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Author(s): Jerry A. Jacobs and Sarah E. Winslow

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Overworked Faculty: Job Stresses and Family Demands

By
JERRY A. JACOBS
and
SARAH E. WINSLOW

Do professors put in very long workweeks solely out of a love of their work, or do expectations for teaching and publishing essentially require a sixty-hour workweek for the successful completion of the job? How do faculty members reconcile the demands of an academic career with the realities of family life? Drawing on a large national survey of postsecondary faculty conducted in 1998, the authors examine the length of the workweek by analyzing its relationship to faculty dissatisfaction with their workload. The authors find evidence that many professors are dissatisfied with their workload. Moreover, dissatisfaction increases among those working the longest hours. The data also indicate that very long hours on the job greatly contribute to research productivity. The very long hours demanded by faculty jobs thus pose a dilemma for parents who want to spend time with their children and their families. The authors conclude by suggesting that the challenge is to create a set of expectations for academic employment that are compatible with responsible parenting in dual-career couples.

Keywords: working time; faculty jobs; work-family conflict; working women; working parents

As a way to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the Women's Studies Program at the University of Pennsylvania, Janice Madden organized a conference in October 2003 titled "Mommies and Daddies on the Fast Track." Given that occasion, we began by taking a step back and putting today's questions in context. Women have made major strides in entering many prominent professions during the thirty

Jerry A. Jacobs is Merriam Term Professor of Sociology at the University of Pennsylvania. He has been an active member of the American Sociological Association and Sociologists for Women in Society. He has just completed a term as president of the Eastern Sociological Society and is starting a three-year term as editor of the American Sociological Review, the leading sociology journal in the United States. He has written extensively on opportunities for working women over the past two decades. His research has addressed a number of aspects of women's employment, including authority, earnings, working conditions, part-time work, and entry into male-dominated occupations. Jacobs is the author of

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years since Penn's Women's Studies program was established. Since 1973, we have seen so many firsts—the first woman morning news anchor, the first woman on the Supreme Court, the first woman astronaut, the first woman secretary of state, the first woman president of an Ivy League university, the first woman CEO of a Fortune 500 technology company—that the very idea of female firsts is almost old news. In some areas, women's advances have gone well beyond the successes of a few pioneers. In 1973, no one would have dared to predict that within thirty years, students in law school and medical school would be able to count as many female as male classmates (American Association of Medical Colleges 2004). For all the complicated issues of gender inequality that remain for our society, we do believe that it is useful to remind ourselves of how much has changed in so short a time.

Many feminists and other interested observers are coming to the conclusion, however, that in recent years, the progress women have made in entering the professions has begun to stall. Arlie Hochschild (1989), who has coined so many memorable phrases, has referred to the current period as “a stalled revolution” in gender roles. The gender gap in earnings appears to be stagnating (Padavic and Reskin 2002). In an earlier paper, we found evidence of a plateau in gender segregation of occupations (Jacobs 1999). The disparity in attainment seems most evident at the highest echelons of business corporations. For example, at present, only eight women head Fortune 500 companies.¹

At the same time as scholars raise serious questions about maintaining the momentum toward economic advances on the part of women, concern is growing about the ability of parents, especially working mothers, to balance commitment to their jobs and families. This body of research generally focuses on the ways work spills over into the rest of life, although we must take into account spillovers in both directions. Work-family conflict results from the competition between families and employers for the time and energy of individuals; it is a form of interrole conflict that emerges whenever the demands of one role make it difficult to fulfill the requirements of another (Greenhaus and Beutell 1985). Tension between work and family can result from three major sources: the demands of work (e.g., working

three books, Revolving Doors: Sex Segregation and Women's Careers (1989); Gender Inequality at Work (1995); and The Time Divide: Work, Family and Gender Inequality, with Kathleen Gerson (forthcoming). His current research projects include a study of women's entry into the medical profession, funded by the Macy Foundation, and a study of working time and work-family conflict among college and university faculty.

Sarah Winslow is a Ph.D. candidate in sociology at the University of Pennsylvania. Her research interests focus on gender, the intersections of work and family, and the life course. She has written about trends in work-family conflict from the 1970s through the 1990s and about the relationship between welfare reform and women's enrollment in postsecondary education. Her publications include “Welfare Reform and Enrollment in Postsecondary Education,” The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, vol. 586 (with Jerry A. Jacobs); “The Academic Life Course, Time Pressures and Gender Inequality,” in Community, Work, and Family, with Jerry A. Jacobs (forthcoming); and “Work-Family Conflict, Gender, and Parenthood, 1977-1997,” Journal of Family Issues (forthcoming). Her dissertation examines wives' contributions to couples' income over time and its relationship to the timing and incidence of childbearing and women's postbirth employment.

time, schedule inflexibility, and so on), the demands of home (e.g., the gendered division of household labor), and normative and/or cultural expectations (e.g., the ideals of appropriate parenting and successful career achievement). In earlier work (see Winslow forthcoming), we have shown that reported levels of work-family conflict have increased in recent decades; furthermore, the rise in experiences of conflict between employment and family life has been concentrated among parents.

*[T]he best jobs have become more
demanding over time.*

We feel that these two sets of issues—gender equity and family compatibility—need to be considered together. The goal should be to have family-friendly institutional arrangements in our society that also promote equal opportunities for women and men. Too many inquiries focus on one-half of this set of paired concerns. In other words, it is easy enough to address the family-friendly side of this equation—women can drop out of the labor market or the creation of more part-time jobs can be encouraged in organizational and occupational contexts where these remain the exception. But in the absence of broader institutional reforms, expanding part-time options will just make the gender disparities bigger. So as we see it, the real question is how to maintain and enhance women’s access to the best jobs while making it possible for successful workers to be responsible and caring parents.

One key to understanding this dilemma is to recognize that the best jobs have become more demanding over time.² Long hours on the job are expected in many professional and managerial settings, far in excess of the forty-hour workweek that was established as the national standard more than sixty years ago. Moreover, smaller staffs are expected to get more done in less time as the pace of business has sped up. In other words, many jobs are more demanding in terms of effort as well as time. As a result, a significant fraction of respondents in national surveys report that they often feel used up at the end of the workday (Jacobs and Gerson 2004). Thus, “having it all” becomes especially difficult in the context of increased expectations at work.

Exacerbating the increased expectations on the job are increased expectations at home. While we often think of caring for children as a natural response of parents, closer consideration reveals that parenting is a socially constructed set of practices. Hays (1996) has suggested that middle-class parents are increasingly expected to cultivate every aspect of their children’s social and intellectual facili-

ties. Declining family size means that there are fewer children on the street to play with, resulting in more one-on-one time expected from parents (see also Lareau 2002).

