for maintaining a home, a family, and other human relationships exists. This is not reality for most academic women and can be a particularly acute disadvantage for faculty in the lower ranks because tenure and biological clocks often tick in unison (Coiner & George, 1998; Finkel & Olswang, 1995).

The pressures of tenure requirements can become overwhelming for women because aside from the research productivity and publishing quotas,

they tend to take on more, or are assigned more, teaching duties (especially in research institutions) which consume time (Hensel, 1991). In this study, Hensel noted that women reported limited time for research because of family responsibilities and spending significantly more time teaching as issues impeding their tenure path. Most higher education institutions focus on research when considering scholars for tenure. "However, women...scholars tend to be more committed to teaching, service, mentoring, and community work..." (Ruffins, 1997, p. 20). According to Loder, (1999) women professors place lower priority on attaining research grants, which puts them at a disadvantage. "Other factors that prevent women from applying for research money include teaching loads, pastoral care duties, and family commitments" (Loder, p. 28).

Coiner's formula for the lives of women seeking tenure portrayed this difficulty clearly:

If you get a job in a research institution, you'll have to live three-and-a-half lives:

Mother life = one life; Teaching life = one life; Publishing life = one life; Maintaining a home (hopefully sharing that responsibility equally with another adult) = half-a-life.

If you get a job at a 'teaching institution', you'll have to live only two-and-a-half lives, unless you are employed by a school that is increasing publication requirements while maintaining heavy teaching loads. (Coiner & George, 1998, p. 239)

Pease (1993) revealed that at research universities, most teaching is done by women; most research by men. These historically assigned work roles are a disadvantage to women seeking tenure because faculty who show outstanding teaching ability, but have published little, are denied tenure and promotion. Thus, "like motherhood, teaching is celebrated in the abstract, but denigrated in practice" (Pease, 1993, p. 135).

Many universities and colleges have maternity policies which allow women to "stop the tenure clock" to give personal time during the birth and first months of the baby's life. However, many women academics are afraid to take maternity leave or go on "mommy track" because their peers will view them as insufficiently motivated (Clark, 1996). Thus, even some of the policy in place that could help women through this time is not utilized because of the negative perception or stigma it evokes from other professionals.

Similarly, a woman professor will not dare use child care responsibilities as an excuse for not being at a committee meeting or campus activity, whereas a male professor may be held in high esteem for being a "good father" when using the same excuse. There is indeed still a double standard in this instance. Caplan (1993) describes the following "Catch 22" situation:

Women academics are not considered real women if they don't have children and devote a great deal of time to them; but women academics who devote much time to their children are said not to take their careers seriously. Even if you do not have children, you may be taken less seriously because someday you might have them. (p. 69)

The fact is that women faculty fare better in obtaining entry-level positions than in being equitably compensated or in gaining tenure. The 1995-96 AAUP salary survey of 2,200 institutions indicates that women are 33.5 percent of tenure-track faculty verses 66.5 percent for men. The tenure rate is only forty eight percent of tenured faculty women, only two percent improvement in twenty years, while men enjoy a seventy two percent tenure rate (Glazer & Raymo, 1998).

Research also reveals that the vast majority of women assistant professors want to remain in academia. Fewer than one per cent indicated a preference to leave the educational system (Finkel & Olswang, 1994). Therefore a disparity exists between the professional desires of women and the number of women who actually reach tenure and full professorship.

When women are faced with choices of nurturing the student or her child at home, the non-supportive environment of academe can be exasperating. "Feelings may be denied [doesn't she have a sense of humor?], ridiculed [what's your problem, honey?], or minimized" (Caplan, 1993, p. 72). "Research literature notes that women faculty are often assigned time-consuming tasks that men faculty do not regard as important for professional socialization" (as cited in Aquirre, 2000, p. 41). "In essence, women must transcend a work environment which is not likely to be supportive" (Frost & Taylor, 1993, p. 186).

Since women are a minority in the academic environment, and isolated at that, they have less access to the organizational and instructional resources (Tack & Patitu, 1992). "Women faculty describe experiences in which men were

offered more institutional assistance with their careers, such as research and laboratory money, than they were, citing them as reasons for leaving" (Aquirre, 2000, p. 41).

