

April 2015

## Work-Life Balance at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst

Jennifer Lundquist

*University of Massachusetts, Amherst*

Joya Misra

*University of Massachusetts, Amherst*

Follow this and additional works at: <http://thekeep.eiu.edu/jcba>



Part of the [Collective Bargaining Commons](#), and the [Higher Education Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Lundquist, Jennifer and Misra, Joya (2015) "Work-Life Balance at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst," *Journal of Collective Bargaining in the Academy*: Vol. 0 , Article 72.

Available at: <http://thekeep.eiu.edu/jcba/vol0/iss10/72>

This Proceedings Material is brought to you for free and open access by The Keep. It has been accepted for inclusion in Journal of Collective Bargaining in the Academy by an authorized editor of The Keep. For more information, please contact [tabruns@eiu.edu](mailto:tabruns@eiu.edu).

# Work-Life Balance at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst

Jennifer Lundquist and Joya Misra  
Sociology Department, UMass

# Research Questions

- How do faculty spend their time? What are the variations?
- How have UMass' work-life policies helped faculty balance care and work? Who benefits most?
- Do caregiving responsibilities and family benefits affect how faculty feel about their jobs and the university?

# Research Method

- Survey of tenure-line and contract faculty from November-March 2008/2009
  - 720 responses; 349 completed surveys; 30% response rate
  - More women, fewer science/engineering faculty, more assistant professors
- Focus groups for contract faculty, assistant and associate professors, and librarians in April 2009
  - 7 focus groups, 77 participants (65 faculty)
  - More women, fewer science faculty, more contract faculty
  - 3 additional focus groups (December 2009)
- Qualitative Interviews in 2007 (Kerry Ann O'Meara)
  - 22 parents

# Work-time findings

- UMass faculty report working 60+ hours a week, including a substantial portion of weekends.
- Faculty find balance between different types of work a challenge.
- Work time is heavily weighted toward teaching and mentoring/advising students.

*“It’s about finding a ‘work-work’ balance rather than ‘work-life’ balance .”*

*“Some people have jobs that finish when they leave, we don’t.”*

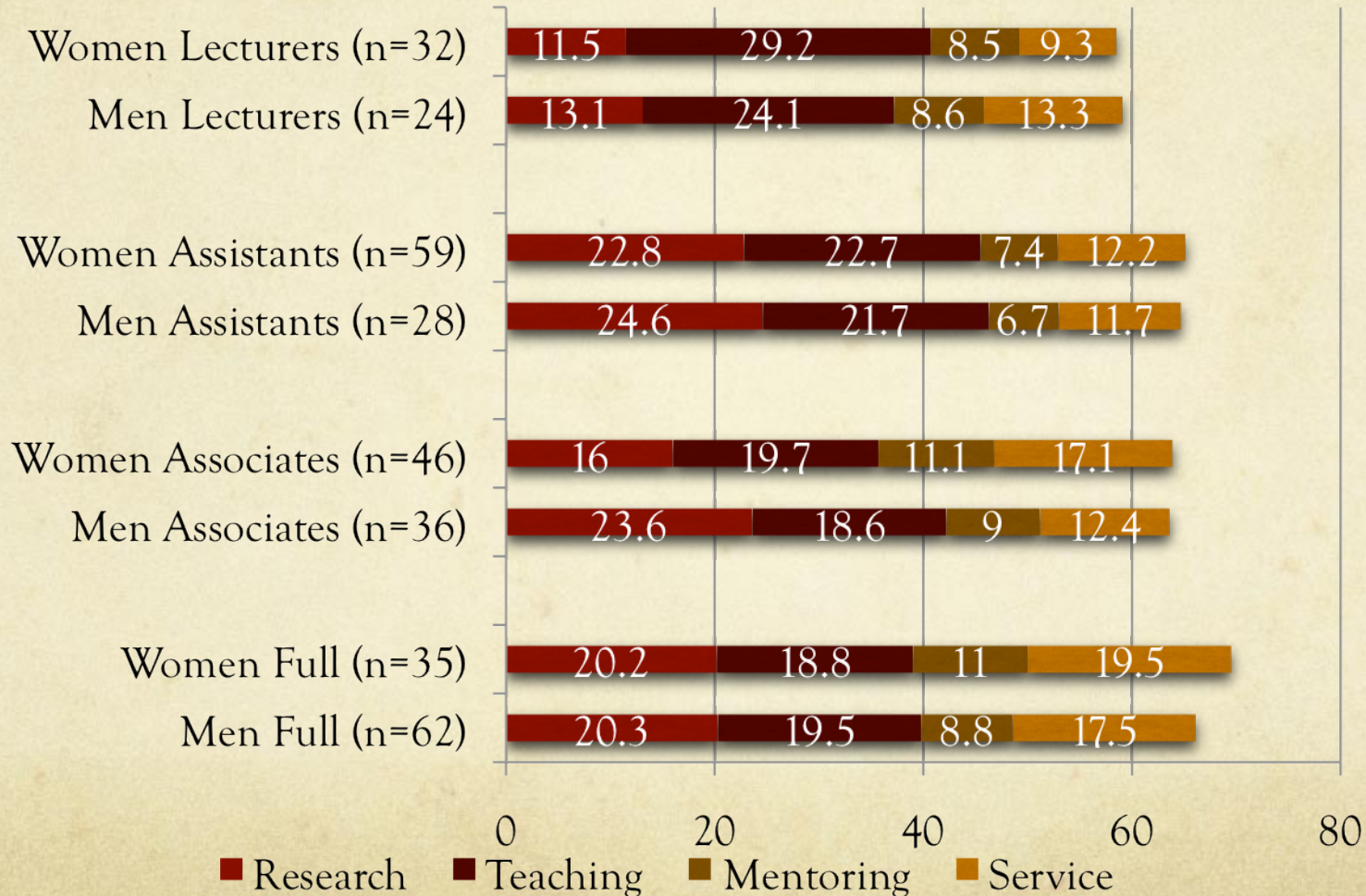
*“When can you say no? . . . How will this be taken? Will it jeopardize my career?”*

