

Work-Life Balance at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst

*A Series of Reports from a study commissioned by
the Joint Administration-Massachusetts Society of
Professors (MSP) Work-Life Committee*

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Research Questions

- Are there differences in how faculty work-time is spent by gender and care responsibilities?
- Are there differences in faculty promotions by gender and care responsibilities?
- How have UMass' work-life policies helped faculty balance care and work? Who benefits most from these policies?
- Do caregiving responsibilities and family benefits affect how faculty feel about their jobs and the university?
- What are the major stressors regarding work-life balance for faculty and librarians?

Current UMass Work-Life Benefits

- New dual career partner hire policy
- Tenure delays for care responsibilities
- Paid semester of parental leave for mothers and fathers
- Paid and unpaid leaves for other serious care responsibilities
- Flexible spending accounts for dependent care
- Childcare subsidies to new faculty
- Subscription to Sittercity
- High quality, on-site childcare center
- Tuition waivers/remissions for family of full-time faculty/
librarians/staff
- Office of Family Resources

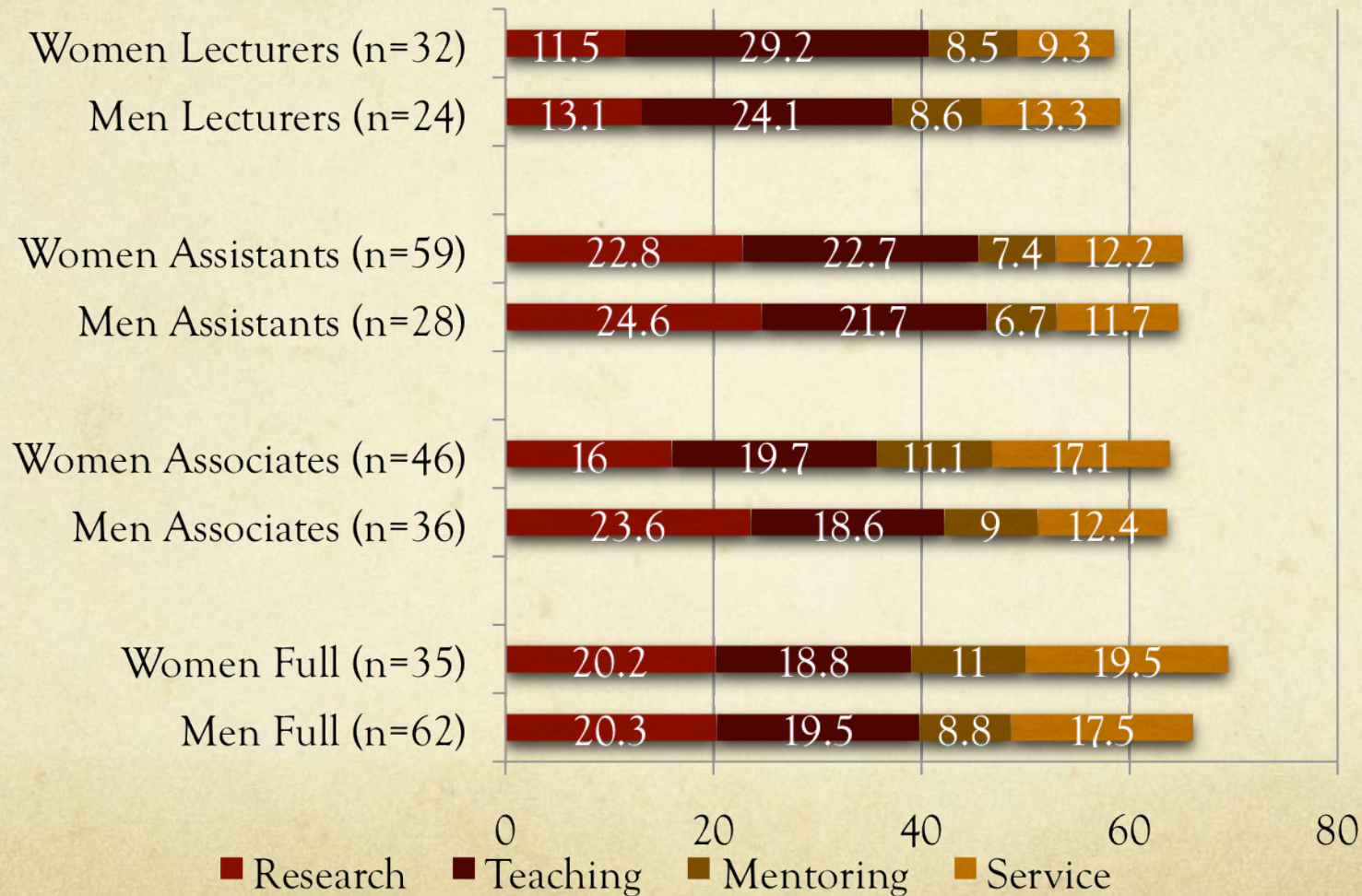
Research Method

- Survey of tenure-line and contract faculty and librarians from November-March 2008/2009
 - 733 responses; 362 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)