Lack of a support system and professional mentors are also factors in this minority disadvantage. Male faculty have the advantage of a historical system which supports their professional socialization. Women colleagues have had to develop their own means of support since there is little formal power to help develop women's voices. (McCall, 1999).

Within this societal and institutional disadvantage scenario is the fact that most women want to be primary caregivers. The primary caregiver role is not compatible with the overload schedule imposed on women seeking tenure. A woman's innate feeling or need to care for her children may be a negative factor during her pursuit of tenure. The pull of nature, which lures women to motherhood, may be stronger than a desire to be an intellectual professional for many women academics. Once motherhood is entered, "My child's existence becomes my own" (Coiner & George, 1998, p. 139). The following discusses the conflict of women as being professors versus being mothers:

The maternal is what the life of the mind exists to escape.

Thus the constant battle of the maternal teacher who feels the

demands of both her children and her students. Whatever time

I spent on one was being guiltily stolen from the other. I could

never be adequate, never catch up, never be good

enough. (Coiner & George, 1998, p. 4)

The entwining of a woman's nurturing instincts into her teaching while having children of her own at home only enlarges the conflicting saga of achieving tenure. Finkel and Olswang (1994, 1995) researched the tenure impediments for 124 women associate professors at a large, public, research university. When respondents of women with children were examined, 59.1 percent indicated that "time required by children" was a serious impediment. More than eighty percent with children five and under felt child care was an impediment.

Lack of publications, too much time teaching, and too much time on committees were the other top choices of women as tenure obstacles (Finkel & Olswang, 1994, 1995). Thus, "Academic women perceive that the time they spend with their children creates a serious impediment to tenure" (Finkel & Olswang, p. 18).

After reviewing the literature on the subject of women attaining tenure, I wanted to find out by interviewing female professors who are mothers to see what effect this gender related situation had on their tenure climb. I hoped to gain insight regarding this and other gender issues through qualitative research interviews.

## Methodology

### Participants

Because this is a preliminary case study, participants were limited to women professors from a single college. The three participants are faculty at a small, mid-western, liberal arts college of 1500 students. They have been given

pseudonyms to provide anonymity. Their ages range from thirty-eight to fifty-two.

Carla is a divorced, Caucasian woman with two children aged twenty-two and twenty-six. She is a full-time faculty member with tenure and a Ph.D. in the Humanities domain. Carla has taught at several colleges in both part-time and full-time positions for the past twenty-five years. During the time she was on the tenure track, her children were in elementary school.

Ellen is a Caucasian, part-time, non-tenured faculty member with a MA degree in English. She also holds an administrative position as director of the student services center on campus. She is the mother of two children, aged fourteen and nineteen, and is working toward her Doctorate degree in Education. Prior to coming to this liberal arts college, she taught part-time at a larger teaching university.

Alexa is an international minority woman who is a tenured, full-time faculty member and is presently the chairperson of the Social Sciences department. She earned her BA degree in India and now has a Ph.D. She had her children, who are aged one and three, after receiving tenure. She believes that there is an equal partnership in the child-rearing responsibilities at home.

Interview Questions

The one-on-one interviews were conducted at the workplace of the participants and were audio-taped. The following questions were posed to them during an approximately sixty-minute interview. Occasional follow-up questions were necessary for probing and clarification.

1.  What are or have been impediments to your professional growth as a woman faculty member?

2.  Do you feel that raising children has impeded your professional career?  Did you ever consider remaining childless?

3.  Do you consider yourself to be the primary caregiver for your children?  Describe your support system at home.

4.  What, if any, sacrifices did you have to make during your academic climb in either family or career?

5.  Do you believe that there is a difference in the perception of male faculty taking time from work to care for children than there is for women faculty?  Do you believe your experience is different than men's in balancing work and family?

6.  Describe any gender discrimination you have experienced or observed as a woman in higher education.

7.  What is your sense of where gender discrimination is today compared to twenty years ago?

From the verbatim transcriptions of the interviews, data were analyzed for emerging commonalties and themes.  Within the qualitative parameters of this preliminary research, analyzing the interviewees' statements with utmost objectivity and open mindedness was a priority.

