

WIP: Proactive Dual Career and Relocation Assistance During the Faculty Interview Process

Dr. Robyn Sandekian, University of Colorado, Boulder

Robyn Sandekian, PhD, is the Manager of Diverse Faculty Recruiting for the College of Engineering and Applied Science at the University of Colorado Boulder. In this role, Robyn works with hiring committees throughout the College to ensure that faculty searches reach a broad pool of potential applicants and coordinates training offered by the National Center for Women and Information Technology (NCWIT) to identify and reduce implicit bias throughout the search process. In addition, she runs a faculty development and leadership program to train and recruit diverse PhD students who wish to pursue academic positions in engineering or applied science after graduation.

Dr. Sandekian earned B.S. and M.S. degrees in Aerospace Engineering Sciences at CU Boulder in 1992 and 1994, respectively. She went on to earn a Specialist in Education (Ed. S.) degree in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies in 2011 and a Ph.D. in Higher Education and Student Affairs Leadership in December 2017, both from the University of Northern Colorado.

She is a Founding Leader of the American Society of Engineering Education (ASEE) Virtual Community of Practice (VCP) for LGBTQ+ Inclusion in Engineering and a facilitator of Safe Zone trainings for engineering faculty and staff who wish to learn more about how to create inclusive environments within engineering for LGBTQ+ individuals.

Mrs. Karen G Braun, University of Colorado, Boulder

Karen G. Braun is a Special Projects Lead for the Provost at University of Colorado Boulder. She has worked in the Office of Admissions, in the Office of Diversity, Equity & Community Engagement, and the BOLD Center in the College of Engineering & Applied Science at the university. She previously worked as an educational and public outreach specialist at the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

Dr. Sarah Miller, University of Colorado, Boulder

Sarah Miller provides vision and leadership for the recruitment, retention, and success of outstanding and diverse students, faculty, and staff to the University of Colorado Boulder's College of Engineering and Applied Science. As Assistant Dean for Inclusive Excellence, she leads the Broadening Opportunity through Leadership and Diversity (BOLD) Center, overseeing efforts to attract and prepare students for the rigors of engineering study and careers, and to improve student performance and graduation rates. Appointed in January 2014, Miller comes to CU-Boulder from the National Science Foundation, where she worked in STEM education as a American Association for the Advancement of Science Fellow.

Sarah believes that every child deserves an excellent education. She has worked in inner-city public schools, both as a teacher and as an administrator, and in the admissions office of Amherst College, where she earned a B.A. in Chemistry. She holds a PhD from Yale University in chemical and environmental engineering, where her doctoral research produced a bio-based water purification system for removing arsenic from developing world water supplies.



WIP: Proactive Dual Career and Relocation Assistance

A work in progress at the University of Colorado Boulder to increase faculty diversity



Definition



A dual-career couple includes two people who plan to maintain a long-term relationship together while each continues to pursue a career. It does not:

- require legal marriage
- limit genders of partners
- require full time employment
- require that both partners work for same employer

Sprunt, 2016



Importance to Academia



- Academia is a gendered environment¹
- Female academics are statistically more likely to be partnered with another academic
- Dual career hires have been suggested as one solution to underrepresentation of female faculty^{2,3}

¹Morton (2018);

²Schiebinger, Henderson, and Shannon (2008);

³Wolf-Wendel, Twombly & Rice (2003)



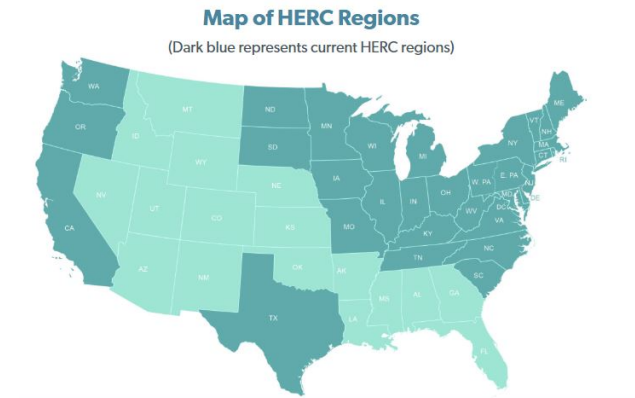
Status: We are Playing Catch Up!

Proactive vs Reactive approach



Best Practices

- Published and supported dual career hiring policies
- Higher Education Recruitment Consortium



- Active process typically starts *after* first offer is made



Already in Place at Our University

- Support for dual career academic couples
 - Faculty/staff position placement assistance for partner
 - Provost provides partial funding for partner's position
 - Allows for search waiver for partner's position
- Advertising our support of dual career couples (started 2016)
 - “The College ...is also eager to accommodate the needs of dual career couples” [in all advertisements]
 - Information on current process in materials handed out to all candidates during on-campus interviews



Previous Process

- Find out about spouse/partner needs once offer is made then scramble to find a placement for the S/P
 - Department chairs & HR responsible for individual requests (Chair contacts Dean who contacts Provost)
 - May require cross-college collaboration in timely manner
 - Required expedited last-minute review/decisions/votes which lead to candidate decision delays



Feedback from Recent New Hires

- 50% of male faculty survey respondents rated dual career issues as “extremely” or “very” important
- 38% of female faculty survey respondents rated dual career issues as “extremely” important*
- Experiences varied dramatically

Leysia Palen is a Professor and the Founding Chair of Information Science at our University. She has also led the establishment of the Crisis Informatics research area.



I was a trailing spouse...and the closest fit for me was Computer Science... but it wasn't an easy fit

*0% as “very”



Phase I: Started in Spring 2019

- Partners of ALL on-campus interviewees invited to campus (paid for by the Dean)
- Partners work with Provost staff member to arrange their own choice of activities
 - Separate from all faculty-candidate interview components
 - May or may not explicitly involve job-related activities
- If appropriate, partners have informational mtgs.
 - Faculty discussions arranged by Assoc. Dean of Faculty Affairs (instead of Chairs)
 - Staff discussions arranged by College's HR Rep



Phase I continued

- Relocation packets to candidates @ hotel
 - College info
 - Relocation specialist info
 - Local goodies (tea & chocolate)



Early Results



Approximately 20% of candidates bring Spouse/Partner

- 12 candidates identified S/P for visit
 - Eight seeking dual career & relocation assistance
 - Seven T/TT faculty & one professional staff
 - Four seeking relocation assistance only
 - Expecting approximately 2-3 more visits

In addition to active searches

- Two targeted dual career hires outside search process

***Revelation: Not *explicitly* a dual-career program

- No limitations on working-status of visiting partner



Phase II – Started March 2019

- Upon Decision to Offer Job to Candidate
 - Partner's job materials immediately available to be provided to relevant contacts
 - Provide continuing Provost-level support for process as needed
 - Potential hiring department initiates employment discussions with spouse/partner



To be Answered this Year



- Additional costs to the college?
 - Expect to fund 15+ additional travelers (S/P)
- Does this program improve yield?
 - Numbers? Diversity? Other identifiable differences?
- Improved candidates experiences/perceptions?
- Is there a limit to # of dual hires Provost will fund?



Ongoing Challenges/Issues



- Candidates are well trained NOT to mention partners prior to offer being made
- Negative assumptions about partner's competence¹ (“second hire” vs “trailing spouse”)
- Potential illegalities of family-status inquiries
 - Actual & perceived
- No guarantee of employment for EITHER visitor
- HERC must be initiated at university system level
 - System staff “doesn’t have bandwidth to lead effort”

¹ Schiebinger, Henderson, and Shannon (2008).



Suggestions

- We are seeking suggestions from other universities!



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