Workplace demands in some occupations, inflexibility in others, and increased expectations of parents result in a set of work-family dilemmas that face many working families. These challenges call for a national discussion and for some institutional changes. The expectations of the typical job need to be brought more into line with the needs of the typical family, even while we recognize the diversity in both jobs and family arrangements (Jacobs and Gerson 2004).

In this article, we focus on the work side of these issues for one interesting occupation: faculty members employed in academia. University faculty members resemble incumbents in other high-profile occupations in some ways but are distinctive in others. Professors work long hours for less pay than many other professionals but have more autonomy regarding the substance of their work and more flexibility in their daily schedules. What of the prospects for women's employment in academia? Large numbers of women are training for academic positions, but a large gender gap in professional success remains. Women are overrepresented in part-time positions that are paid very low wages. Women are also overrepresented at the rank of assistant professor. One might expect this during an initial period when women are entering a profession in large numbers, but this pattern has persisted for quite some time. In other words, it is clearly the case that waiting for more women to work their way up the academic ladder will not lead to parity in employment any time soon.

Among the major pluses of academic employment is the flexibility of these jobs. The evidence indicates that workplace flexibility is a key factor in reducing work-family conflict (Galinsky, Bond, and Friedman 1996; Glass and Camarigg 1992). A key problem, however, is that academic jobs are very demanding. Professors often complain that the demands of their jobs never end. Furthermore, a long, continuous stretch of full-time commitment is expected for successful entry into the ranks of tenured faculty.

Female academics tend to have full-time employed husbands, and this has the potential to add to the time pressures they experience. Because jobs in academia pay less than other prominent professions, such as law and medicine, dual-earner careers will become increasingly common for men as well as women.

This article is organized as follows: First, we review the findings of several companion papers on the nature of academic careers. Second, we outline two views of the nature of academic work. Then we develop specific research questions regarding whether professors' long work hours are self-imposed. Third, we present our analysis of data on dissatisfaction with workload as well as an analysis of faculty research productivity, drawing on data from the 1998 National Survey of Post-Secondary Faculty (NSOPF). We show that many faculty members who put in long workweeks tend to be dissatisfied with their workload. Finally, we conclude with a discussion of some ways in which academia might become a more family-friendly institution.

Work and Family in Academia

This is the third article in a series on the work demands of faculty employed in colleges and universities. In two previous articles (Jacobs 2004; Jacobs and Winslow 2004), we documented a number of facets of faculty work time. We showed that the average workweek for full-time faculty exceeds fifty hours. These long workweeks are characteristic of all groups of faculty, irrespective of rank and institutional type. In other words, assistant, associate, and full professors all work in excess of fifty hours per week, as do faculty at research, liberal arts, and comprehensive institutions. We suggested that these long hours present a challenge to faculty trying to juggle the demands of having young families and the requirements of an academic position.

A second notable finding is that the timing of tenure decisions collides with that of family formation. Many assistant professors are in their late thirties and early forties. Indeed, we found that the average age of assistant professors was just over forty. As a result, the strategy of waiting until after one earns tenure to have children is not a viable one for large numbers—perhaps even the majority—of assistant professors.

Dual-earner careers are prevalent among academic families, especially among female academics. Of married faculty in 1990, just more than half of men and nearly 90 percent of women are married to other full-time workers (Jacobs 2004). A significant minority are married to other academics (18.2 percent of female faculty and 12.5 percent of male faculty). Thus, the long workweeks experienced by faculty need to be understood in the context of busy families.

Faculty Workload: Two Views

How can we make sense of the long workweeks put in by faculty? To clarify the issues here, we juxtapose two views, which we label the self-imposed or optimistic view and the structural constraints or pessimistic view.

The optimistic view holds that academia is a context in which devotion to work is self-imposed. Professors do not punch a time clock. Time spent in class is limited. Even at the most teaching-intensive institutions, classroom time rarely exceeds fifteen hours (authors' calculation from NSOPF data), and all other work time is allocated based on a professor's own concept of the time necessary to perform at an acceptable level. Thus, time demands experienced by faculty are in some sense discretionary. In any event, faculty members love their work. They deeply identify with their professional role. In this sense, academia represents a secular "calling" in the sense employed by Max Weber (1918/1946). This perspective on faculty working time would be consistent with the "work devotion" schema outlined by Blair-Loy (2003). Professors keep working diligently into retirement as long as their strength and stamina allow. While one can raise questions about exploitation of professional workers in some positions (such as junior associates in law firms, soft-

ware engineers expected to work around the clock to make a tight deadline on the next application, and so on), faculty fall into a different category of worker. If the faculty workweek seems excessive to some, it certainly does not to faculty because it is what they chose to do.

In contrast to the view that faculty work time is self-imposed, an alternative view is that professors often find themselves caught in a set of institutional and professional expectations. Adherents to this second, more pessimistic, view would point to a number of other facets of academic life to support their position. For example, the pessimist would note that the life of assistant professors, who often slave away to meet high and imprecisely defined tenure standards, does not easily fit into the story of the self-imposed workweek. While the institutional demands perspective would acknowledge the many attractions of academia, such a view stresses the practical challenges that large numbers of faculty confront at both elite and less selective colleges and universities. The leading research institutions set high expectations for research, while at less well-endowed institutions, faculty struggle to keep up with preparing many different courses. And the optimistic picture certainly does not apply to increasingly cash-strapped institutions where state budget cuts mean more teaching with less support. Endless committee meetings, posttenure reviews, and a relentless stream of e-mails make today's faculty work experience less than the idealized world of academia suggested by the self-imposed viewpoint outlined above.

The rosy portrait of faculty life also fails to acknowledge the family context of faculty lives outside of their academic institutions. Academia demands a great deal of effort on a consistent basis for many years before the rewards of tenure are bestowed on anxious candidates. In this way, academia is an excellent example of what Phyllis Moen (2003) referred to as the "lock step life course," namely, jobs that do little to accommodate a variety of entry and exit points over the course of one's career.

Professors, especially female faculty, often delay having children as long as possible to meet tenure demands. In an earlier work (Jacobs and Winslow 2004), we have shown that this delay strategy may result in childlessness, given that the tenure decision, for the majority of faculty, occurs in one's early forties to midforties (see also Mason and Goulden 2004 [this volume]). Furthermore, the modest salaries of faculty (at least by middle-class standards) mean that many are partners in dual-earner couples. This is because the lower the husband's income, the more likely the wife is to work, other things being equal (Blau, Ferber, and Winkler 2002). As a result, today's faculty cannot count on a full-time homemaker to provide them uninterrupted time to focus on reading and writing as did their counterparts in the 1950s and 1960s.