Work-time findings

- UMass faculty report working, on average, more than sixty hours each week, including a substantial portion of weekends devoted to work activities.
- In focus groups, faculty noted that finding balance between different types of work was an issue.
- The distribution of faculty time is heavily weighted toward time spent on 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.*

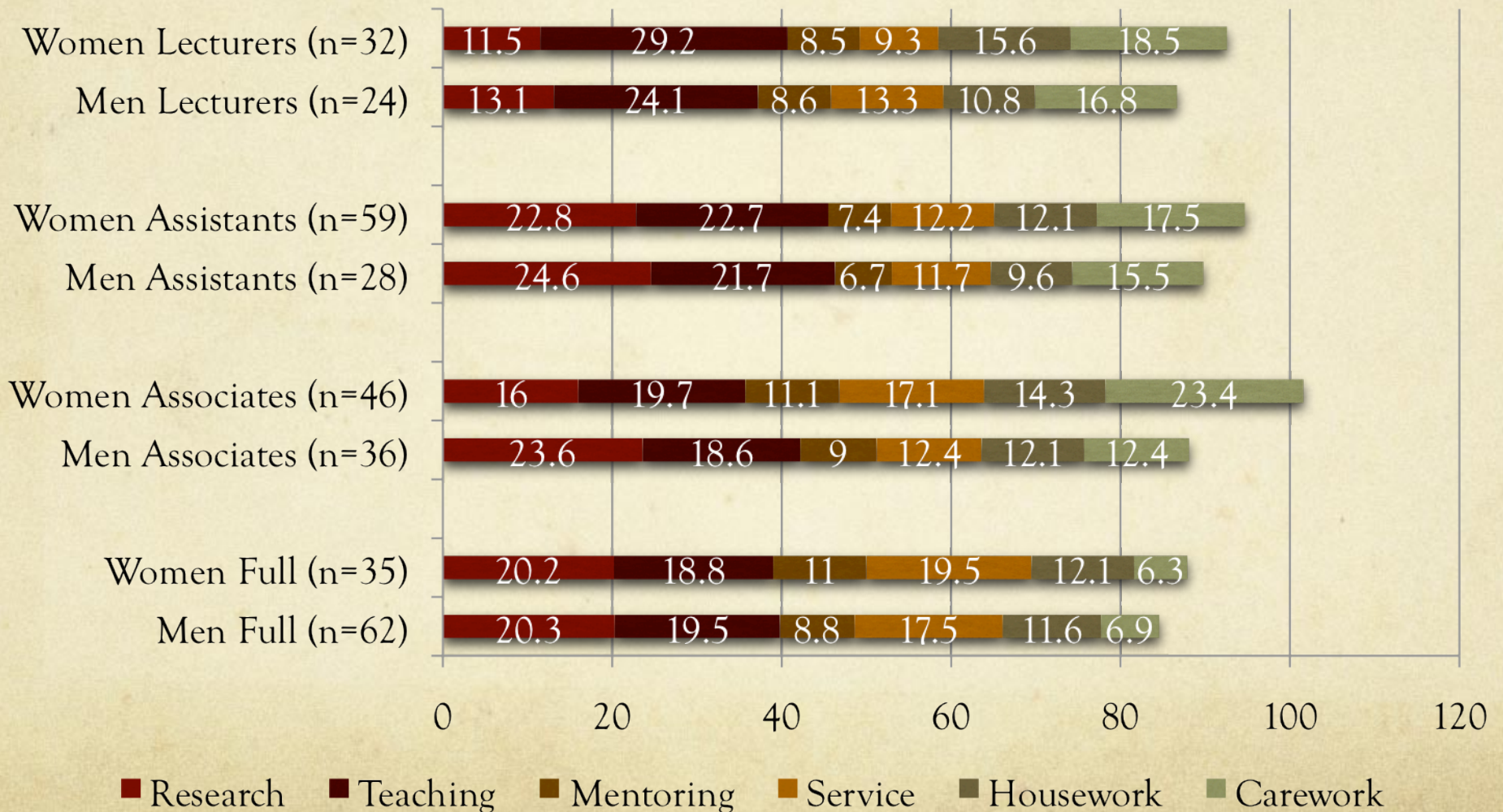
Weekly Hours of Work by Gender and Rank



Housework and Care Time

- Dramatic differences by gender in how much time faculty devote to unpaid work outside of the University, such as on housework, caring for children, elders, or others.
- Although, women are less likely than men to have children, faculty mothers are much more likely to be the primary caregivers for children 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 and Care Time by Gender and Rank