Interview data corresponded positively with the literature review.  The themes of tenure process rigidity, underlying gender bias in the academic setting, and innate or socialized personal feelings as mothers, seemed to

dominate the interview comments. Two of the interviewees, Carla and Ellen (pseudonyms) showed strong opinions that women have an extra burden when advancing in the tenure process. The third, Alexa, who began her family after receiving tenure, did not experience the struggle and conflict described by the others. This seemed to be a noteworthy consideration when drawing research conclusions.

<div align="center">Analysis of Interview Data</div>

The question, "What have been impediments in your tenure climb?" elicited several responses pertaining to children and family responsibility. Two of the interviewees, Carla and Ellen, considered themselves primary caregivers for their children. Following are several quotes that constituted a recurring theme regarding the issue of children during the tenure track. Carla commented:

> One (Impediment to earning tenure) is having kids. My kids were small when I started the Ph.D. program. There was all the things about child care, to and from school...at nine and six they were not old enough to be by themselves and we lived out of town away from the elementary school so transportation was an issue. That continued all the way through, even when they were much more self-sufficient. I would always think, 'what are they doing, where are they going to be, can I get there, what am I missing?' There's a whole list.

During the interview with Alexa, who had her two children after earning tenure, there was a total disconnection with this issue because she could not identify with the problems related to child care during that pressure period.

Once tenure was earned, the college "has been very accommodating to my family needs."

Carla and Ellen stated that the choices they made regarding their career were affected by the fact that they have children. "It kept me at the degree level where I was. I chose to be part-time because I had small children at home", was Ellen's comment. Carla's response was, "I started my Ph.D. program later than I should have, or would have, if I hadn't been following someone else's career around and hadn't had children."

This led to the themes of concession and accommodation mentioned throughout the interviews. These were made for husbands, children, peers, and administration. Keeping everyone else happy and meeting the institutional expectations for women faculty were at times a political necessity. "One previous president didn't like pushy women. If you needed something, you needed to smile and be nice...not confrontational. Strong women were uncomfortable to him," was Carla's observation.

Ellen felt that she had to "be careful and accommodating toward male leaders, using very diplomatic or strategic procedures necessary to accommodate his (administrator's) style." Women had to be careful not to be too assertive in the eyes of male administrators. Carla added, "I was ambitious. I wanted a full time job and I got told on a couple occasions by different people that aggressive women didn't make a good impression and I ought to back off." So it was felt by two of the faculty women that a double standard indeed existed for male and female aggressiveness when pursuing tenure.

This type of concession carried over to peer faculty members also as women had to remain silent about child care difficulties to be available for scheduled meetings and college events. Ellen commented: "I never felt free to say 'I can't' to things at school because I'd have to take care of my children." Carla felt she accommodated other faculty despite her family obligations. "Most women don't talk much about child care arrangements. They just go ahead and make them. Babysitters get put in place and meetings get attended regardless of when they are and I didn't hear much complaining."

The accommodation theme carries over to the home situation and the spousal support provided to tenure track women. Two of the three interviewees, Carla and Ellen, said that they had primary responsibility for household duties and child care when their children were young. They also expressed that their careers were secondary to their mates. "His (husband's) job was always first. For the first twenty years of marriage, I did all the household chores, cooking, groceries, balancing checkbook." Another comment, "if I hadn't been following someone else's career around...," clearly pointed out that her professional goals were secondary to those of her husbands which would compound the difficulty of her tenure journey as a woman.

This carried over to the issue of gender inequity in the institutional workplace. The women who said they could not mention child care as a detriment to their work schedule found it to be different for male faculty. "I do see men all the time who use children as an excuse not to have early morning meetings because they can't find child care. I can't tell you how many early

morning babysitters I've had for committee meetings." The disparity is
emphasized by Carla's comment:

> I hear men making excuses about their child care responsibilities; why
> they can't attend a meeting or do this. They probably have legitimate
> reasons for raising the issue, but it's not something I did or that other
> women I worked with ever did.

A double standard is suggested by the following: "If men make that claim
(child care as a detriment to meeting professional obligations), then they are well
rounded and in touch with their feelings and take their family responsibility
seriously. Women use the same excuse and it's the opposite kind of
reaction...not professional, not focused." Ellen commented:

> I always felt like I wouldn't be perceived as a serious scholar and member
> of faculty or colleagues would think I was a dilettante. Part of that comes
> from being part-time. The perception is there that you're not committed
> enough to be full time. I didn't want to add to that perception.