If professors' long workweeks are due to "structural constraints," what are these structures, and what are the sources of these constraints? There are four main sources of growing time pressures on faculty (Jacobs 2004).

First, the rising cost of higher education has brought renewed public scrutiny and, with it, calls for more emphasis on teaching. The general public wonders why

professors do not spend more time in the classroom. As a result, pressure to increase the quantity and quality of time devoted to teaching has been evident in public and private institutions of higher education. In public institutions, the concern is to justify the tax dollars spent on universities. In the private context, the \$30,000 or \$40,000 price tag of a year of college focuses parents and university administrators alike on how much faculty attention students actually receive.

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Second, the increased emphasis on teaching has been accompanied by rising expectations for research productivity. Both the form and the content of the tenure review system formerly most developed in the elite schools have been adopted by colleges and universities at all levels of higher education. Dimaggio and Powell's (1983) notion of institutional isomorphism may be useful here. They suggested that institutions obtain legitimacy by adopting the organizational forms of high-prestige organizations. In the academic context, this means that second- and third-tier colleges and universities adopt the tenure review apparatus of the more elite schools. On the other hand, posttenure reviews represent a form of increased publication standards that did not originate in the elite universities (American Association of University Professors 2001). In short, high research expectations are no longer the restricted province of elite schools but have diffused throughout higher education.

Third, technological changes associated with the information economy have paradoxically increased the time demands and intensity of faculty jobs. Ruth Schwartz Cowan (1983) has explained how labor-saving technologies often result in a dramatic increase in the quality and quantity of a product that is produced but do not actually save time. We feel that computers represent a classic example of this pattern. It is much faster to produce a short letter on e-mail than it is to write and mail a letter. As a result, more time is spent reading and responding to e-mail messages than was formerly spent in hard copy correspondence. The adoption of computers was also accompanied by a decline in secretarial support among faculty.

Finally, we have suggested that the rise of part-time employment in academia increases the pressures on full-time faculty members (Jacobs 2004; Gappa and Leslie 1993). Part-time employment in academia has risen sharply over the past thirty years as extremely low-paid part-time faculty are available to teach for a small

fraction of the cost of full-time members of the standing faculty. In 1999, more than two in five (42.5 percent) postsecondary faculty were employed part-time, a substantial increase from the 21.9 percent found in 1970 (U.S. Department of Education 2002).³ The growth in the number of part-timers increases pressures on full-timers in two ways. First, the reduction in the number of full-time positions makes entry into the ranks of full-time faculty that much more competitive. Furthermore, since part-timers are rarely asked to serve on committees and take on other administrative roles, the growth of part-time employment means that a smaller fraction of faculty are saddled with a growing amount of administrative responsibilities.

These four factors thus include organizational forces, professional norms, and technological changes. Employers (colleges and universities) are the principal source of teaching requirements, and employers' cost-cutting concerns are the reason for the expansion in part-time employment. Publication expectations can probably be best understood as a set of professional norms, although the Dimaggio and Powell (1983) perspective acknowledges the organizational role in institutionalizing these arrangements. Finally, the technological changes associated with computers have also contributed to this trend.

Which of these views fits the data more closely? We are able to shed some light on this question with data from the NSOPF, which asked respondents a series of job satisfaction questions (a more complete description of these measures appears below). While it is clear that faculty overwhelmingly report being satisfied with their jobs, they do voice complaints about salary, benefits, and their workload. Here we focus on whether faculty report dissatisfaction with their workload because it allows us to assess the extent to which the length of the faculty workweek is self-imposed and willingly chosen. If the optimistic perspective is correct, then we would expect that those who put in the longest hours express few if any complaints about their workload since these faculty love teaching and research and cannot get enough of it. On the other hand, the pessimistic view suggests that some professors are not satisfied with their workload. If one's workload is largely driven by institutional and professional demands such as increasing course loads and expectations for publishing, then we may find a significant number of professors who are not satisfied with their jobs. A key question, then, is whether satisfaction with workload increases with time on the job. If so, then those working the longest may not be doing so completely voluntarily. Instead, work patterns may be the result of many pressures, some stemming from the institution and others from normative expectations set by other faculty.

We are also interested in the connection between working time and research productivity. Do long workweeks play a key role in contributing to success in publishing? If so, this relationship may give us insights into the reasons for the amount of time faculty spend on the job.

Our analysis begins by examining levels of workload dissatisfaction. We assess whether a connection exists between the length of the workweek and the likelihood of reporting workload dissatisfaction. We then examine variation in the

length of the faculty workweek. Next, we model workload dissatisfaction in a multivariate context. Our analysis concludes with an assessment of the link between the length of the faculty workweek and research productivity.

Data

The data analyzed in this article were drawn from the 1998 NSOPF administered by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) of the U.S. Department of Education (U.S. Department of Education, NCES 2002). The survey is part of an ongoing series of cross-sectional surveys of faculty. This survey has been administered three times: during the 1987-88, 1992-93, and 1998-99 academic years. A fourth wave is currently in progress. In 1998, a nationally representative sample of faculty was drawn from 819 colleges and universities. The response rate was 83.2 percent, yielding a total of 17,600 responses.

For the present analysis, the sample was restricted to those faculty members at four-year institutions who considered their academic appointment to be their primary job and who did not spend the majority of their time in administrative activities. This resulted in a final sample size of 10,116 full-time faculty members.⁴

Measures of work dissatisfaction used in the analyses come from respondents' answers to a series of job satisfaction questions. Specifically, respondents were asked, "How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following aspects⁵ of your job at this institution?" Responses to this question were measured on a 4-point scale consisting of *very dissatisfied*, *somewhat dissatisfied*, *somewhat satisfied*, and *very satisfied*. We focus our analyses on the questions regarding workload and reverse-code the responses to focus on the issue of workload dissatisfaction.

Our principal independent variable of interest is the amount of time spent working at the institution. (Time spent in other roles, such as consulting, is not included in our analysis, although we do include a measure of whether the faculty member does consulting work.) We tried a number of different specifications of working time, including hours as a continuous measure and hours squared. We present results with two dummy measures: those working fifty to fifty-nine hours and those working sixty hours or more. For most of our analyses, this specification captured the majority of the hours effects. These measures are also easily interpretable and allow for consistency with our earlier research in this area.