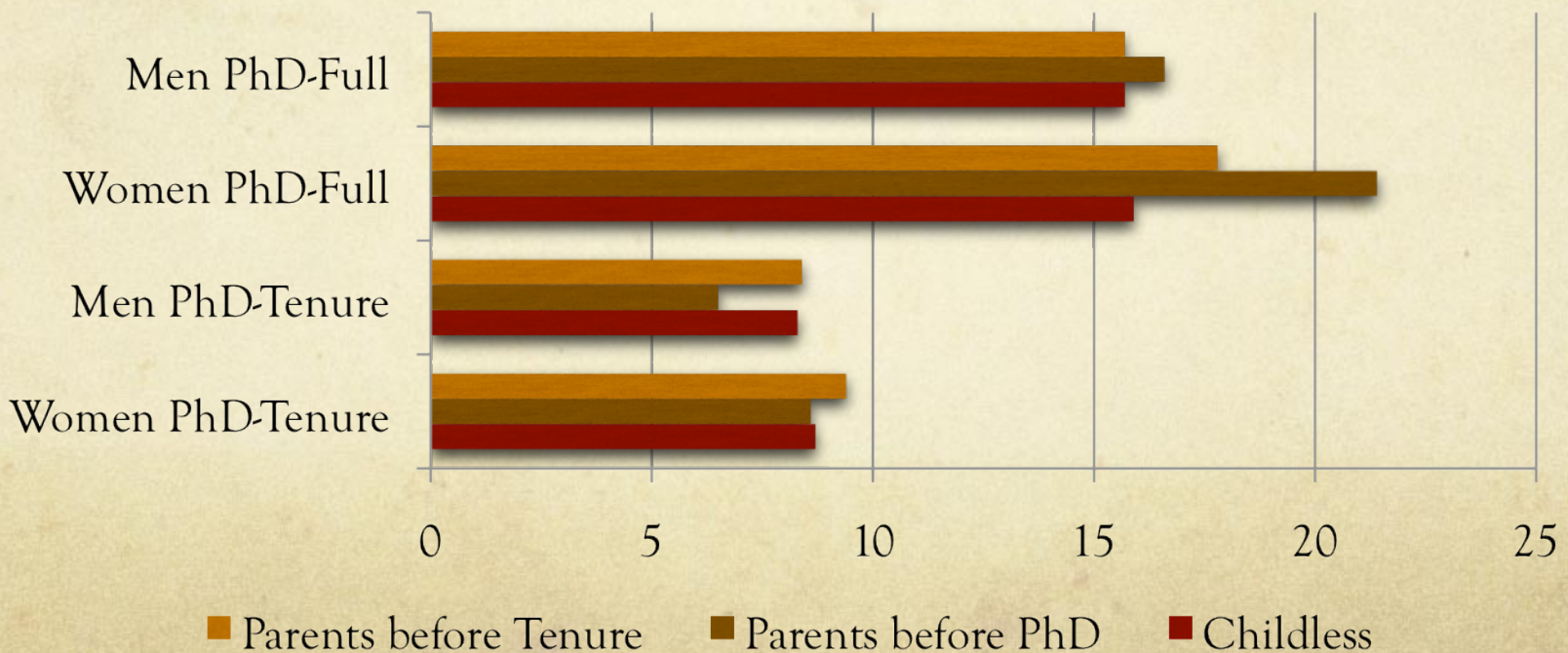


Difficulty balancing

- *“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.”*

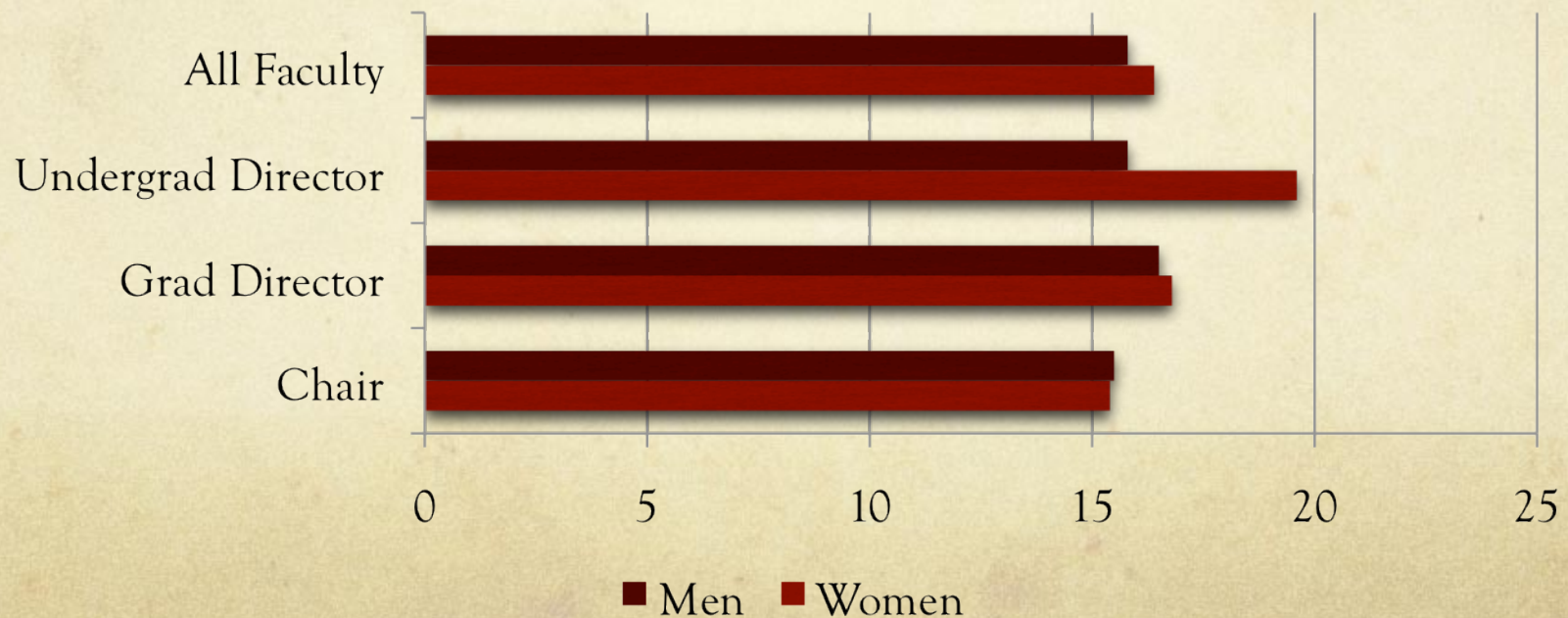
Time to Promotion by Gender and Parenting Status

