DO YOU KNOW YOUR WAGE SCALE?

By Anne MacLachlan*

Whatever the type of position, if it is at a public college or university, pay scales are available on the Web. Salary ranges for non-ladder faculty and other positions are usually given in advertisements. It is critical that before a position is accepted, you know how much you are worth and what you can expect from the institution about to hire you. Average academic salaries for 1400 colleges and universities are found for all ranks in the American Association of University Professors’ Annual Salary Survey (www.aaup.org/).

Before going to the campus interview you should know the average salary for your level and approximate salaries for your particular discipline. Several professional associations now track members’ salary range and distribution.

INSIDE: Articles on
- How Academe Treats Mothers
- What to do When you Receive a Sexual Harassment Complaint.
- Responses Re. Collegiality
Do You Know Your Wage Scale? (continued from p. 1)

Equally important: Do not respond when the dean, chair or provost discusses possible salary with you at the interview. Listen to what is being said and understand that this is part of the mating dance. Most institutions expect you to bargain when they make the offer, which usually, but not always, follows the interview.

Whether made on the spot (not an approved approach) or in a later phone call, your response ought to be that you are honored, delighted, etc. but you would like to digest the good news and call back in a day. When you call back you should then ask precisely what is being offered to you, write it down, and respond, particularly if the voice at the other end says, “We are thinking of offering you $55,000 for a none-month appointment.”

You will know from having done your homework that this is a fairly decent offer (they usually really do want you to accept), but as a matter of principle you should respond that you had been thinking more in the upper $50s. This is a non-confrontational way of asking for more and the most likely outcome is you will be given a little more. The voice at the other end will probably respond that it must be discussed with a higher up, but not always.

Whatever you agree upon, however, should be plainly written in the offer letter. Offers that are clearly way below the listed salary in the AAUP Survey should be regarded with great suspicion. However, if a fairly reasonable salary rate is not particularly flexible you can agree on extra salary for the summer, student assistance, generous start-up costs, moving costs, and several other things that universities regularly offer new hires.

Keep in mind, though, that every salary increase is a percentage building on your original salary. The higher the salary, the greater the increases.

+ Our thanks to Anne MacLachlan for letting us reprint this article from Wage, We Advocate Gender Equity (Spring 2002) pp. 4-5. Wage is a newsletter whose mission is “to end gender bias and achieve gender equity in the education, hiring, retention, promotion, and compensation of women in the academic community within the University of California and other academic institutions.”

A subscription can be ordered from

WAGE, 3857 Howe St.
Oakland, CA 94611
www.wage.org

“One of the largest enemies we need to deal with is our own expectations and attitudes toward money.”

Marsha Sinetar

The Strategist has available two previously published items on how you can negotiate your salary:


For these two items send a stamped self-addressed envelope to Annis Pratt at the address on the masthead.
How Academe Treats Mothers

By JOAN WILLIAMS*

In 1996, Debbie Moore, an admissions staff assistant at Alabama State University who was eight months pregnant, was walking across campus one day when she ran into a top administrator who, she says, remarked,

"I was going to put you in charge of [the] office, but look at you now."

A continuing survey by the Program on Gender, Work & Family -- which I direct at American University's law school -- has found that many mothers (in academe and other professional realms) face a chilly climate at work. And many are suing as a result. When Moore sued the university, in Moore v. Alabama State University, a federal court held that the remark, if true, would constitute direct evidence of unlawful employment discrimination. (Ultimately the case was settled through mediation and the terms remain confidential.)

In June 2000, in another federal-court case, the University of Oregon agreed to pay $495,000 to a former assistant professor who was denied tenure after she took two maternity leaves while on the tenure track. The university's provost had told faculty members that taking maternity leave would "prejudice the case for tenure," and criticized the plaintiff for failing to teach classes while on maternity leave and for being unable to present a paper at a conference she could not attend because of medical complications of her pregnancy.