Control Variables

While the NSOPF data are not as systematic about family measures as we would like, we nonetheless were able to construct family-related variables in our analysis. Respondents were asked to indicate their marital status during the fall 1998 term according to the following four categories: single, never married; married; living with someone in a marriage-like relationship; and separated, divorced, or widowed. Those indicating that they were married or were living with someone in a marriage-like relationship are considered married for the purposes of our analyses.

Since respondents were asked to indicate their spouse or significant other's gross income in the 1998 calendar year, we were able to create a dummy variable indicating whether the respondent's spouse was employed in the reference year (i.e., if the respondent reported his or her spouse's income to be zero, he or she was considered to have a nonemployed spouse). A (proxy) measure of whether the respondent's spouse is also a faculty member was created using a survey question in which respondents were asked to indicate whether their "spouse or significant other [was] employed in a professional position at a higher education institution."

[A]ssistant professors were less likely to report dissatisfaction with their workload. Perhaps this is due to their expectation of extensive job commitment associated with being an assistant professor.

The collection of data on children in the NSOPF is even more limited. The measure we use is a proxy measure, obtained using responses to the question, "For the 1998 calendar year, how many persons lived in your household including yourself?" Single individuals were coded as having children if they reported two or more total household members, while married respondents were coded as parents when reporting three or more household members. The NSOPF unfortunately does not include questions on work-family conflict or stress. This is a major limitation that we hope other data collection projects will be able to address.

The NSOPF has a range of measures of job attributes that are relevant to our analysis of work dissatisfaction. In the regression models predicting hours worked and workload dissatisfaction discussed below, we control for a number of potentially influential covariates. Age is measured using a variable created by the NCES (survey respondents are asked to provide their month and year of birth). Our education measure is a dummy variable in which those with a first professional degree (M.D., D.O., D.D.S., J.D., etc.) or a doctoral degree (Ph.D., Ed.D., etc.) are coded as one, with all others coded as zero. Faculty rank is obtained from answers to the question, "Which of the following best describes your academic rank, title, or position at this institution during the 1998 Fall Term?" Institution type represents a Carnegie classification schema and is drawn from a variable created by the survey administrators. Our academic field variable comes from responses to the question, "What is your principal field or discipline of teaching?" The numerous potential

response options listed for respondents to choose from were grouped into twelve larger categories: biological sciences, physical sciences, medicine and dentistry, nursing, other health fields, architecture and engineering, business, computer science and math, social science, education, arts and humanities, and vocational and other fields.

We also include several other job-related variables in our multivariate analyses. We assess the distribution of faculty work time by including measures of the percentage of time spent on teaching (undergraduate and graduate students) and research. We also control for whether the respondent was a department or division chair, whether the respondent's current appointment was temporary, and the respondent's union membership status. Finally, we control for respondents' employment outside the institution with two dummy variables, one for outside consulting work and another for outside employment other than consulting.

Results

Faculty workload dissatisfaction

Professors are largely quite satisfied with their jobs. In the 1998 NSOPF survey, 84.8 percent of male and 81.8 percent of female full-time faculty report being somewhat or very satisfied with their jobs (results not shown).⁶ But that does not mean that faculty are happy with all aspects of their jobs. One common area of dissatisfaction has to do with faculty workload.

Tables 1 and 2 display the mean responses to the question of workload dissatisfaction for male and female faculty, respectively. A significant minority of faculty report being dissatisfied with their workload. Specifically, 30.4 percent of male faculty and 35.5 percent of female faculty report being dissatisfied with their workload. Dissatisfaction with workload may well be related to another faculty concern, not being able to keep current with one's field, which is the most common complaint voiced by faculty in the NSOPF survey. This problem is reported by 44.6 percent of male and 51.5 percent of female faculty.

In additional analyses (results not reported here), we found that concerns expressed over workload are a powerful determinant of overall job satisfaction. In fact, workload dissatisfaction rivaled concerns over salary and benefits as predictors of overall job satisfaction. When we predicted overall job satisfaction, we found that workload dissatisfaction and concern with not being able to keep current in one's field had effects similar in size and explanatory power to those of concerns over salary and benefits.⁷

As reported in Tables 1 and 2, faculty dissatisfaction with workload increases with hours on the job. Of male faculty working fewer than fifty hours per week, only 24.0 percent report being dissatisfied with their workload. The level of dissatisfaction rises to 38.2 percent for men putting in sixty or more hours per week. The same association can be found for female faculty. Nearly one in three (30.3 percent) of those working fewer than fifty hours per week report being dissatisfied

TABLE 1
DISSATISFACTION WITH WORKLOAD, BY WORK HOURS,
FAMILY STATUS, AND AGE FOR FULL-TIME MALE FACULTY

	Percentage Dissatisfied	Percentage Very Dissatisfied
All	30.4 ^{°°}	8.6 ^{°°}
<50 weekly hours	24.0 ^{°°}	5.2 ^{°°}
50+ weekly hours	34.3 ^{°°}	10.1 ^{°°}
60+ weekly hours	38.2 ^{°°}	12.5 ^{°°}
Married with children	32.7	8.7 ^{°°}
Married without children	27.8 ^{°°}	7.6 ^{°°}
Single with children	34.6	9.5
Single without children	35.6	12.0
Married, employed spouse	31.8 ^{°°}	8.4
Married, nonemployed spouse	27.2	7.8
Married, faculty spouse	34.2 ^{°°}	9.3
Married, nonfaculty spouse	29.9	8.1
Age		
<35	27.6 ^{°°}	8.3
35-44	38.0	11.0
45-54	35.8	9.5
55-64	26.3 ^{°°}	7.2 ^{°°}
65+	14.0 ^{°°}	4.5 ^{°°}

NOTE: "All" comparison assesses the gender gap. Fifty-plus and sixty-plus *t*-tests compare those who work fifty (sixty) hours or more each week to those of the same gender who work less. All other comparisons are within gender (with single nonparents as the reference category for the four-category marital/parental status variable and thirty-five to forty-four the reference age category).

^{°°}*p* < .01.

with their workload, compared with more than two in five (44.1 percent) of those working more than sixty hours per week.

Thus, the evidence suggests that the more hours that faculty report working, the more likely they are to complain about an excessive workload. This is a simple and perhaps not surprising idea, but it runs counter to the notion that people working the longest hours are all doing so simply out of a love of their job.