- Women take longer than men to earn tenure and be promoted
- This gender difference is largely driven by greater promotion penalties to motherhood than fatherhood

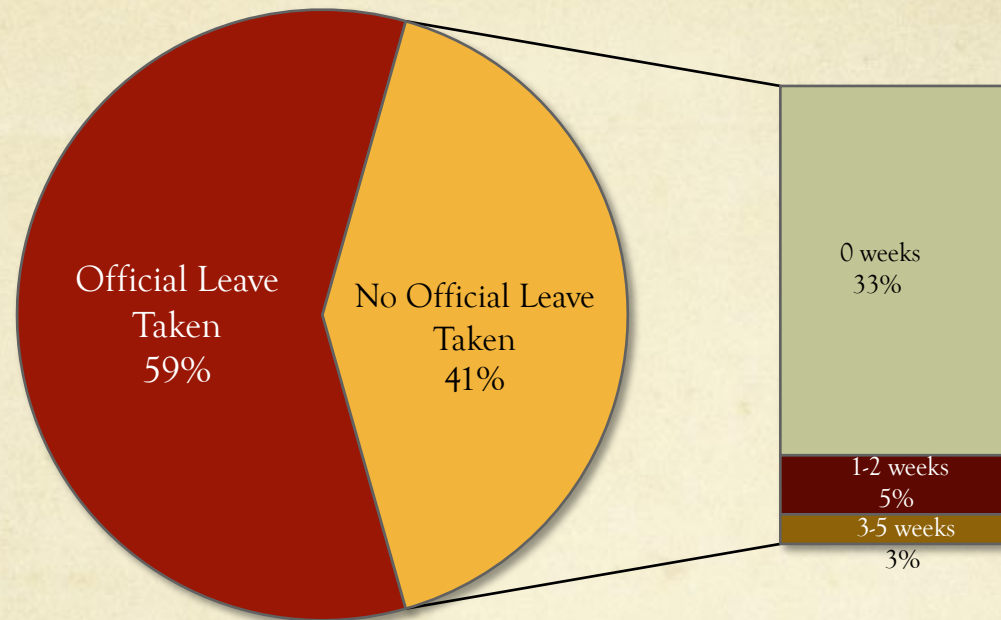


Time to Promotion by Gender and Service Positions

- Associate women are much more likely than Associate men to serve as Undergraduate Directors (35% vs. 17%) and Department Chairs (15% vs. 0%)
- Undergraduate Directorship slows women's promotion by 4 years



Who Takes Paid Parental Leave?