*“At a tenure workshop, one of the deans got up and said that when you get tenure you need to have ten letters from Nobel prizewinners and Academy of Science members saying that you are the top person in your field. . . Expectations have expanded to crazy proportions.”*

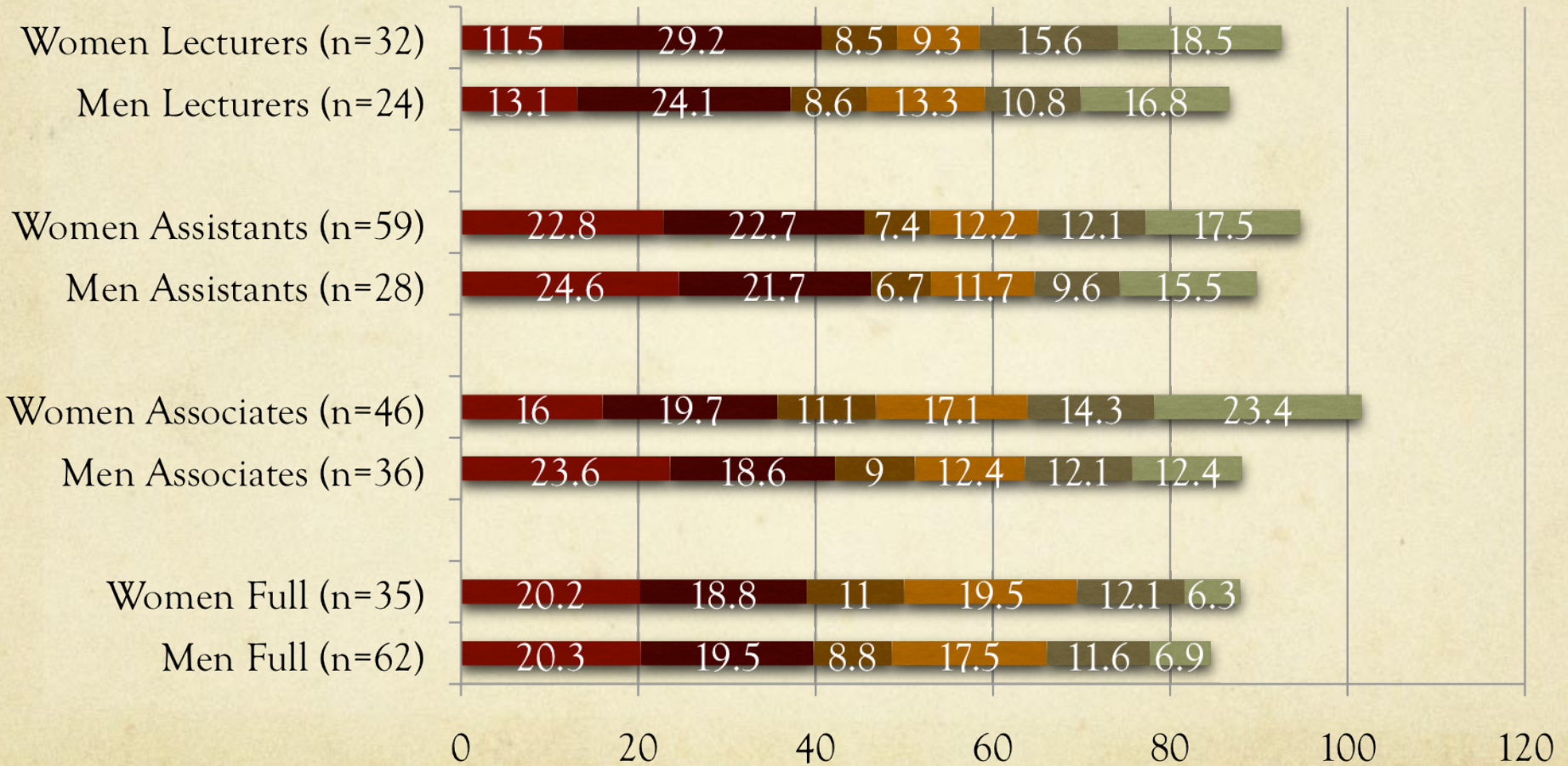
# Housework and Care Time

- Dramatic gender differences in time faculty devote to unpaid work outside University, such as on housework, caring for children, elders, or others.
- Fewer women have children, but faculty mothers are primary caregivers for children more often than faculty fathers.
- When work time, housework time, and care time are totaled, UMass faculty women at every rank put in much longer days than men.

# Weekly Hours of Work by Gender and Rank



# Weekly Hours of Work and Care Time by Gender and Rank



■ Research  
 ■ Teaching  
 ■ Mentoring  