Tables 1 and 2 also display dissatisfaction with faculty workload by marital and parental status. The results on this score are somewhat surprising. We expected that those people experiencing the greatest nonwork demands on their time, that is, individuals who are married and who have children at home, would report the highest levels of dissatisfaction with their workload on the job. We expected this to be particularly true for mothers, who continue to shoulder a larger share of the housework and child care burden than do fathers. The results indicate, however, that both married fathers and married mothers report lower levels of dissatisfaction with their workload than do those in other statuses.

We considered two explanations for this result. The first is that the question only focuses on workload and not overall work-family stress. Perhaps a broader mea-

TABLE 2
DISSATISFACTION WITH WORKLOAD, BY WORK HOURS,
FAMILY STATUS, AND AGE FOR FULL-TIME FEMALE FACULTY

	Percentage Dissatisfied	Percentage Very Dissatisfied
All	35.5	10.8
<50 weekly hours	30.3**	7.6**
50+ weekly hours	41.5**	12.9**
60+ weekly hours	44.1**	15.2**
Married with children	35.7**	9.3**
Married without children	37.3	11.7
Single with children	35.6*	10.7
Single without children	41.3	12.8
Married, employed spouse	36.6	10.4
Married, nonemployed spouse	32.3	12.8
Married, faculty spouse	38.9**	12.8**
Married, nonfaculty spouse	34.9	9.4
Age		
<35	31.6*	6.7
35-44	38.3	9.7
45-54	40.2	13.6**
55-64	36.1	10.2
65+	22.3**	9.0

NOTE: "All" comparison assesses the gender gap. Fifty-plus and sixty-plus *t*-tests compare those who work fifty (sixty) hours or more each week to those of the same gender who work less. All other comparisons are within gender (with single nonparents as the reference category for the four-category marital/parental status variable and thirty-five to forty-four the reference age category).

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

sure would yield a different result. The other possibility is that married parents find ways to limit the time they spend at work and, therefore, experience somewhat less overload on the job. We consider this latter possibility in more detail below when we examine the determinants of hours on the job.

Other aspects of faculty's marital status do impact dissatisfaction with workload in the expected directions. Men whose wives work for pay are more likely to experience dissatisfaction with their workload than those whose wives stay at home. And those men whose wives are themselves faculty report higher levels of workload dissatisfaction. This should not be surprising because their wives are likely themselves to be working fifty or more hours per week.

For female faculty, the presence of an employed spouse increases workload dissatisfaction, but the gap is not quite statistically significant. This is likely due to the fact that so few husbands are not employed. We do see higher levels of workload dissatisfaction for female faculty whose husbands are faculty as well.

The age patterns are also somewhat surprising. There is a curvilinear pattern of workload dissatisfaction for both male and female faculty. The highest levels of workload dissatisfaction occur between the ages of thirty-five and fifty-four for

both groups. We were particularly surprised that assistant professors were less likely to report dissatisfaction with their workload. Perhaps this is due to their expectation of extensive job commitment associated with being an assistant professor. In other words, perhaps they feel that long workweeks are built into the job, and perhaps they expect the situation to be temporary.

*[Faculty perception of workload] is not
just how many hours one works but
whether one is doing the kind of work
one finds most satisfying.*

One important pattern that connects Tables 1 and 2 is the many commonalities in the reports of male and female faculty. In other words, while overall workload dissatisfaction is higher among women than among men, the correlates that we consider in Tables 1 and 2 generally have similar effects for men and women. This evidence supports the premise that work-family issues are not restricted to women.

Determinants of working time

Workload dissatisfaction increases with time on the job, so we now turn to the determinants of the faculty workweek. In our previous work, we stressed the long workweeks common to faculty of all stripes. For each group of full-time faculty we considered—whether they were assistant, associate, or full professors and whether they were working at research universities, liberal arts colleges, or comprehensive institutions—working hours exceeded fifty per week. Here we focus on variation among faculty since variability around this high mean is of interest and may be related to the likelihood of reporting dissatisfaction with one's workload.

Table 3 presents separate regression analyses for men and women. We first examine the determinants of working time, treating work hours as a continuous variable. We then present results for models that analyze the odds of working more than sixty hours per week.

The first notable finding in Table 3 is that both married mothers and fathers work less than those in other marital and parental statuses. On average, married mothers work four hours less per week than do single women without children, while for married fathers, the gap is two hours per week. The gap is especially pronounced in the analysis of the odds of working more than sixty hours per week.

TABLE 3
REGRESSION ANALYSES OF HOURS WORKED, BY GENDER

	Ordinary Least Squares Regression, Hours Worked,		Ordinary Least Squares Regression, Hours Worked,		Logistic Regression, Hours Sixty-Plus,		Logistic Regression, Hours Sixty-Plus,	
	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men
Intercept	42.307**	42.627**						
Married with kids	-4.132**	-2.033**			0.491**	0.642**		
Married without kids	-1.506*	-1.373*			0.769**	0.715**		
Single with kids	-2.224**	-0.486			0.715**	0.809		
Single without kids (reference)								
Nonemployed spouse	0.767	0.991*			1.286	1.240**		
Faculty spouse	0.840	0.540			1.057	1.177*		
Rank								
Full	0.593	2.006**			1.172	1.424**		
Associate (reference)								
Assistant	-0.393	1.562**			0.845	1.323**		
Instructor/lecturer	-3.279**	-1.248			0.618**	0.909		
Other/ no ranking	-3.042**	0.555			0.528**	1.030		
Institution type								
Research	1.297*	2.287**			1.065	1.388**		
Doctoral	-0.088	1.524**			0.913	1.198		
Liberal arts	1.213	1.183*			1.209	1.232*		
Comprehensive (reference)								
Other	-0.617	0.179			0.749	1.127		
Percentage of time spent on research	-0.026*	-0.002			0.999	1.000		
Age	0.502**	0.458**			1.049	1.031		
Age squared	-0.006*	-0.006**			0.999*	0.999*		

Education						
Ph.D.	1.693**	0.371	1.366**	0.977		
Professional degree	2.440*	1.959*	1.614**	1.072		
Department chair	1.639*	2.097**	1.179	1.354**		
Temporary appointment	-0.019	-0.962*	1.080	0.898		
Union member	-0.642	-0.358	0.920	0.989		
Outside employment						
Consulting	4.668**	3.727**	1.686**	1.501**		
Other employment	0.966*	0.795*	1.240**	1.192**		
Field						
Biological sciences	2.514*	2.961**	1.548**	1.455**		
Physical sciences	0.764	2.391**	1.246	1.213		
Medicine/dentistry	3.218**	3.995**	1.712**	1.820**		
Nursing	2.549**	4.903	1.267	2.695		
Other health	1.807*	3.276**	1.183	1.685**		
Architecture/engineering	2.936	2.058**	1.474	1.268*		
Business	-1.000	-0.328	0.744	0.867		
Computer science/math	0.240	0.195	0.918	0.927		
Social science	0.711	0.285	0.954	0.927		
Education	2.484**	1.058	1.372*	0.991		
Arts and humanities (reference)						
Vocational and other fields	3.793**	3.049**	1.644**	1.502**		
R-squared	.079	.066	.055	.038		

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Married mothers are about half as likely as single childless women to work more than sixty hours per week, while married fathers are about two-thirds as likely to do so than are their single, childless counterparts.