N=75 eligible births

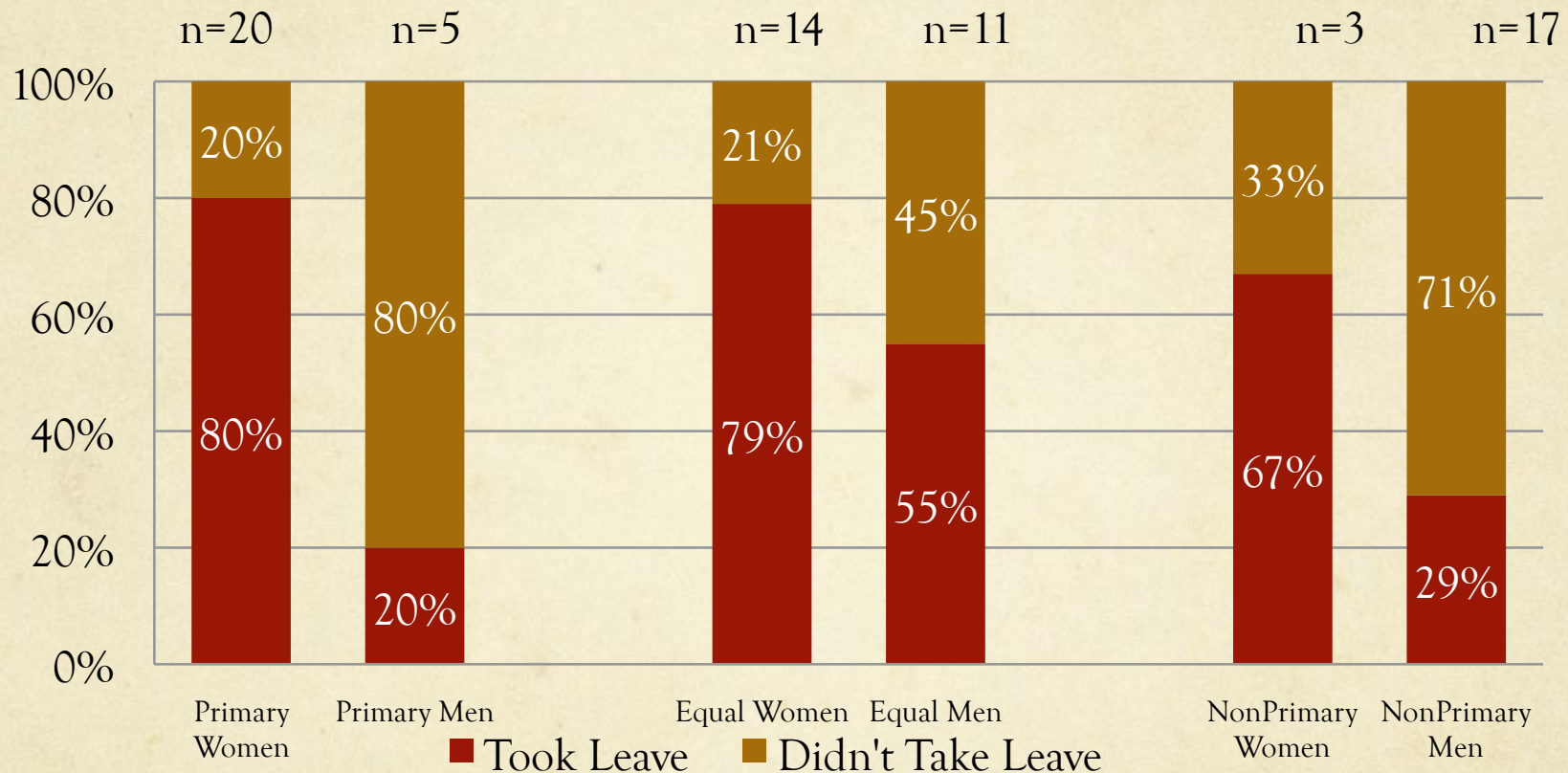
These trends are influenced by gender and college affiliation

- 79% of mothers take leave
 - 89% of non-STEM mothers
 - 70% STEM mothers
- 36% of fathers take leave
 - No difference by STEM

“I am grateful for all that the university has done to help with balancing family and work responsibilities. At the same time, I remain frustrated over the lack of encouragement I received to take family leave...”