 ■ Service  
 ■ Housework  
 ■ Carework



# Difficulty balancing

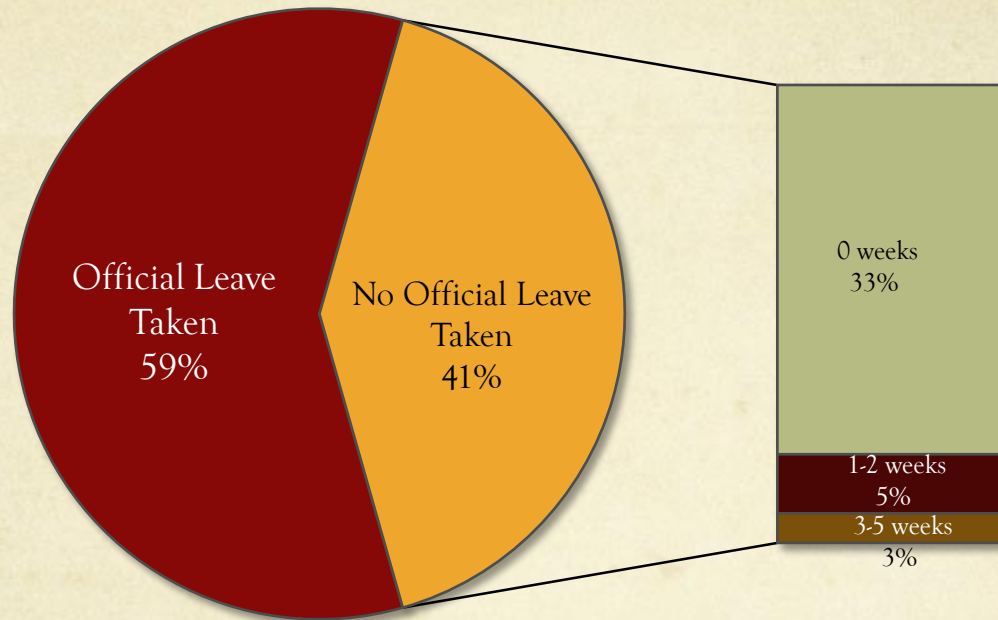
- *“My son said, 'Dad you are not here when I need you these last 4 years.'” “I do the opposite; I refuse to lose that time with my daughter, and I feel like I am slacking on my job.”*
- *“In a sense, it's easier for me to not work all the time, because I have a partner and children. But if you don't have someone pulling at you to stop working...”*
- *“Balance is an inappropriate term. I sat on a seesaw.”*
- *“I was not able to balance work/family responsibilities and feel I neglected care of my mother in order to keep up with my teaching and service responsibilities. I regret it.”*
- *“Balance has not been achieved and my health and physical stamina suffers.”*
- *“Balance was not a word in my vocabulary pre-tenure. It would be best described, rather, as cliff hanging.”*