This pattern helps to explain the findings reported in Tables 1 and 2. Married mothers and fathers report less dissatisfaction with their workload because they work less. As we will see, working more than sixty hours per week is a powerful predictor of dissatisfaction with workload, and married mothers and fathers are much less likely to work these extremely long hours.

For female faculty, the average workweek does not vary significantly between assistant, associate, and full professors, while male associate professors report a small slump in working time. Faculty report working the longest hours in research universities, compared to comprehensive institutions, but the gap is not large (just more than one hour per week for women faculty and just more than two hours per week for male faculty).

The results in Table 3 indicate that male or female faculty who spend a larger proportion of their work time on research do not have a longer workweek. This result runs counter to the idea that the race for scientific stardom is the driving force behind the long workweeks of faculty. Having controlled for institution type, devoting a larger fraction of one's time to research is not the principal determinant of long workweeks. (We return to the issue of time devoted to research when we consider the issue of faculty research productivity below.)

Being a department chair increases the length of the workweek by one to two hours. Outside employment, including consulting, has a more significant effect on the length of the faculty workweek. Note that time spent consulting is not included in the hours measure we use in this study. In other words, those who do consulting work also devote more time to their institution, all other factors being equal.⁸ Union members do not work different hours.⁹ Age and age squared impact the average work week but have less impact on the odds of working more than sixty hours per week.

Determinants of workload dissatisfaction

Table 4 presents the results of our models of workload dissatisfaction. We group somewhat dissatisfied and very dissatisfied together into a single category of workload dissatisfaction. We conducted additional analyses of being very dissatisfied, and the results largely mirror those reported here. We initially present a pooled analysis of male and female faculty. Results for a series of nested models are presented. Table 5 presents separate models for men and women.

The first notable result in Table 4 is that those faculty working fifty to fifty-nine hours are more likely to report being dissatisfied with their workload than those working fewer than fifty hours per week. In the final model, those working fifty to fifty-nine hours per week are about one-third more likely to report workload dissatisfaction than those working fewer than fifty hours per week. Similarly, the odds of reporting workload dissatisfaction rise again for those working sixty hours per week. Here we find that professors who work more than sixty hours per week are

TABLE 4
 LOGISTIC REGRESSION OF WORKLOAD DISSATISFACTION
 (ODDS RATIOS REPORTED)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5
Female	1.478**	1.367**	1.327**	1.306**	1.344**
Hours 50-59	1.391**	1.332**	1.338**	1.333**	1.337**
Hours 60+	1.470**	1.921**	1.952**	1.946**	1.955**
Age		1.227**	1.208**	1.204**	1.212**
Age squared		0.998**	0.998**	0.998**	0.998**
Highest degree		1.186**	1.173**	1.227**	1.232**
Married with kids		0.761**	0.770**	0.770**	0.780**
Married without kids		0.872°	0.878	0.873°	0.879
Single with kids		0.864	0.870	0.873	0.873
Single without kids (reference)					
Nonemployed spouse		0.908	0.910	0.917	0.902
Faculty spouse		1.046	1.079	1.091	1.083
Rank					
Full			0.818**	0.827**	0.816**
Associate (reference)					
Assistant			0.950	0.944	0.954
Instructor/lecturer			0.769**	0.741**	0.754**
Other/no ranking			0.699**	0.710**	0.714**
Institution type					
Research			0.632**	0.887	0.879
Doctoral			0.947	0.954	0.952
Liberal arts			1.006	0.936	0.942
Comprehensive (reference)					
Other			0.799**	0.778**	0.765**
Percentage of time spent on research				0.992**	0.992**
Percentage of time spent teaching				1.001	1.001
Department chair				1.204**	1.212**
Temporary appointment				1.020	1.024
Union member				1.043	1.052
Outside employment					
Consulting				0.951	0.964
Other employment				1.061	1.058
Field					
Biological sciences					0.889
Physical sciences					0.933
Medicine/dentistry					0.964
Nursing					0.812
Other health					0.745**
Architecture/engineering					1.220
Business					0.688**
Computer science/math					0.869
Social science					0.884
Education					0.766**
Arts and humanities (reference)					
Vocational and other fields					0.682**
Pseudo R-squared	.019	.034	.041	.045	.048

°p < .05. **p < .01.

TABLE 5
 LOGISTIC REGRESSION OF WORKLOAD DISSATISFACTION,
 BY GENDER (ODDS RATIOS REPORTED)

	Men	Women
Hours 50-59	1.345 ^{°°}	1.345 ^{°°}
Hours 60+	2.051 ^{°°}	1.856 ^{°°}
Age	1.207 ^{°°}	1.220 ^{°°}
Age squared	0.998 ^{°°}	0.998 ^{°°}
Highest degree	1.213 [°]	1.267 ^{°°}
Married with kids	0.779 ^{°°}	0.811 [°]
Married without kids	0.898	0.884
Single with kids	0.940	0.837
Single without kids (reference)		
Nonemployed spouse	0.914	0.860
Faculty spouse	1.147	0.989
Rank		
Full	0.750 ^{°°}	0.999
Associate (reference)		
Assistant	0.866	1.079
Instructor/lecturer	0.788	0.804
Other/no ranking	0.596 ^{°°}	0.871
Institution type		
Research	0.923	0.787
Doctoral	0.976	0.916
Liberal arts	0.933	0.950
Comprehensive (reference)		
Other	0.776 [°]	0.746 [°]
Percentage of time spent on research	0.991 ^{°°}	0.993 ^{°°}
Percentage of time spent teaching	1.002	1.000
Department chair	1.249 ^{°°}	1.166
Temporary appointment	1.098	0.944
Union member	1.145	0.952
Outside employment		
Consulting	1.000	0.921
Other employment	1.102	0.997
Field		
Biological sciences	0.803	1.062
Physical sciences	0.967	0.759
Medicine/dentistry	0.950	0.977
Nursing	0.486	0.876
Other health	0.775	0.719 [°]
Architecture/engineering	1.248	0.886
Business	0.644 ^{°°}	0.746
Computer science/math	0.862	0.865
Social science	0.795 [°]	1.001
Education	0.752 [°]	0.800
Arts and humanities (reference)		
Vocational and other fields	0.691 ^{°°}	0.666 ^{°°}
Pseudo <i>R</i> -squared	.051	.040

[°]*p* < .05. ^{°°}*p* < .01.

nearly twice as likely to report workload dissatisfaction as those working fewer than fifty hours per week.