Caregiving Responsibility and Paid Leave

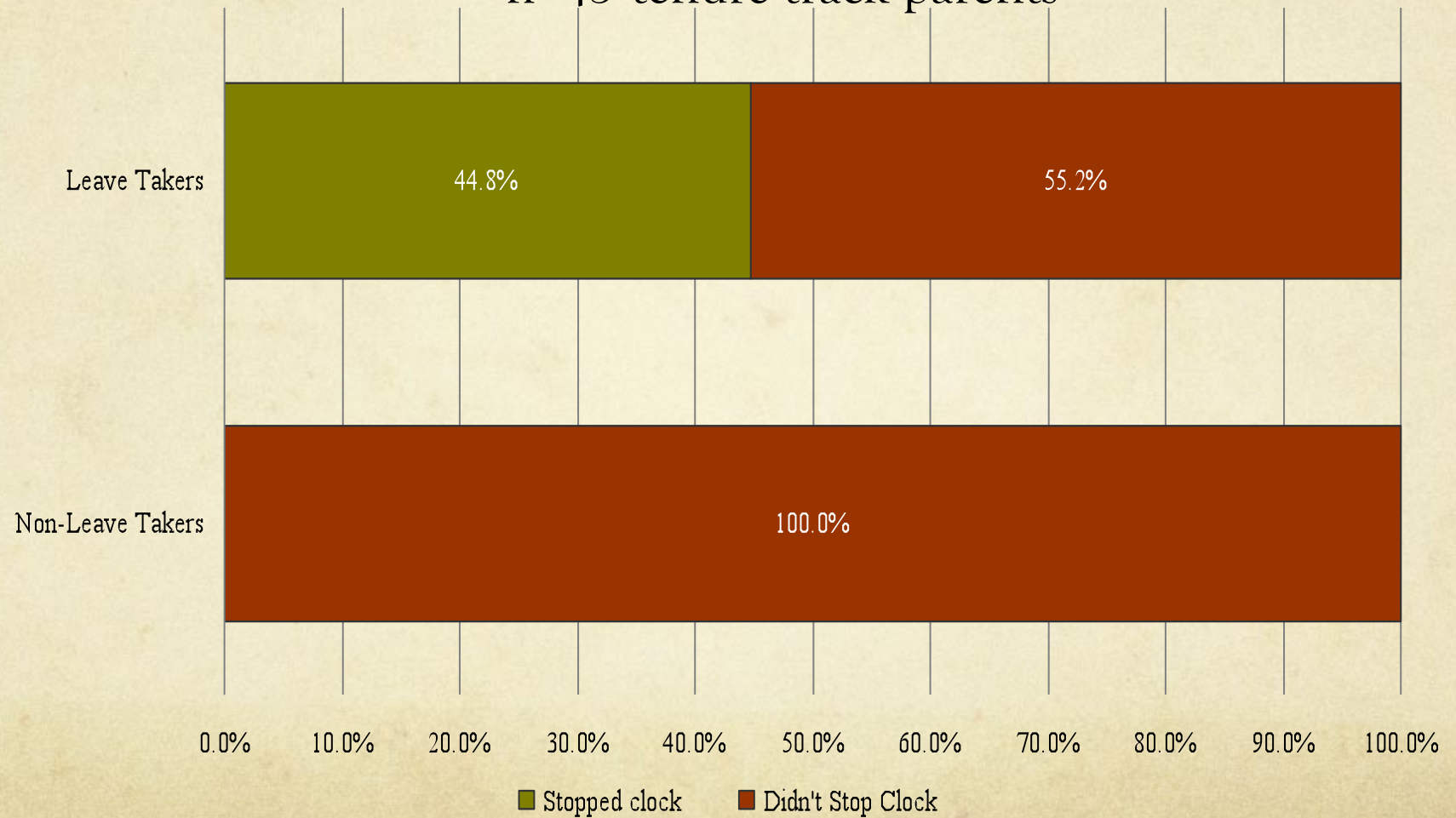
Fathers who are primary or equal caregivers in the household often do not take paid leave



- Of men who take leave, 83% have working partners
- Of men who DON'T take leave, 72% have working partners

