From the Boardroom to the Academy: How promising corporate workplace practices can transform the academic culture

Linda Siebert
University of Illinois at Chicago
“The New Norm of Faculty Flexibility” Conference
October 2008

What the ACE report said

“What can we learn/apply/leverage, adapt, innovate from the corporate experience to guide and accelerate the movement in the use of flexibility in the entire career path for t/tt faculty research academic careers?”


Objectives

- Terms
- The Corporate Case
- Flexibility Model
- 100 Best Companies List
- A Great Workplace
- Example
- Areas of Promise

Terms

- WorkLife Lens - a focus on the integration and acknowledgement of individuals' needs over the career and life cycle and the needs of the institution
- Organization Transformation – a focus on the climate and culture for a successful evolution necessary to grow organization and to leverage talent. Includes the workplace experience
- Flexibility – is a new way of thinking how work can be done to support productivity, engagement, loyalty
- Branding – is a visceral experience of how the organization is perceived

Flexibility – Building the Compelling Case

- Sloan Foundation funded project - 46 companies
- Report consolidated workplace flexibility data
- Gathered known internal and external data
- Flexibility “weight of evidence”
- Illustrated positive business flexibility impacts


Flexibility – Building the Compelling Case, cont.

Overwhelmingly companies reported these actions:

- Communicate business imperative for workplace flexibility
- Create standards and principles for effectively implementing broad based flexibility
- Develop leadership for expanding flexibility
Flexibility – Building the Compelling Case, cont.

- What information had the greatest impact?
  - Annual opinion/climate survey/worklife
    - “Do you have the flexibility you need?”
  - Employee and manager self report of flexibility impact: retention, productivity, engagement, satisfaction
  - Focus group feedback

Create a Flexibility Strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Drivers</th>
<th>Organizational Challenges</th>
<th>Systemic Flexibility Solutions</th>
<th>Outcomes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Loss of key faculty</td>
<td>Address stress</td>
<td>Create a competitive edge</td>
<td>Increase attractiveness to candidates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retirements</td>
<td>Create dept. environment</td>
<td>Long-term change strategy</td>
<td>Increase retention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shift in generational</td>
<td>Optimize environment</td>
<td>Comprehensive practices</td>
<td>Support faculty to excel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>expectations</td>
<td>Optimize assets</td>
<td>Provide continuing education</td>
<td>Great place to join and stay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior faculty</td>
<td>Establish new career paradigms</td>
<td></td>
<td>Evidence of impact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fewer resources</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>ROI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflect student diversity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address pipeline leak</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Setting the Stage for Flexibility - Tactics

- Create urgency – “60% of faculty have considered leaving”
- Hit hard with internal/external research
- Use stories: exits and successes
- Use ROI over and over: salary, recruitment, funding, teaching, start up, potential
- Communicate benchmarks
- Involve all areas: faculty, staff health care
- Listen to the customer -constituent
- Make the vision compelling, achievable, inspiring
- Use sense of pride, competitive spirit (Top 100)
- Conduct visible forums – time bound outcomes

100 Best Companies List

- Ignited change in corporate world
- 2 universities on list: Cornell and Harvard
- Move ahead or will take back seat
- Leverages pride and competition
- Want to be on list and stay on list
- 5-7x more applicants; free advertising
- Create a 100 Best Universities to Work for List?

Creating a Great Workplace - Areas for Improvement

- Greater assistance from chair (#1 Opportunity) to ensure success of work
- Effective mentoring of junior faculty
- Flextime or flexible schedules
- Teleworking
- Transitional part time work after major life event
- Extended tenure clock for new parents
- Back-up Child Care
- Increased infant/toddler care
- Elder Care
- Greater support from chair when personal or family needs arise
- Paid parental leave

Ask Faculty About:

- Their work experience
- Teaching Load
- Advisory Load
- Service Expectations
- Outreach Expectations
- Expectations for applying external funding
- Internal funding availability
- Resources support/staff, space, equipment
- Time/opportunity to develop collaborative relationships
Ask faculty about their chairs’ actions to support worklife

- I believe that my chair effectively addresses faculty personal or departmental work life and flexibility concerns
- I believe that my chair has complete knowledge of worklife and career flexibility policies and how to advise faculty on their effective use

Top 100 Universities List

- Do you have a written statement supporting career flexibility?
- Do you provide modified duties for semester (more) to faculty?
- Do you provide tenure clock stops?
- Do you provide part time to faculty?
- Do you have a mentoring program for all junior faculty and mid-career?
- Do you have phased retirement?
- Do you provide child care?
- Do you provide elder care?
- Do you provide paid leave for childbirth, adoption? Post FMLA?
- Do you provide telecommuting?
- Does your strategic plan commit to career flexibility to attract & retain faculty?

Strategy Insights – Corporate and Academy

**Corporate**
- Flexibility is a business/management tool
- Management required education
- Funded, central office
- Written policy, values tied to mission/strategy
- Find, communicate stories
- Message - theme and brand
- Communicate flexibility success
- Highlight innovation

**Academy**
- Flexibility is fundamental to careers and workplace competitiveness
- Leadership education
- Funded hub office with partnerships
- Written strategy linking climate to viability and talent
- Find, communicate stories
- Message - theme and brand
- Communicate flexibility and leadership successes
- Highlight innovation

State Flagship University – Case Example

- 3 Core individuals (Researcher Administrative Executive, EVP, Administrator)
- WorkLife Forum – presented data from other universities, and importance of worklife and flexibility
- President hosted Forum (national university leader + corporate leader invited)
- Task force formed: leaves, flexibility; charged with time frames
- Recommended Central Office
- President and EVP invited cross section of individuals to be members, sponsors of WorkLife Task Force
- Strategic Plan named WorkLife support for faculty & staff as a value

Areas of Promise – Consulting firms

**Learning Resources**
- Created centralized flexibility resources

**Peer Networking**
- Established 40+ women’s networks
- Annual Conference for women

**Accountability**
- Issue annual survey: employees rate manager on women’s development to leadership, inclusion, flexible work environment

Areas of Promise – On-Ramps

**Large Consulting Firm**
- Inspired by “The Hidden Brain Drain”
- Goal - to get off ramped women back into talent pipeline
- Program: to hit the ground running, guide back to high-power careers
- Reached out to off-ramped alumni, other organizations
- Put structure together: recruiting areas, women’s network, alumni
- Attendees had access to decision makers
- Large annual event: discussed trends & challenges
Areas of Promise – On-Ramps

- Academy option* to On-Ramp
  - Offer annual event for PhD level STEM women who want to on-ramp
  - How to prepare for a transition and gap
  - How to position for the academy
  - How to write proposals; funding profile
  - How to explain your work
  - How to teach
  - How to work with students
  - How to be a scientist and have a life

*U of Washington ADVANCE will offer a “On Ramps at the Academy program” in 2009

Flexibility Resources

  - www.cvwf.org

  - www.worldatwork.org

“Workplace Flexibility in Action”, Sloan/AWLP Retreat, August, 2007