

Researchers release first national study on partner-friendly support for dual-career academic jobseekers

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In the first national study analyzing the support of academic couples, researchers at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill have

developed a full ranking of universities by their partner-friendly status and resources for dual-career academic jobseekers.

UNC-Chapel Hill professors Torin Monahan and Jill A. Fisher led a research group to review the support of academic couples to rank 146 R1 universities—doctoral universities with very high research activity.

"The goals of the research are to empower academic couples in their job searches and to encourage universities to support couples more fully," said Monahan. "More than one-third of university researchers have a spouse or [partner](#) who is also an academic, so addressing their needs is essential for recruiting and retaining top academic talent."

The research examined university policies, materials and resources to identify which universities best supported couples through their various programs and funding arrangements.

The data reports that 82% of [public universities](#) created [faculty positions](#) for partners while only 41% of private universities participated. The analysis also revealed that universities in the Northeast were less supportive of academic couples than those in other parts of the country.

In the Northeast, 46% of universities established faculty positions specifically for hiring the partners of new faculty members. In comparison, this practice was more widespread in other regions: 86% in the West, 81% in the South and 76% in the Midwest.

The findings are now published on the Partner Hire Scorecard [website](#) to provide a full ranking of universities by their partner-friendly status and offer resources for dual-career academic jobseekers. The website offers a scorecard that allows jobseekers to see a complete ranking of universities. It also provides access to primary resources to help couples during job searches and negotiations.

Monahan and Fisher collaborated on the project with Carolina researchers Margaret Waltz and Maral Erol and doctoral student Amelia Parker.

The research team anticipates that this website and report can also contribute to addressing various gender inequalities. It personifies data feminism by revealing significant inequalities and disparities that may have been overlooked previously.

"When academic couples don't obtain positions in the same region, it typically disadvantages women in particular, who are more likely to have their careers postponed or sidelined," Monahan adds.

Provided by University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

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