Again, the woman faculty member is accommodating her peers even in
response to the gender inequity of this situation. She has two small children at
home, but is worried about how her colleagues will perceive her. This is
consistent with theory that women want to please and nurture others, often to the
point of neglect toward "self". An internalized reluctance to care for oneself can
lead to imbalance in the lives of caring mother professors (McCall, 1999).

This internal pressure or guilt of women professors emerged several
times during the interviews. Taking time from their homes and family

commitments to contribute to that of their professional tenure was a dominant personal struggle for all of them. Carla, a full-time professor, describes her emotions while working on tenure:

> The biggest sacrifice was emotional. I remember feeling guilty all the time. Guilty at home because there was research, reading, course design that I should have been doing if I only had to think about school. But when I got to school, I'd feel guilty about leaving my children...I always felt guilty and torn.

Ellen stated, "I remember thinking so many times, no matter where I was, my head was always in the other place...so it was always this tug back and forth." Thus, the emotional facet of this issue was a dominant factor in their struggle to reach tenure.

As these internal pressures made the difficulties of tenure even more intense, so did the external attitudes of gender inequity. When asked about gender discrimination in the college faculty, the women respondents all said that overt discrimination such as chauvinistic name calling or inequitable action are no longer a problem. Such behavior has been brought to greater awareness because of policy and political correctness established over the past several decades.

However, the interviewees pointed out covert attitudinal issues. "In the English department, most composition classes are taught by women. Composition is considered the low end of the English course ladder. Tenured men professors teach the literature courses." These composition courses

usually require more out-of-class help from the instructor, which translates to women spending more time on teaching rather than on research. This follows the pattern indicated by my literature review that women spend more time teaching.

Carla reported her necessity to emphasize during the faculty search process, that women's vitas should be reviewed differently than men's.

I have had to more than one time, remind my male colleagues who because they were looking at a woman's vita that was interrupted and maybe had more part time work, they shouldn't make the assumption she's not professional, and they do, or have. If a woman manages to put together a number of part time things and stays professionally employed, then there is a great deal of commitment. She's operating with a whole lot of restrictions about what someone else's career is doing, how old her children are, whether or not she does or doesn't have children, other things that don't get looked at the same way for women's verses men's vitas.

Ellen spoke of the old attitude of placing a woman in the framework of her husband's career:

I think gender bias is more attitudinal. When I get upset about something like being identified as 'Paul's wife' in a professional setting, male faculty think my outrage is funny. They see me as getting all bent out of shape at something that's a trivial matter. If someone introduced them as so and so's husband in a work setting...well, it just wouldn't happen.

With regard to attitudinal levels, Carla commented with a differing point of view:

Attitude levels might be the cause for some bias, but I'm inclined to think it's deeper or more hidden. It's at the level of unexamined assumptions or patterns of behavior. Not to say that some people are still pretty sexist...and maybe are threatened by women. But I say those things are pretty far down in peoples' consciousness.

Coupled with the attitudinal issue is the fact that women themselves tend to make excuses for men when certain situations or statements arise. As this interviewee reports:

Women make excuses for men that are along the 'boys will be boys' line. Male faculty members say things that are inappropriate in class and we tend to view it as a joke. Women who call them on it are still seen as troublemakers...as making too much out of a small thing.

It may be all these small facets of socialization that keep the tenure goal proportionately more difficult for women academics. Attitudes are the basis for action or the lack of it, and are often complacently subtle.

One interviewee spoke with concern about the attitudes of young women today. The giant strides women have taken toward equality over the past several decades are taken for granted by most college-aged women today. "The awareness of young women today will keep the issues of inequity moving forward, not more policy." The implication is that people who have not learned from history are doomed to repeat it.

Summary and Conclusions

These data showed that faculty impediments to tenure for women are based on several complex and intertwining factors. First are the external societal attitudes of administrators and male faculty which carry traditional perceptions and deeply embedded bias toward women faculty and their family responsibilities. Secondly, the innate physiological, psychological and socialized needs women have which draw them to be the primary caregivers for their children, can be detrimental to their tenure climb. Finally, the historical hurdles women have to override are buried so deeply under social constructs that change is slow and complicated.