# Research Time & Parenthood

- Given the additional housework and childcare demands, parents of children under 12 may feel squeezed
- While they do not substantially reduce their time spent on teaching, mentoring, or service – **mothers spend 7.2 hours less on research**
- On the other hand, **fathers of young children protect their research time**
- This reflects the gendered effects of parenthood on faculty careers.

# Who Takes Paid Parental Leave?

*Journal of Collective Bargaining in the Academy, Vol. 6, Iss. 10 (2015), Art. 72*



N=75 eligible births

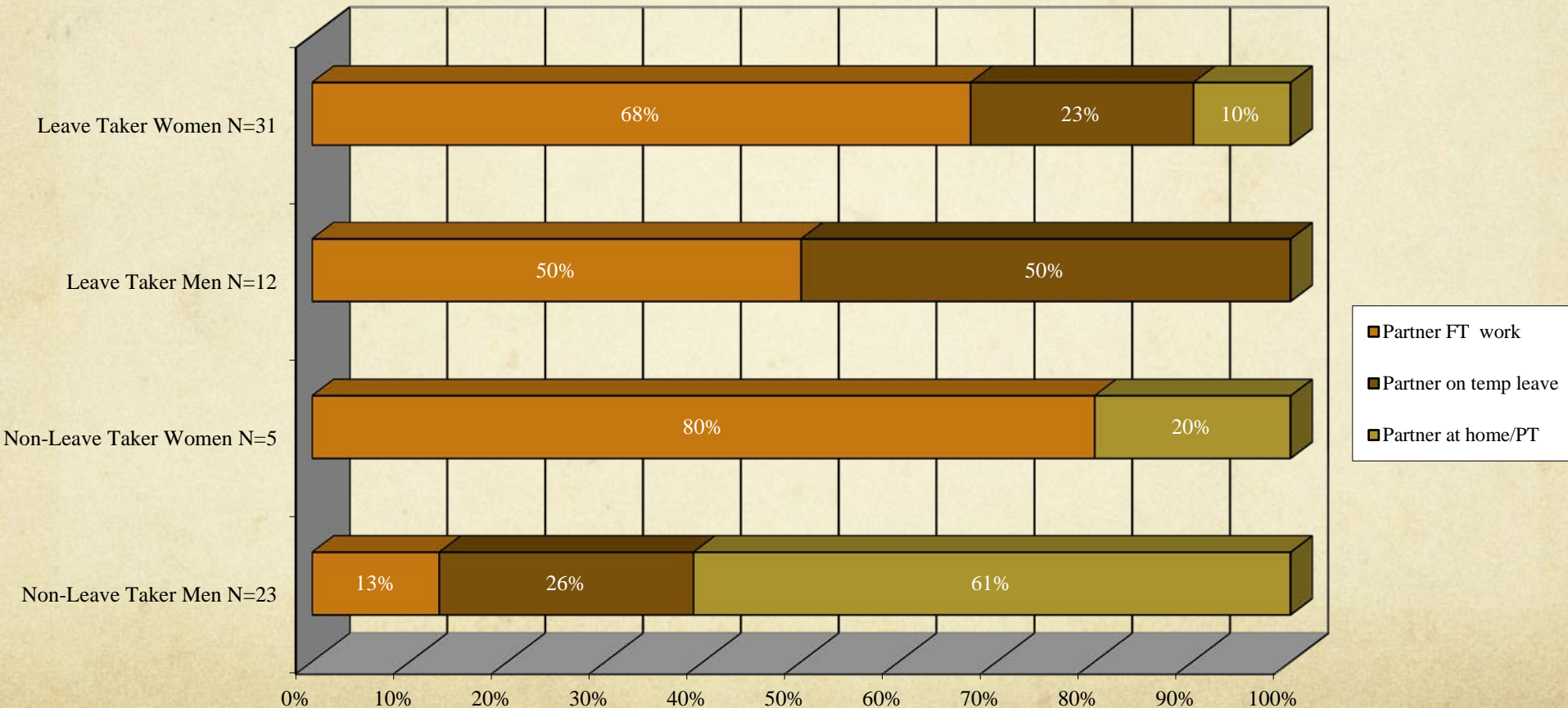
These trends are influenced by gender and college affiliation

