

## TRANSFORMATIONS

OCTOBER 2009

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### UPCOMING EVENTS: FALL 2009

#### Graduate Student Lunch Seminar

October 12, 2009  
12:00 pm–1:30 pm  
GLC F

Join Dr. Shelli Fowler, Director of the Graduate Education Development Institute (GEDI), for a discussion of the need for active, problem-based learning in STEM classrooms. This seminar will focus on “Contemporary Pedagogical Issues: How Do We Engage SOL-trained, Passive Learners?”



#### Leadership Lunch

October 27, 2009  
12:00 pm–1:30 pm

#### Old Guard Room, Inn at Virginia Tech

Join Dr. Cynda Johnson, Founding Dean of the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine, for lunch and her perspectives on leadership.

Registration for all upcoming events is available at [www.advance.vt.edu](http://www.advance.vt.edu).

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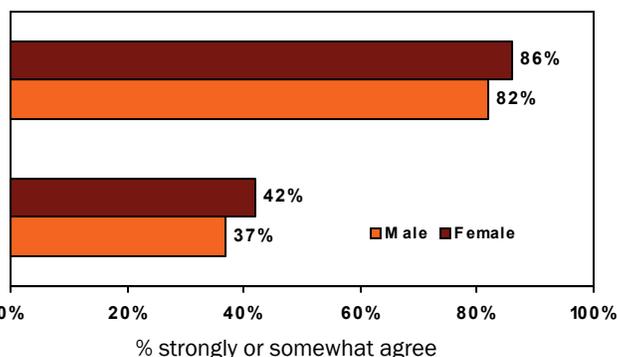
### DUAL CAREER HIRING: DEFINING THE ISSUE

Like many land grant institutions, Virginia Tech is located in a part of the state with limited employment options. In order to attract and retain an outstanding faculty, Virginia Tech must increasingly address issues related to the employment of faculty spouses and partners. These issues are particularly important for women faculty, since women are more likely to be married to other professionals, especially academics, than their male colleagues. In the fall of 2008, *AdvanceVT* surveyed Virginia Tech faculty to gauge perceptions of climate, diversity, work-life balance, and overall job satisfaction. The survey responses indicate that spouse/partner employment is a concern for both male and female faculty.

#### 2008 Survey Responses

My spouse/partner’s career aspirations are as important as mine.

I have considered leaving Virginia Tech to improve employment opportunities for my spouse/partner.



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# TRANSFORMATIONS

## DUAL CAREER HIRING GUIDELINES AND RESOURCES

One of the areas of focus for *AdvanceVT* is university policies. A work group of faculty and administrators was established in late 2003 to review policies and their implementation, and recommend changes to existing policies or development of new policies. Based on discussions among work group members and at a university-wide workshop sponsored by *AdvanceVT* in January 2004, the work group chose as its first project to develop written guidelines for dual career hiring at Virginia Tech.

The guidelines are available on the provost's web site, and state that Virginia Tech is committed to responding to the needs of dual career couples within available resources in cases that are consistent with the university's mission and goals. The guidelines outline the basic conditions under which dual career hires will be considered. However, the guidelines do not create an entitlement. Given limited resources, the lack of disciplinary fit in some cases, and the university's mission and aspirations as a research university, it simply will not be possible to respond to the employment needs of all dual career couples.

Virginia Tech's Dual Career Assistance Program offers job search assistance for spouses or partners of newly recruited faculty or administrators. Departments may also refer current faculty members to the program where retention is a concern because of spouse employment issues.

The dual career coordinator can:

- provide general information on employment in the region;
- help identify appropriate employers and make connections with key contacts;
- critique a resume, cover letter, or other documents for the client;
- help prepare the client for interviewing; and
- act as a sounding board for job seekers in need of encouragement, support, or focus.

More intensive career exploration may be available on a case by case basis. In addition to the dual career coordinator, the provost's office remains involved in negotiating and cost sharing faculty appointments for dual career partners in accordance with the Dual Career guidelines.

As a result of the ADVANCE program, Virginia Tech has:

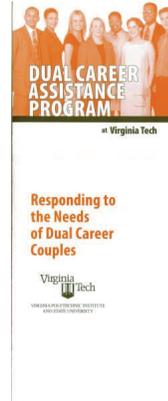
- Established a Dual Career Assistance Office (opened fall 2005)  
⇒ [www.hr.vt.edu/employment/dualcareers](http://www.hr.vt.edu/employment/dualcareers)
- Developed community contacts and networks
- Created guidelines for department heads  
⇒ [www.provost.vt.edu/Guidelines.php](http://www.provost.vt.edu/Guidelines.php)
- Educated department heads and search committees
- Provided cost sharing for dual hires from the central administration

Feedback from recent faculty hires indicates that while Virginia Tech is making progress in addressing the needs of dual career couples, additional efforts are needed in order to recruit and retain highly accomplished faculty members.