These cases bring home an important point: The chilly climate for women at universities reflects not only stereotypes about women in general, but also stereotypes about mothers in particular. Psychological studies inventoried by the "cognitive bias working group" of the Program on Gender, Work & Family document that gender stereotypes sharply differentiate between mothers and other women. The most dramatic is a study -- forthcoming in the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology -- by Susan Fiske, Amy Cuddy, Peter Glick, and Jun Xu. Fiske and her colleagues worked with a group of 74 psychology undergraduates and 50 nonstudents. The researchers found in a laboratory setting that, while "businesswomen" were rated as similar in competence to "business men" and "millionaires," "housewives" were rated as similar in competence to the "elderly," "blind," "retarded," and "disabled."
This study helps explain a common phenomenon: Many female professors and staff members report that they felt treated like valued colleagues until they had children, and then they felt their colleagues' assessment of their competence start to plummet. Stereotypes about caregivers may play a significant role in academe, both because standards are so high and because assessments are so subjective.

Mothers often pay the price. Just for fun, count up the number of men and women in your department. Now count the number of mothers. If there are very few mothers, it means one of two things. It may signal women who are childfree: who do not have, and never did have, an interest in having children. If that's the case, that's something to celebrate. It's important that women feel they have a choice about motherhood. Academe is a key arena where women are carving out full adult lives, gay and straight, with or without children.

On the other hand, a department with few or no mothers may also be a workplace in which women, but not men, have to sacrifice children in order to succeed.

"At work, you think of the children you've left at home. At home, you think of the work you've left unfinished."

Golda Meir

Bias against mothers may be blatant, of the "look at you now" variety. It may well be more subtle, as research in cognitive bias psychology has shown.

Say a faculty member devotes a day to research -- only to encounter questions the next day about whether she enjoyed her time home with her baby. If the faculty member were a man, the same action -- taking a day to focus on your research at home -- is usually automatically attributed to work rather than to family. In sharp contrast, mothers may find themselves constantly explaining that no, they really were at the library rather than the playground. The tendency to attribute behavior in stereotypical ways -- to work for men, to family for women -- is what social psychologists refer to as differences in "attribution."

Cognitive bias can have other effects as well. How many times can a mother correct biased assumptions without seeming to "protest too much?" In these instances, controlling your tone of voice is so important. How much energy do mothers devote to correcting biased attributions in a carefully modulated tone that does not make colleagues uncomfortable?

It can be a tightrope, as any attempt to correct a misperception that a mother has "lost her edge." One mother told us that she responded to criticism by pointing out her accomplishments, only to find her collegial relationships further strained by her "bragging." Psychological studies report that what is seen as proper self-assertion in a man may be perceived as unseemly self-promotion in a woman.
The disturbing message that I draw from all of this is that the chilly climate in academe is not produced by a few bad actors who don't like women. Instead it stems from spontaneous and unexamined assumptions. We need to start bringing those assumptions to the fore.

- Academic institutions need to think about discrimination not just by comparing the treatment of men and women; they also need to compare the treatment of mothers and others. People need to look around and assess not only whether women are surviving and thriving, but whether mothers are.

- The next step, if academe followed the corporate world, would be training programs designed to sensitize colleagues to the unexamined messages they may be sending.

- If family care is no longer associated with lack of commitment and competence, fathers, too, will feel freer to spend time with children. And adults without children will find themselves freer to take time to care for parents or partners in need of family care. Changing workplace ideals to enable academics to balance work and family can improve the lives not only of mothers -- but of others as well.

Joan Williams, a professor of law at American University and director of its Program on Gender, Work & Family, is author of Unbending Gender: Why Family and Work Conflict and What To Do About It (Oxford University Press, 2000).

*This article is excerpted from The Chronicle (Monday, June 17 2002) and is available in full online at this address: http://chronicle.com/jobs/2002/06/2002061701c.htm

"The Greeks thought the purpose of the brain was to cool the blood, while the actual locus of thought was in the heart."

Eric Ulne
How To Handle Sexual Harassment Complaints

The year that I came up for tenure, two secretaries and several graduate students appealed to me to do something about Professor C., who was calling them into his office, closing the door, and making sexual overtures; he was also reaching over to fondle their breasts when they passed him on the stairway. I knew that if I made a big stink just then it would be no tenure for me, and what use, I pointed out, would I be to women on campus then? However, I promised that the minute I got tenure I would do something about it, which I did, the very next morning. The chair of the department and an important sidekick rounded on me for ingratitude, and Professor C. got the Dean to threaten to take me to court for defamation of character. We did not have any person on campus designated to handle sexual harassment complaints at the time, so I went to a lawyer who gathered depositions from the secretary and graduate students, got them to sign one copy which he put in his drawer, then mailed the unsigned copies to a more progressive Dean. The results were immediate:, Professor C. was reprimanded and never allowed from that day on to close his office door; and the secretaries’ and students’ names were protected. If you do not have tenure yet, here are some useful suggestions:

How to Handle a Sexual Harassment Complaint:
Passing the Hot Potato to Someone Else.
By Bernice R. Sandler*

Handling a sexual harassment complaint is difficult and requires both training and experience. If handling sexual harassment complaints is not part of your job responsibilities, what should you do if someone comes to you and describes behaviors that may be sexually harassing? Here are some things you can do:

1. Show concern. “I’m sorry this is happening to you.”
2. Take the report seriously. Don’t use “dangerous words” such as “it’s no big deal,” “I know he didn’t mean it,” “You have to understand he is from a different culture,” “He hugs everyone.” “Boys will be boys,” “You ought to be able to deal with this yourself.
3. Tell the person that the institution has a policy. “We have a policy to deal with this kind of problem.”
4. PASS THE HOT POTATO TO SOMEONE ELSE. Know who the person is who handles sexual harassment complaints. “I’m not the best person to talk to about this. Mary Smith has lots of experience with this and has helped a lot of people like you. Let me call her right now and see when she can see you.”
5. Provide for follow up: “If that doesn’t work out, get back to me and we’ll figure out what to do next.”
6. Follow up. Call to find out if the harassment has actually stopped.
7. Keep a written record of the meeting.
8. Report the complaint if required and/or the behavior is serious or the impact of the behavior on the person is severe.
How to Handle Sexual Harassment Complaints (continued):

In the years following my tenure decision, our campus assigned a dean to handle sexual harassment complaints, but my students kept telling me that she did nothing about their cases while the harassment against them continued. So check out the procedures on your campus before sending women who have come to you along to someone else: is the person or office just a public relations “front” for inaction, or have cases actually been handled well?

In the 1990s Stanford University was notorious for the Medical School’s harassment against surgeon Francis Conley. About Women on Campus tells how, after she went public, “the Medical school distributed a wallet-sized card to students listing the school’s definition of sexual harassment and listing the names, phone numbers, and e-mail addresses of its sexual harassment resources, including the medical school’s ombudsperson, sexual harassment advisors, sexual harassment coordinating advisor, campus sexual assault and recovery team, and counseling and psychological services.”*

This sounds like a serious effort, but in my opinion an untenured faculty woman might put herself in a vulnerable position by working openly, even through such overt channels, which is where Bernice Sandler’s advice on passing the “hot potato” might be especially useful.

*This material is quoted from About Women on Campus, 8:1 (Winter 1999) p. 4, and 7:4 (Fall 1998) p. 4, a publication put out by NAWE (Advancing Women in Higher Education), 1325 18th Street NW, Suite 210, Washington DC 20036-6511.

Some Responses to our Collegiality Article (Spring 02)

Kay Austen called our attention to an article by Tamar Lewin in the July 12, 2002 New York Times on “Collegiality” as a Tenure Battleground.” Lewin concludes from a number of court cases in which “collegiality” was considered a relevant factor in tenure decisions that it may come to be added to the three present categories for promotion: research/publication, service and teaching. Unfortunately, the covert requirement that women faculty act like “good daughters” can still be used to validate men who are uncomfortable with levels of assertion in women they easily accept from each other.

(NYTimes.com/2002/07/12/education/12COLL.html?ex=102/584942&ei=1&en=657e57ed2f10bb54)

Pat Washington sent us an apt quote from the Career Network of the Chronicle of Higher Education: “A CONGENIAL DEPARTMENT, says Michael J. Bugaj, is usually one whose members are of one sex, one race, one pedagogy, or one research theory - in other words, homogeneous.”

(http://chronicle.com/jobs/2002/07/200 2073001.c.htm)
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The NWSA Academic Discrimination board is looking for volunteers to work with us on the annual conference. We need you
to help plan panels and contact panelists to present to correspond with NWSA about conference plans and panels.
to send material about these plans to NWSA Action and The Strategist to arrange for a table at the conference to exhibit our materials.

Can you help? Contact Ines Shaw at orchidea3S@netscape.net