The effects of the length of the workweek on workload dissatisfaction are robust across the nested models we present. The only notable change that occurs is that the effect of working sixty hours or more increases once age is controlled. In other words, the effect of hours worked is obscured by age, and once this association is controlled, the effect of working very long workweeks becomes even stronger.

What factors affect workload dissatisfaction besides time on the job? Women report more workload dissatisfaction than men. Workload dissatisfaction increases with age in a curvilinear manner.

Those reporting having the highest appropriate degree report more workload dissatisfaction than those with fewer credentials. (In most cases, this is the Ph.D., but in some professional settings such as law school, the highest appropriate degree may not be a Ph.D.) This suggests that those who are fully certified feel the full brunt of academic expectations. Those with fewer credentials may be less committed to the academic calling and are, thus, less susceptible to professional norms regarding research productivity. Those with fewer credentials may also be less likely to be called upon to serve on committees and thus have fewer obligations regarding academic governance.

We expected assistant professors to have the most complaints about workload. But the results suggest that it is associate professors who have the most complaints. The odds ratios for assistant professors are less than one, indicating lower levels of dissatisfaction, but these differences are not statistically significant. Full professors and those in other ranks report statistically lower levels of dissatisfaction with workload. Perhaps assistant professors accept the high workload expectations set by their institutions, and perhaps they view their heavy workload as a temporary accommodation needed to obtain tenure. Full professors are less likely to report workload dissatisfaction, as are those in nonstandard faculty positions.

We found few differences across institutional type. Those in research, liberal arts, and comprehensive institutions were equally likely to report being dissatisfied with their workload, all other factors being equal.

Teaching, research, and administration have somewhat different effects on faculty's perception of workload. Thus, it is not just how many hours one works but whether one is doing the kind of work one finds most satisfying. Those spending a larger fraction of their time on research are less likely to complain about their workload. (Of course, these are average effects, and there may be a significant subset with different views about the relative satisfactions of teaching and research.) In contrast, spending a larger fraction of time on teaching is not clearly differentiated from spending more time on administration in terms of its effect on workload dissatisfaction.

Department chairs report higher levels of workload dissatisfaction than do other faculty. This effect is obtained even when we control for the number of hours they put in on the job. It is clear that these positions demand a certain kind of time that professors tend to feel is especially onerous. Faculty members who are union members do not report any less dissatisfaction with workload.

We expected that marital and parental status would be powerful predictors of faculty workload dissatisfaction, but this was not the case. As we noted above, married individuals were not more likely to report dissatisfaction with their workload. While this does not surprise us for husbands, the result does not conform to our expectation for wives. We expected that wives' increased housekeeping responsibilities at home would make them more likely to complain about their workload on the job.¹⁰

Recall that married women without children worked about 1.5 hours less per week than their single counterparts. While this slight reduction in work is surely not sufficient to compensate for the extra unpaid work that they are taking on, there were more sizable effects of being married at the high end of the distribution. Married women were only 70 percent as likely to work more than 60 hours per week as were single women, and thus these women may be cutting back on the very longest hours that generate the most dissatisfaction with workload. Perhaps married faculty members were able to achieve a better balance in their work lives and, as a result, were no more likely to report being dissatisfied with their workload.

Similarly, parents did not report higher levels of dissatisfaction with their workload than did those with no children. Recall that married mothers work about four fewer hours per week than do single women without children. Married fathers reported working about two hours less than single childless men. As we saw with married individuals, there was more evidence of cutting back on working time among those putting in more than sixty hours per week. Here we find that married mothers were about half as likely to work more than sixty hours per week, and married fathers were about 60 percent as likely to work more than sixty hours per week. Again, by cutting back on the most onerous hours, married parents are able to keep complaints about their workload at a level comparable to other faculty. Thus, the lack of an effect of marital and parental status appears to be due to a combination of the facts that the questions did not elicit information about overall stress levels and that professors in these roles reduce the hours they devote to their academic work, especially by cutting back once they reach sixty hours per week. These reductions in working time, however, are not costless, as we will see in the following discussion of publishing patterns. If cutting back on working time means jeopardizing research productivity, which is essential to securing tenure, then the efforts of parents to balance work and family come with a substantial price tag.

Research productivity

We remained curious about the connection between time devoted to research and workload satisfaction. We found that the percentage of time spent on research was not the driving force behind long work hours. There is no statistically significant increase in working time associated with a larger fraction of time spent on research. On the other hand, those who spent a larger fraction of their time on research were less likely to voice dissatisfaction with their workload. Are those who put in the longest workweeks the most productive in terms of research?

Table 6 presents results of regression analyses on research productivity. We define research productivity as the sum of articles published to date. We convert books into this measure by multiplying the number of books by five. (The results are broadly similar when we consider just books, just articles, and different book-to-article translation scores.) Controls in the model for academic specialty capture important differences in publication rates between different academic fields. Given the nature of these data, we are unable to control for differences in quality among published articles and books.

The results make it clear that those who put in the longest workweeks are likely to publish more books and articles. The differences between those putting in more than fifty hours per week versus those putting in fewer than fifty hours per week are substantial. However, the impact of working more than sixty hours per week is even more dramatic. Working sixty hours per week seems especially critical for women since the coefficient on working fifty to fifty-nine hours per week is not significant for them.¹¹ If research productivity is indispensable for success in academia, and if a sixty-hour workweek is key for success in publishing, then working sixty or more hours per week essentially becomes a requirement of academic jobs.

As a final step in our analysis, we took these productivity results into account in our analysis of dissatisfaction with workload. We considered whether those scholars who are highly productive researchers are less likely than others to be dissatisfied with their workload. In other words, it is clear that many who work very long hours are not fully satisfied with this situation. But perhaps the complaints are concentrated among those who are less successful in publishing. We found no such association in the NSOPF survey. Specifically, among those working the most hours, dissatisfaction with workload is equally evident among scholars with high research productivity and those with shorter academic vitae.