Tenure Clock Adjustment

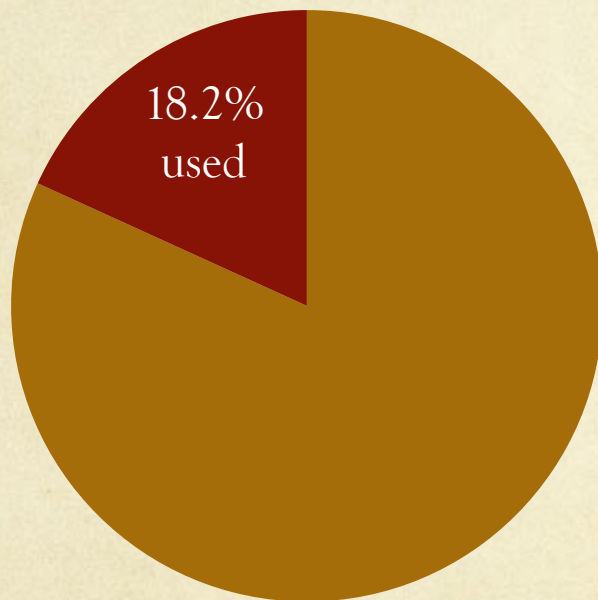
n=43 tenure track parents



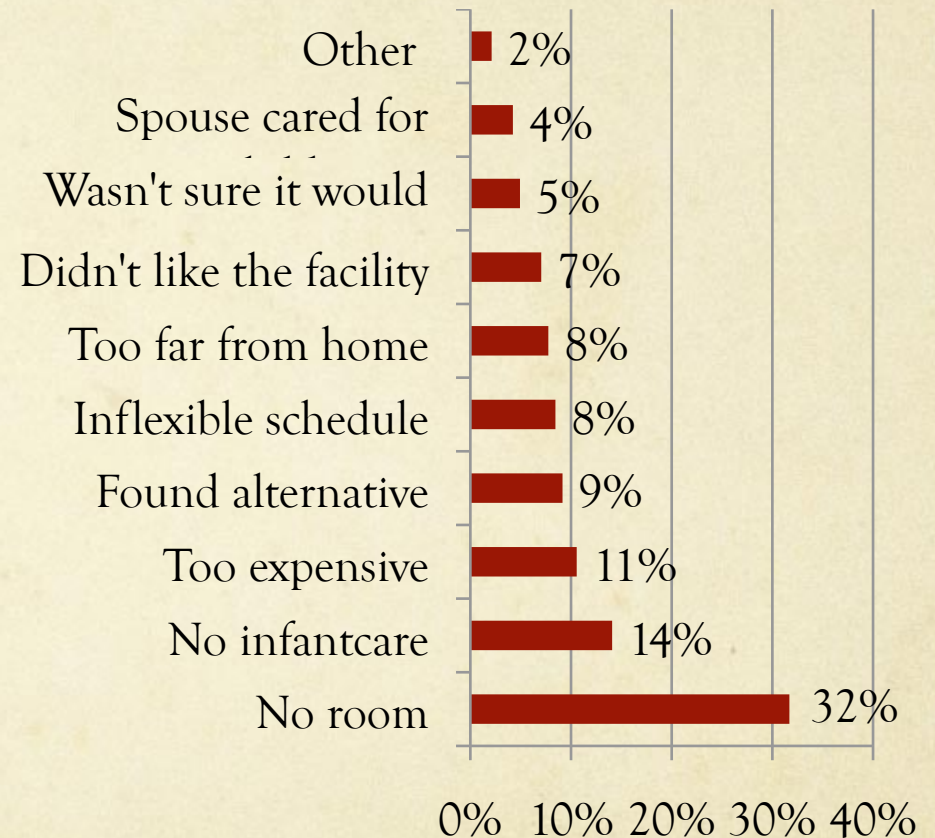
Campus Childcare Use

N=216 parents with children of daycare age

- University childcare does not meet faculty need



N=142 parents with children of daycare age



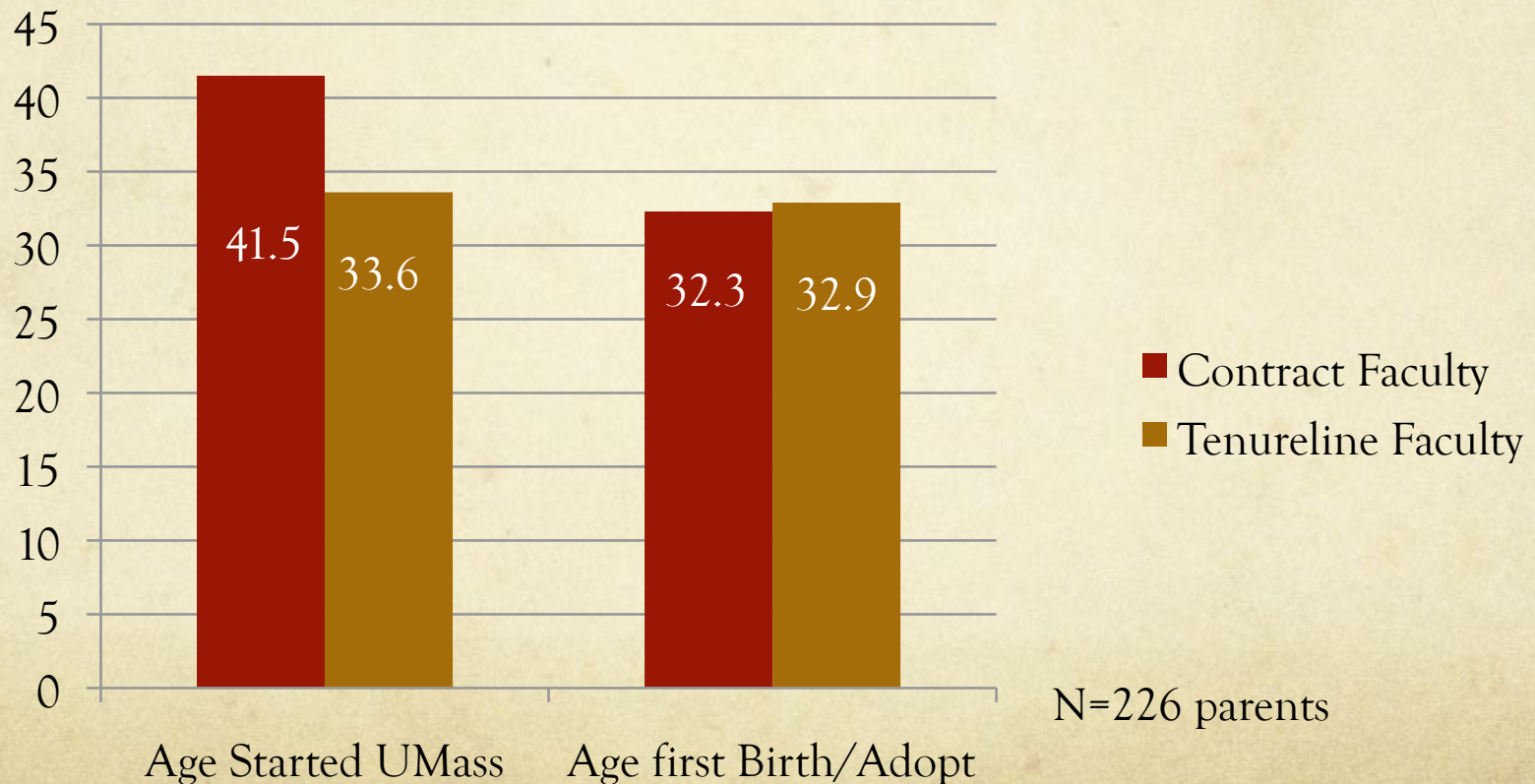
Current space: 87 toddler and preschool slots

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



Email and Work-Life Balance

- Without set email protocols, students' expectations for immediate response from their professors is unrealistically high. Email also lowers the quality of student-instructor communication of the kind that is better suited to face-to-face interaction
- Emails sent by colleagues and supervisors after work hours and over weekends results in frequent feelings of "email invasion." Peers also often expect instant communication. This ubiquitous nature of email is a major factor in faculty work-life boundary blurring.