Through research interviews I found that women in academia are faced with deeply embedded bias that has definitive repercussions on their personal and professional lives. Although more overt today than several decades ago, gender discrimination occurs from a host of subtle personal and social barriers which operate below the level of awareness for both men and women.

Women, as primary caregivers, carry the burden of childcare as they simultaneously strive to attain tenure. They also tend to accommodate and make concessions for others in their personal and professional environments. As the rules prescribe, reaching tenure is incredibly difficult for some and unattainable for many as the statistics of tenured women indicate.

Although policy affecting women's tenure requirements may be helpful, it is doubtful that even progressive policy could erase the pervasive gender bias that is socialized into most of us. Thus the slow and grinding process of

enlightening attitudes must be escalated to become the basis for change in the tenure system. With the conservative and traditional cultural system as a historical beginning, resistance is inevitable in this transformation process. Incremental, yet effective, assertive, yet subtle changes can reshape institutional culture, but the complexity involved in such change is immense.

Academic women want children. Academic women want tenure. As a gender, women have always been assigned to "do it all" and have carried this responsibility dutifully to the disregard of the their personal "selves". Women in academia must realize that just as men have had help at home with their family responsibilities, women should also acquire more help for themselves. Even though their internal or socialized desire is to care for their children themselves, accommodations must be made in the responsibilities of childcare whether at home or in the workplace. Women deserve the same advantages as men when it comes to support in home and childcare responsibilities.

Inside the academy, administrators and male faculty must realize that a woman's career path may not be a traditional one because of an inequity in parental responsibility. Even so, their competence and presence should be welcomed and not denied or treated with ambivalence.

The tenure rules should be adjustable for faculty who have child care responsibilities, both male and female. The rigidity of the tenure requirements and a void of empathetic understanding in this gender issue is one basis for the disparity between the professional desires of women and the number of women who actually reach tenure.

Change is necessary, however, and equity is essential. The frustration involved in the pursuance of gender equality throughout the tenure track procedure is inevitable. "Equality cannot be externally assigned, it must be internally perceived" (Schaef, 1985, p. 74). It is the internalization of slowly changing attitudes that makes this process so difficult.

Women faculty must communicate professionally with administrators and faculty members about this complicated tenure issue. Women and men faculty members interested in equality must continue to challenge current policies, procedures and institutional norms that are not equitable.

Since there was not a support system build in for them historically as there was for men, women faculty must build their own professional support system. Collectively, feminist, caring voices must collaborate to establish both formal and informal support within the academy. This support system, however, must also include those of the opposite gender so that unity and equality can commence within a "seamless" group of faculty.

Hopefully the academy's respect for the gender status of women as mothers will grow and allow for flexibility in the now rigid tenure system. A quote from a poem, "Solitude", succinctly conveys the nature of a woman's tenure dilemma: "Academic women with young children awaken...to grasp multiple identities; to resist total positionings as mother, wife, bureaucrat...contradictions abound." (Erdman, 2000, p. 88). Indeed, the complex contradictions the tenure inequity issue elicits are far reaching. More research is warranted so that continued progressive awareness is reached throughout the profession.

Implications for the Student Affairs Profession

Though the focus of my research paper was on faculty, I found that the knowledge I gained regarding the tenure track stress experienced by faculty could benefit me as a student affairs professional. I believe that the historical segregation of student affairs and academic affairs can be minimized by each entity gaining knowledge of the other's perspectives, responsibilities and commitments toward students.

Indeed, "having different assumptions, values, and responsibilities does not mean student affairs professionals and faculty cannot work together or that conflict is inevitable." (as cited in Schuh & Whitt, 1999, p. 11). Professionals can become even more so when they take the initiative to understand how and why the "other guys" think and act as they do. This would be a positive step toward the goal of "creating seamless learning environments" for students both in and out of the classroom (Kuh, 1996).

The intensity of tenure demands and post-tenure teaching, advising, serving and publishing should be common knowledge to student affairs professionals. The complementary strengths and weaknesses of academic and student affairs people can help this valuable partnership meet their common goal--student learning and development. Each entity must realize what those strengths and weaknesses are, however, before true and meaningful integration and coherence of the two professions can be achieved.

The education of student affairs candidates, should include instruction regarding the rigorous intellectual, social and emotional stress faculty go

through to earn tenure. Increased understanding and enlightenment of each

other's professional journey will inevitably lead to greater mutual respect.