- 72% of mothers take leave
- 28% of fathers take leave
- STEM Affiliation reduces the likelihood of leave

# Caregiving Responsibility and Paid Leave

Fathers who are primary or equal caregivers in the household often do not take paid leave

Figure 1. Partner Arrangements upon Birth among Faculty Eligible for Parental Leave



## ○ Their partners take it

# Why Men Don't take Leave

## ○ Chilly Climate

- *"I personally was afraid of being away from my work too much"*
- *"Politically, I don't know how the other people in this department feel..."*

## ○ Fear of being labeled a Shirker

- *"as a man, I didn't want to be perceived as milking the system."*
- *Woman 1: "[There] should be some way to make sure only primary caregivers can take parental leave. I don't want to gender it but...normally women are the primary caregivers."*

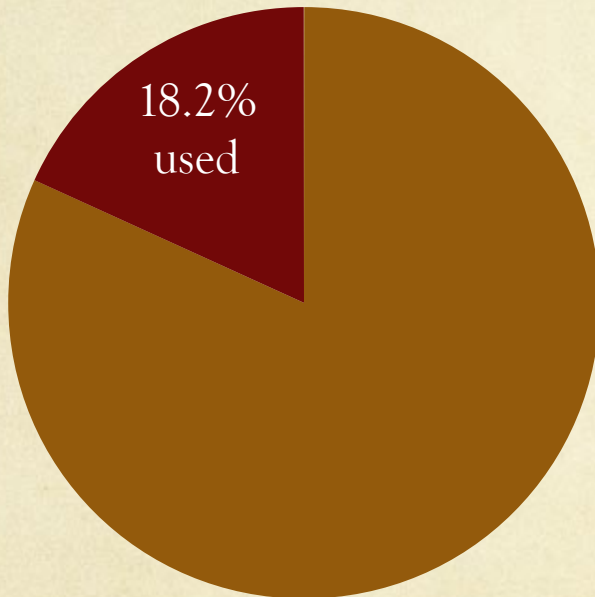
*Man: "In my case I took parental leave as the primary caregiver. My wife is an engineer and only had two weeks off after our child was born."*

*Woman 2: "You are an exception. I am in [X department]. The men I see taking parental leave sit in their office and do research..."*