Conclusion

While academia may appear to be a setting in which work effort is completely self-imposed, the analyses we have presented here begin to flesh out a more complicated picture. Those who work the most hours are the most likely to express dissatisfaction with their workload. Furthermore, while professors often express concerns about the extent of their workload, the brief responses to fixed-choice survey questions are likely to *understate* the breadth and depth of concerns about the voracious time demands of academic life.

So why do faculty work so much? The data indicate that very long workweeks significantly contribute to success in publishing. Those who work sixty or more hours per week are substantially more likely to publish than those who work fewer hours. Since continued research productivity has become a central expectation of faculty at all types of colleges and universities, it is not hard to see why many faculty consider a very long workweek to be a requirement of their job.

We view these data as providing considerable support for the structural constraints perspective on the faculty workweek. While some faculty members would

TABLE 6
 ORDINARY LEAST SQUARES REGRESSION
 OF PUBLICATION PRODUCTIVITY, BY GENDER

	All	Men	Women
Intercept	-26.126°	-44.903°	-28.151°°
Female	-5.127°°	—	—
Hours 50-59	4.550°°	7.733°°	0.691
Hours 60+	12.123°°	16.894°°	5.191°°
Age	0.520	0.666	1.295°°
Age squared	0.002	0.003	-0.010°
Highest degree	2.681°	1.919	4.584°°
Married with kids	3.071°	4.597	-1.006
Married without kids	2.706	3.385	-0.085
Single with kids	1.822	3.930	-0.566
Single without kids (reference)			
Nonemployed spouse	4.117°°	4.184°	-1.330
Faculty spouse	1.116	1.641	1.681
Rank			
Full	24.551°°	25.873°°	16.338°°
Associate (reference)			
Assistant	-3.987°	-3.720	-5.866°°
Instructor/lecturer	-0.053	-1.374	-3.789°
Other/no ranking	-1.177	2.034	-7.213°°
Institution type			
Research	9.638°°	9.147°°	8.690°°
Doctoral	0.725	0.818	1.113
Liberal arts	-9.462°°	-13.106°°	-3.757°
Comprehensive (reference)			
Other	-5.630°°	-7.864°°	-1.871
Percentage of time spent on research	0.303°°	0.381°°	0.187°°
Percentage of time spent teaching	-0.058°°	-0.060	-0.047°
Department chair	2.038	3.008	1.000
Temporary appointment	-4.258°°	-5.231°	-1.564
Union member	-3.897°°	-5.137°	-1.486
Outside employment			
Consulting	12.862°°	16.307°°	6.727°°
Other employment	1.761	2.721	0.772
Field			
Biological sciences	8.454°°	10.276°°	4.871°
Physical sciences	18.458°°	22.327°°	3.400
Medicine/dentistry	13.773°°	18.842°°	3.465
Nursing	4.802	-0.953	3.233
Other health	13.105°°	21.572°°	3.436
Architecture/engineering	35.967°°	39.523°°	14.934°°
Business	-0.424	-0.350	0.655
Computer science/math	2.574	4.847	0.662
Social science	4.727°°	5.280°	3.577°
Education	1.811	1.688	1.566
Arts and humanities (reference)			
Vocational and other fields	8.946°°	12.055°°	5.553°°
Pseudo <i>R</i> -squared	.256	.247	.193

°*p* < .05. °°*p* < .01.

surely spend all of their free time on job-related reading and writing, a significant minority indicate that they feel constrained to work longer than they would like.

It is difficult to sustain a sixty-hour-per-week schedule over the course of an entire career. And as we have seen, parents (especially mothers) are less likely to put in these very long hours. It is exceedingly challenging to be a responsible parent while maintaining this extent of work commitment, even if academic jobs are highly flexible. These effects are far-reaching—the tension between work and family does not end with young children; nor does it end with tenure.

We maintain that work and family are compatible when the expectations of work are not excessive. The data presented here suggest that the demands of academic life are becoming excessive and are making it difficult for individuals to succeed at work while having the time to be caring and responsible parents. This suggests that efforts to promote a better balance between work and family should go beyond parental leave policies for newborns and try to establish limits on the apparently limitless demands of academic jobs.

Notes

1. Catalyst (2003a, 2003b). Women's representation on corporate (Fortune 500) boards of directors has been inching up, from 8.7 percent in 1995 to 15.7 percent in 2002.

2. In this discussion, we focus on the work-family issues confronting workers employed in professional and managerial positions. Workers in less elite jobs often face a somewhat different set of challenges. These jobs tend to have less flexibility even when workers are not routinely expected to work fifty or sixty hours per week. And because those with modest incomes have fewer financial resources to draw on, their work-family dilemmas may be even more daunting than those facing professional families. The variety of work-family issues confronting different segments of American society is one of the themes of *The Time Divide* (Jacobs and Gerson 2004).

3. We considered whether part-time faculty teach substantially fewer courses and consequently fewer students than full-time faculty. Recent evidence finds, however, that part-timers account for 39 percent of faculty and 40 percent of courses and students taught (National Education Association 2001).

4. Many important issues confront academics in part-time positions who find themselves on the other side of the "faculty-time divide" (Jacobs 2004). But here we focus on the issue of overworked full-timers.

5. The job aspects in question were as follows: "my work load; my job security; opportunity for advancement in rank at this institution; time available for keeping current in my field; the effectiveness of faculty leadership at this institution (e.g., academic senate, faculty councils, etc.); freedom to do outside consulting; my salary; my benefits, generally; my job here, overall." An additional question, regarding "spouse or partner employment opportunities in this geographic area," was included in the survey but excluded from the present analyses as it was not asked of the entire sample.

6. It is important to keep in mind that responses to job satisfaction questions tend to inflate the reported level of job satisfaction. In the survey context, respondents in most jobs tend to volunteer that they are satisfied with their employment.

7. Salary and benefits were slightly better predictors of overall job satisfaction for men, but workload was a better predictor for women.

8. Among full-time faculty, a sizable minority of men (34.4 percent) and women (27.0 percent) do some paid consulting work.

9. We believe that faculty unions have focused more on wages and benefits than on working time, but we have not found a positive effect of union membership on wages (Jacobs 2004).

10. Because, as discussed above, we were forced to impute the presence of children based on the size of the household, it is possible that our results are affected by measurement errors.

11. These analyses reveal a negative effect of gender on research productivity. A full discussion of productivity in terms of teaching, administration, and research is beyond the scope of this article, but see Allen (1998) for a useful overview.

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