References

Aquirre, A. (2000). Women and minority faculty in the academic workplace. ERIC-ASHE Higher Education Report, 27(6).

Bernard, J. (1964). Academic women. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.

Blum, D. (1991). "Environment still hostile to women in academe, new evidence indicates. Chronicle of Higher Education, 38 (7).

Caplan, P. (1993). Lifting a ton of feathers: A woman's guide for surviving in the academic world. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Chliwniak, L. (1997). Higher education leadership: Analyzing the gender gap. ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report, 25(4). Washington, D.C.: The George Washington University, Graduate School of Education and Human Development.

Clark, V., Garner, S., Higonnet, M., & Katrak, K. (Eds.) (1996). Antifeminism in the academy. New York: Routledge.

Coiner, C., & George, D. (Eds.) (1998). The family track. Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Cole, J., & Zuckerman, H. (1987). Marriage, motherhood and research performance in science. Scientific American, 256 (2), 119-125.

Collins, L., Chrisler, J., & Quina, K. (Eds.) (1998). Career strategies for women in academe: Arming athena. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.

Erdman, J. (2000). Solitude. In A. Christian-Smith & K. Kellor (Eds.), Everyday knowledge and uncommon truths: Women of the academy. (pp.188-189). Boulder, CO: Westview.

Finkel, S., & Olswang, S. (1994). Impediments to tenure for female assistant professors. Presentation at the annual meeting of the Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE).

Finkel, S., & Olswang, S. (1994). The implications of childbirth on tenure and promotion for women faculty. Review of Higher Education, 17(3), 250-270.

Finkel, S., & Olswang, S. (1995). Child rearing as a career impediment to women assistant professors. The Review of Higher Education 19(2), 123-139.

Frost, P., & Taylor, M. (Eds.) (1996). Rhythms of academic life. Thousand Oaks, California. Sage.

Glazer-Raymo, J. (1999). Shattering the myths. Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University Press.

Henzel, N. (1991). Realizing gender equity in higher education: The need to integrate work/family issues. ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report No. 2. Washington D.C.: The George Washington University, School of Education and Human Development.

Kuh, G. (1996). Guiding principles for creating seamless learning environments for undergraduates. Journal of College Student Development, 37 (2), 135-148.

Lips, H. (!989). Gender role socialization: Lessons in femininity. In Women: A feminist perspective (4th ed.). Mountain View, CA: Mayfield.

Loder, N. (1999, January). Fighting sexism. The Times Higher Education Supplement, 1366, 28.

McCall, A. (1999). Can feminist voices survive and transform the academy? In L. Christian-Smith & K. Kellor (Eds.), Everyday knowledge and uncommon truths: Women of the academy (pp. 83-108). Boulder, CO: Westview.

Newcomer, M. (1959). A century of higher education for American women. New York: Harper & Brothers.

Pease, J. (1993, March). Professor mom: Woman's work in a man's world. Sociological Forum, 8(1), 133-139.

President's Advisory Commission on the Status of Women, University of Saskatchewan. (1995). Reinventing our legacy: The chills which affect women. In The Chilly Collective (Eds.), Breaking anonymity: The chilly climate for women faculty. (pp. 171-210). Ontario, Canada: Wilfrid Laurier University Press.

Ruffins, P. (1997, October). The fall of the house of tenure. Black Issues in Higher Education, 14, 19-26.

Schaef, A. (1985). Women's reality: An emerging female system in a white male society. San Francisco: Harper and Row.

Schuh, J. & Whitt, E., Eds. (1999). Creating successful partnerships between academic affairs and student affairs. New Directions for Student Services, 87.

Stroeber, M. (1993). Report of the Provost Committee on the Recruitment and Retention of Women Faculty. Stanford University Press.

Tack, M., & Patitu, C. (1992). Faculty Job Satisfaction: Women and

Minorities in Peril. ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Report, 4. Washington D.C.:

The George Washington University, School of Education and Human

Development.

The Carnegie Commission on Higher Education. (1973, September).

Opportunities for women in higher education. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Whitt, E. (1991). Hit the ground running: Experiences of new faculty in a

school of education. The Review of Higher Education, 14(2), 177-197.