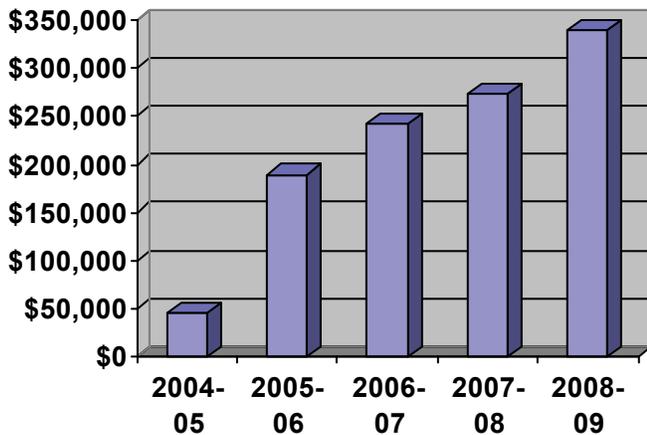


## INCREASING AWARENESS & MONITORING PROGRESS

Policies, procedures, and guidelines are only as effective as their implementation. In order to ensure that department heads are aware of the guidelines for dual career hires, the associate provost for academic administration and *AdvanceVT* met with department heads in the various colleges to distribute the guidelines, answer questions, and discuss their implementation. The guidelines are posted on the provost's web site (<http://www.provost.vt.edu/Guidelines.php>), and a brochure describing resources for dual career couples is also available. The question of when during the hiring process to raise the issue of employment for a spouse or partner is always a difficult one, and Virginia Tech is attempting to address the issue by making information on resources for dual career couples available to all faculty candidates through links on the appropriate university web pages as well as written materials.



Central Funding for Dual Career Hires



Due to the increasing need to accommodate faculty members with spouses/partners also seeking employment, the Virginia Tech administration may provide partial bridge funding to departments for new hires or retentions. This funding is increasingly essential to attract and retain exemplary faculty, and has increased substantially since 2004.

In addition to support provided by the Dual Career Assistance Program and the central administration, an exemption to search for a dual career hire may be approved by the provost and president.

Exemptions to Search for Dual Career Hires						
	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	Total
<b>Tenure Track</b>	0	2	3	2	3	10
<b>Non-tenure Track</b>	2	2	5	12	4	25
<b>Total</b>	2	4	8	14	7	35

“Couple hiring may be an instance where the whole becomes more than the sum of its parts, and faculty should be encouraged to think of the university not as a set of autonomous departments but as an intellectual and corporate whole.

- Use dual career hiring to increase gender equality.
- Budget funds for dual career hiring.
- Communicate with faculty.
- Make the partner issues easier to raise.
- Interview potential partner hires.
- Negotiate partner positions fully up front.
- Collaborate with neighboring institutions.
- Evaluate dual-career programs.”

Schiebinger, L., Henderson, A., & Gilmartin, S. (2008). *Dual-career academic couples: What universities need to know*. Stanford, CA: Michelle R. Clayman Institute for Gender Research.

## DUAL CAREER HIRING NATIONWIDE

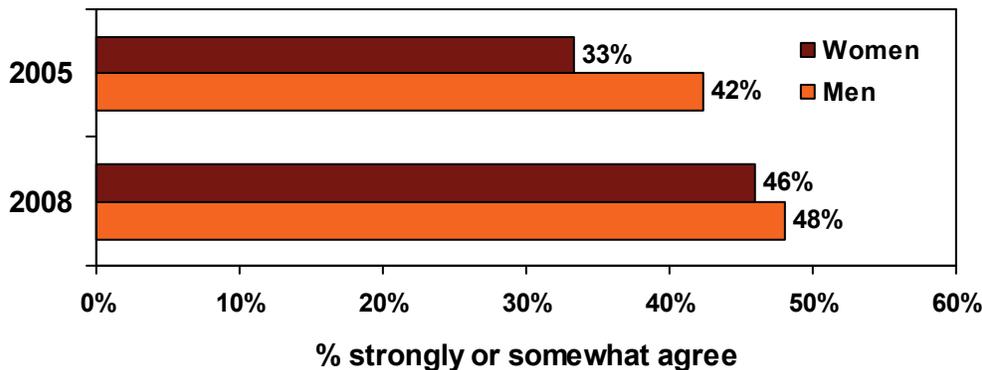
Dual career hiring is an important issue at institutions across the country. In a recent study of research universities (Schiebinger et al., 2008), scholars found that these types of institutions were more likely than others to have a formal policy on dual career hiring. The institutions surveyed offered a range of assistance for dual career couples, from providing contacts outside the institution to creating shared, part-time, or full-time positions. Location of the institution and availability of local employment alternatives impacted how important the institution viewed accommodations for spouses and partners of faculty members. The colleges and universities studied indicated that dual career policies were established in order to recruit and retain the best faculty.

The study also found that:

- Academic couples make up 36% of the American faculty workforce.
- Partner employment status and career success factors weighed heavily in a faculty member's career decisions.
- 10% of faculty enter academe through dual hire; 93% of dual hires work at the same institution.
- Women are more likely than men to have academic partners and rates of dual hiring are higher among women.
- Universities risk losing prized faculty if suitable employment cannot be found for qualified partners.

The additional resources directed towards dual career hiring at Virginia Tech over the past three years have resulted in an increase in faculty satisfaction. However, according to respondents of *AdvanceVT's* 2008 Faculty Work-Life Survey, overall satisfaction with dual career hiring is still low. Continued attention to this issue is necessary.

I am satisfied with the assistance offered by Virginia Tech in finding employment for the partners/spouses of faculty members



*"The availability of dual career hiring guidelines and the existence of the Dual Career Office at Virginia Tech made us feel more secure about accepting Virginia Tech as an employer for my husband. It is a good indication that Virginia Tech cares for the employees and their family, which is one of the most important factors to consider while looking for a new job."* - Dual Career Assistance Client

*AdvanceVT* is a comprehensive program to promote and enhance the careers of women in academic science and engineering at Virginia Tech through institutional transformation. Elements of *AdvanceVT* include:

**Pipeline:** Advancing Women into Faculty Careers

**Recruitment:** Increasing the Representation of Women

**Leadership:** Empowering Women as Leaders and Scholars

**Institutional Change:** Updating Policies and Changing Culture

Go to [www.advance.vt.edu](http://www.advance.vt.edu) to learn more about the initiative.