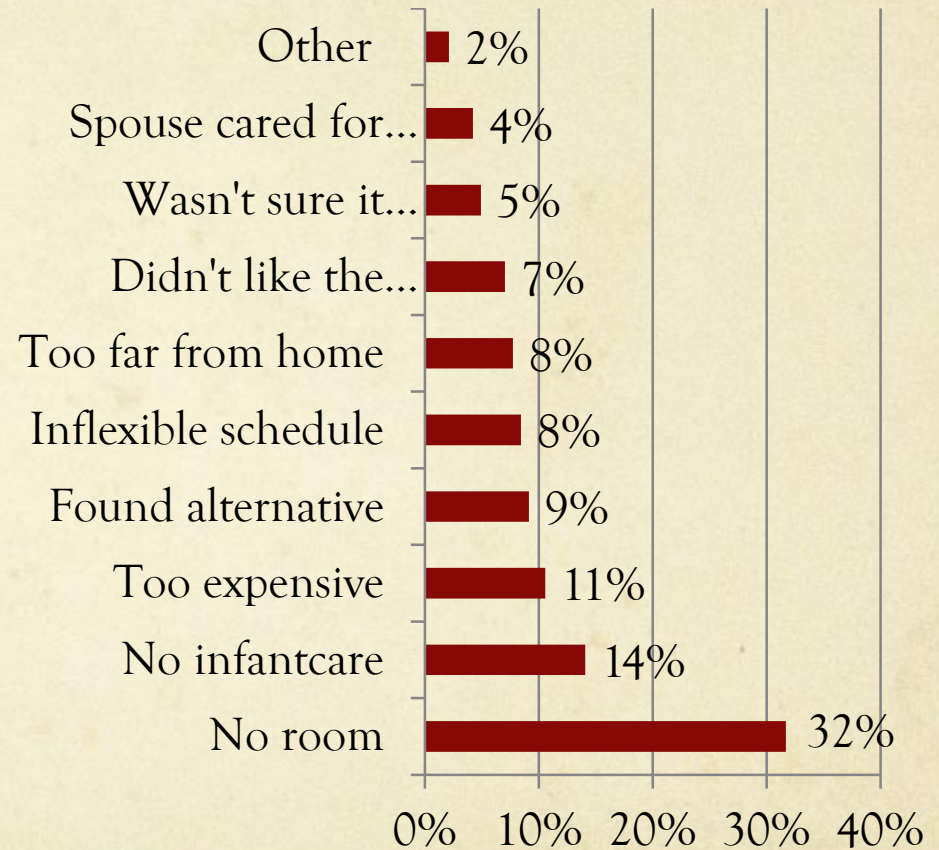
# Campus Childcare Use

N=216 parents with children of daycare age

- University childcare does not meet faculty need



N=142 parents with children of daycare age



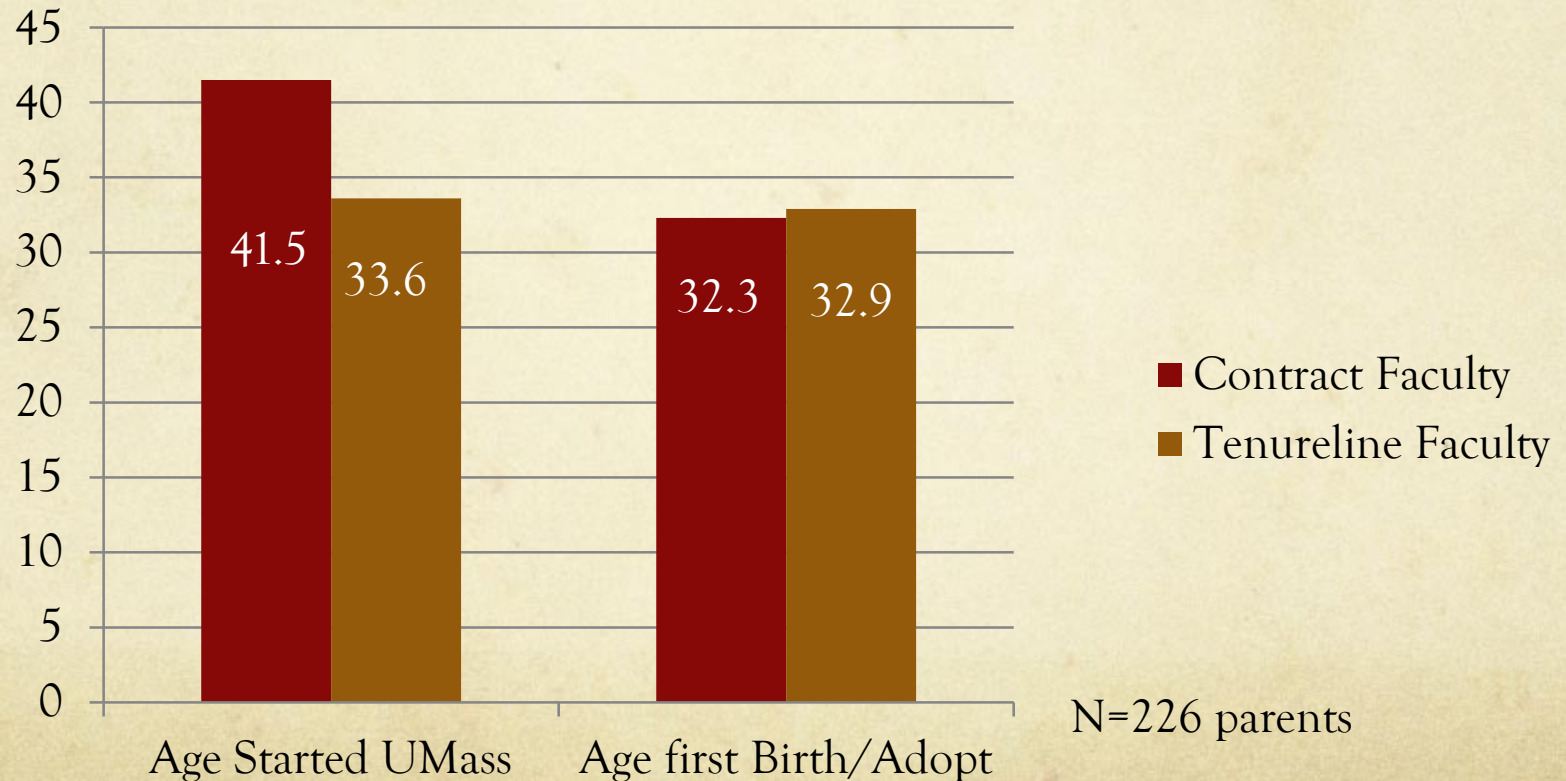
Current space: 87 toddler and preschool slots

