

ADVANCE PURDUE Work-life/Balance Policy Event

Hosted by the Center for Faculty Success

Friday, October 16, 2009, 12:00-2:00 pm

Earhart Dining Court, Private Dining Room C

Opening Remarks, Valentine M. Moghadam, Professor of Sociology and Women's Studies, Director of the Women's Studies Program, co-PI, ADVANCE-Purdue.

This event is part of the NSF-funded ADVANCE grant, which supports research and programming for "institutional transformation" and the creation of the Purdue Center for Faculty Success. (The Center's director, Prof. Chris Sahley, is here today, as are other members of the Leadership Team.) The overarching objective of ADVANCE-Purdue is to increase the number and diversity of successful women faculty members in the STEM disciplines – science, technology, engineering and mathematics – as well as agriculture.

Today's event is part of a series of activities – both research and programming – to better understand work-life (or work-family) balance issues. These issues have become the subject of international policy dialogues, of feminist research, and of a growing literature on the problems and prospects of women in the labor force, including academia. Our working assumption is that the sexual division of labor, or women's double-burden, is a major contributing factor to the glass ceiling, pipeline leakages, chilly climates, and other metaphors that are used to describe impediments to women's advancement. By advancement we mean successful careers that include promotion, involvement in decision making, and higher incomes. With respect to academia, obstacles to faculty women's success are especially salient where institutional supports are lacking or are weak. Conversely, there is more of a level playing field for women

and men in the academy when institutional policies support work-family balance, or help transform the sexual division of labor, or tackle biases and stereotypes.

To this end, one of our activities within ADVANCE is to examine Purdue's policies and programs around family leave (including maternity and paternity leaves), tenure-clock extension, and childcare. I have been working with Mary Burbrink (SOC Ph.D. student) to examine Purdue's policies and those of peer institutions within the Big Ten and elsewhere; we have been reviewing the broad literature on work-family issues; and we have been having conversations with Purdue faculty who have made use of the policies. The goal is to prepare a policy brief and some recommendations.

This is the first of two events in which faculty – largely but not exclusively from STEM and Agriculture – gather for purposes of networking and information-sharing on work-life issues. Following Prof. Shelley MacDermid's presentation, we will break into small groups to discuss our three foci: family leaves, childcare, and tenure clock stoppages. We are interested in knowing how you feel about these issues in general, and what you think of Purdue's policies in particular. Any comparative insights that you may have would also be helpful. The break-out sessions will be followed by a general discussion.