# Campus Childcare

- *“Still on waiting list... waiting... waiting... waiting... Would love to use them if given the chance!”*
- *“I did not get a spot - I would really have loved to have access to the childcare as it would give me more time to work, it's excellent care, and it would also be great to have my child close to me on campus.”*
- *“who ’s going to be able to take leave for 15 months waiting until UMASS childcare is available?”*

# Contract Faculty Access to Paid Leave

- Most contract faculty are beyond childbearing years when they become eligible
- Many tenureline and contract faculty (43%) had their children prior to hire

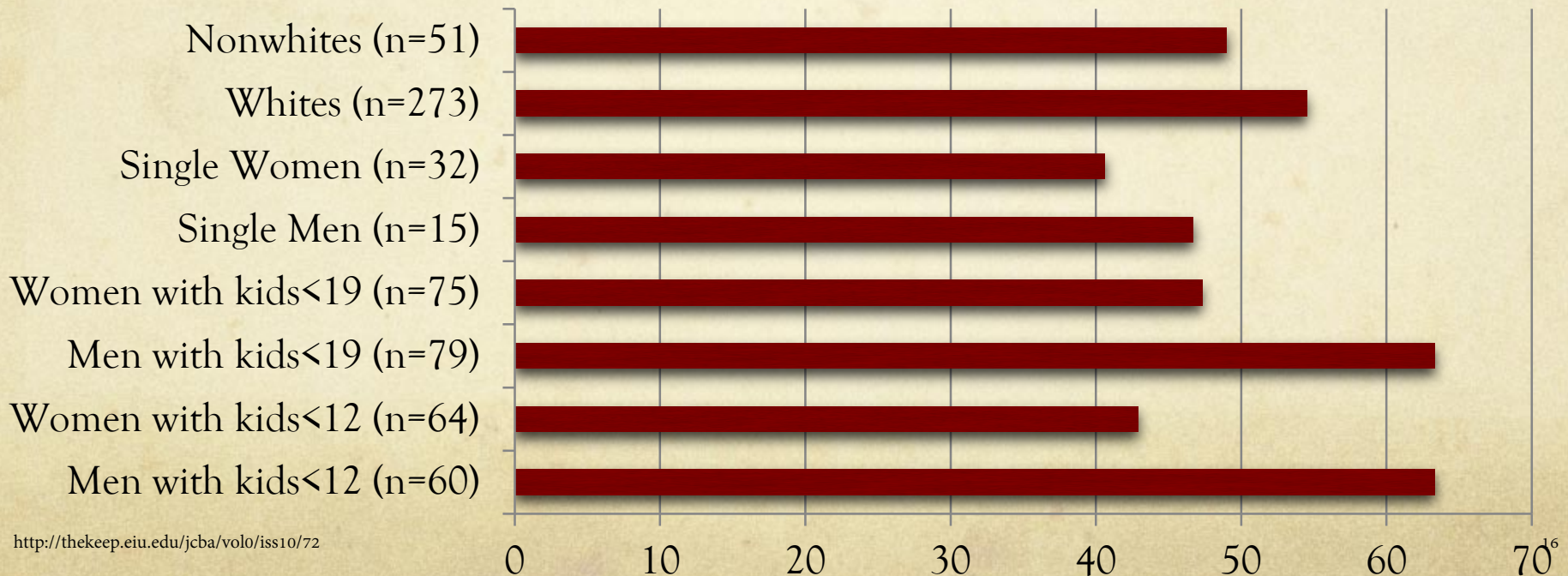




# Perceived Work-Life Balance Support

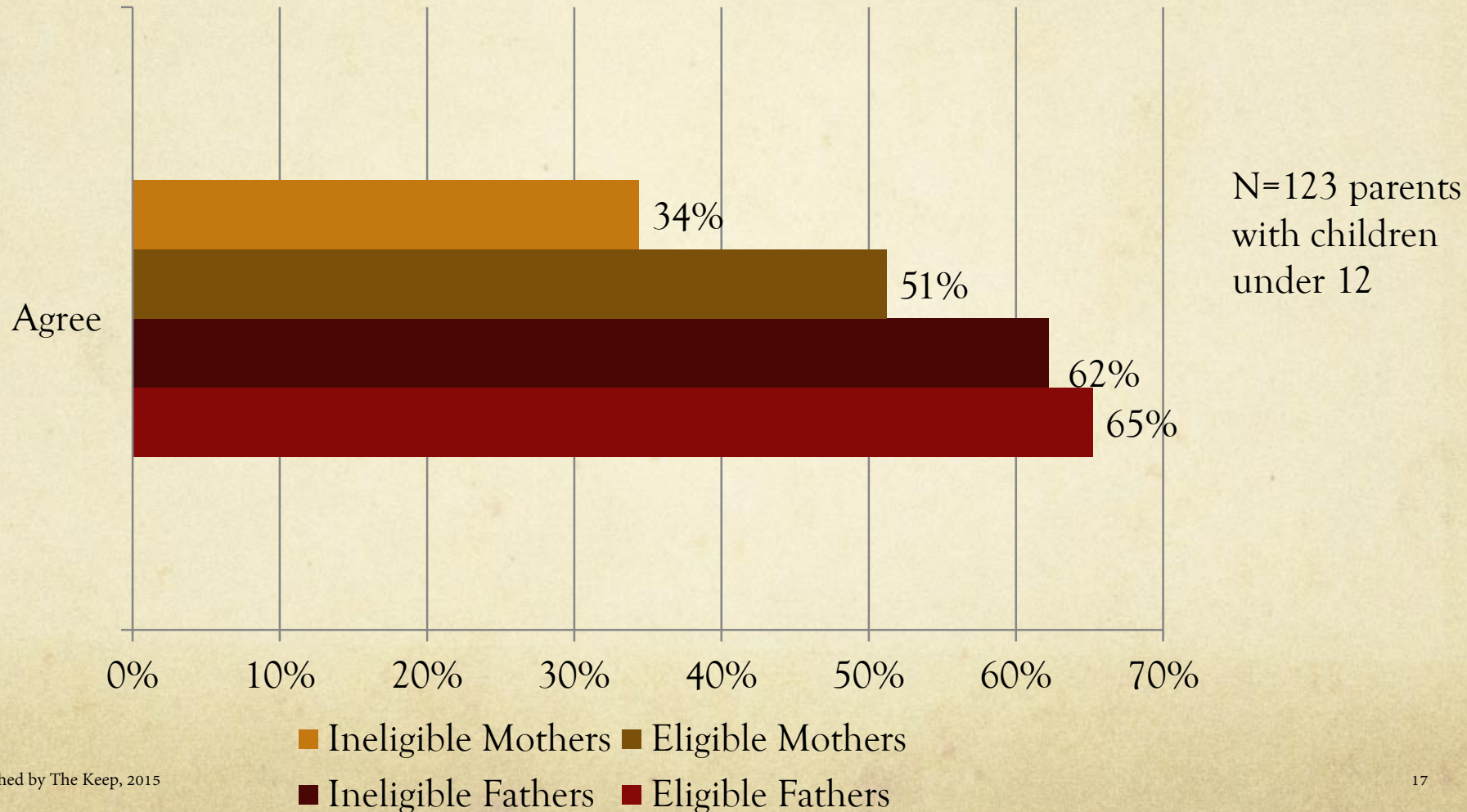
- Men more likely to say their departments provide support for work-life (and their professional goals) than women.
- Single men and women, and faculty of color, do not feel as supported in work-life balance.

## Work-Life Balance Supported



# Benefit Eligibility & Perceived Support

Mothers who had access to benefits are more satisfied with support for work-life than other faculty mothers



# UMass Policy Change Response

- Revision of parental leave to include contract faculty
- Automated parenthood TDY
- Childcare subsidies for new faculty
- Childcare supports for meeting attendance for STEM women faculty
- Toolkit for Deans and Chairs
- Cultural shifts in some units and departments

(e.g. childcare at college events; meetings moved to avoid school schedule conflicts)

# Implications for Work-Life in Academia

- Faculty work a great deal
  - Faculty work bleeds into non-work lives
  - Work hours combined with housework and care are very high, especially for mothers.
- Work-life policies affect faculty recruitment, retention, and overall well being
  - Need to be implemented to ensure that faculty use these policies
- A strong university commitment and culture of work-life balance makes a difference.