Email is...

“truly overwhelming”

“24/7”

“massive amounts”

“excessive”

“an overload”

“very often spills into home life”

- *“I am in the process of writing a large grant. I went out of town to Boston on Friday and one of my collaborators emailed me at 9am, and then sent three other emails. By 3 pm, she emailed back to say she would no longer collaborate because I had not responded to her email. I was out of town!”*
- *“[I am often] doing email and other work at home while I am ostensibly spending ‘quality time’ with them. I felt that the survey couldn’t quite capture the complexities of this kind of daily juggling act where categories bleed into each other.”*
- *“I wish there was something the university could do to put limits on this... The university didn't need to worry about it before; it is a product of new technology that allows for instant communication. Think about the days of the memo, 20 years ago, when someone would write a memo, and then put it into campus mail, and it would take a week to get there.”*

The Geography of Work

- Median sales price for homes in Amherst remain well above NE and national medians, but UMass faculty salaries are relatively low, leading more recent hires to live farther away from Amherst, despite the higher quality schools in Amherst
- Assistant professors and women faculty are most likely to be affected by lengthening commutes, making commute time an important recruitment and retention issue.
- Those who live close to campus (0-10 minutes) express greater satisfaction with the University's career support and work-family balance support.

Faculty and Partners' Commute time by Gender

N=340 faculty

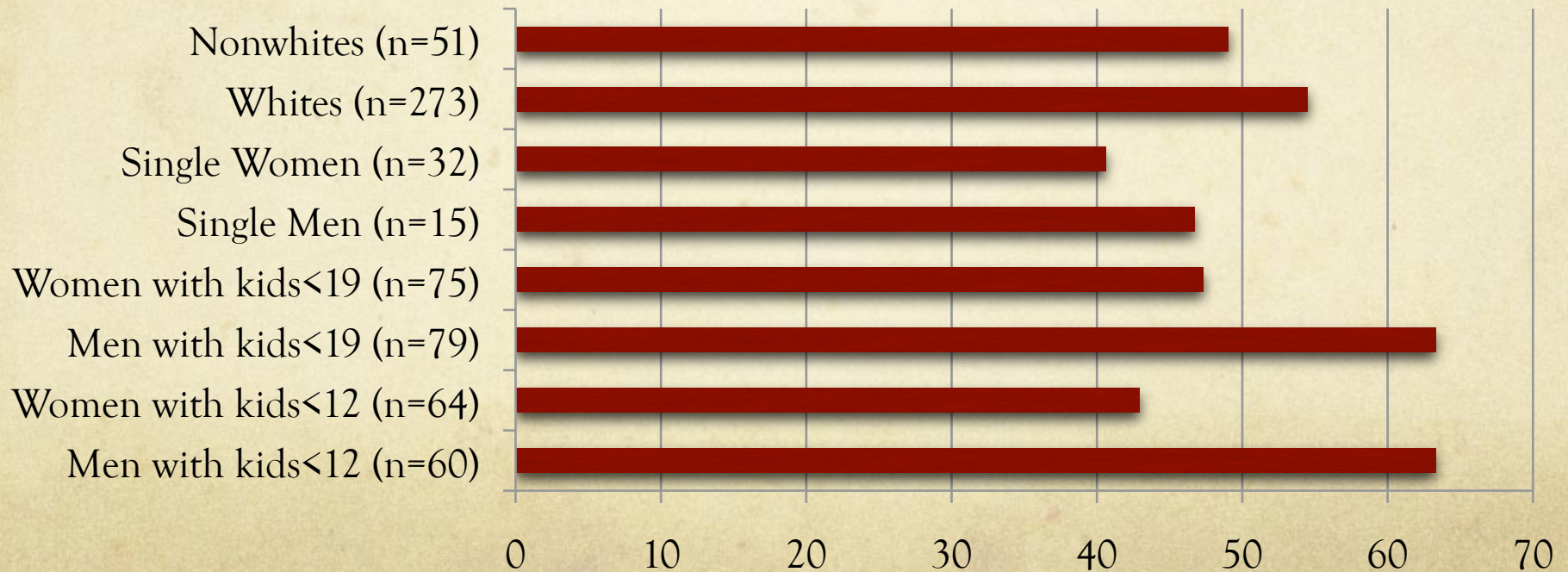


- Of all UMass faculty who live apart from their partners for work-related reasons, 72% are women.

Perceived Work-Life Balance Support

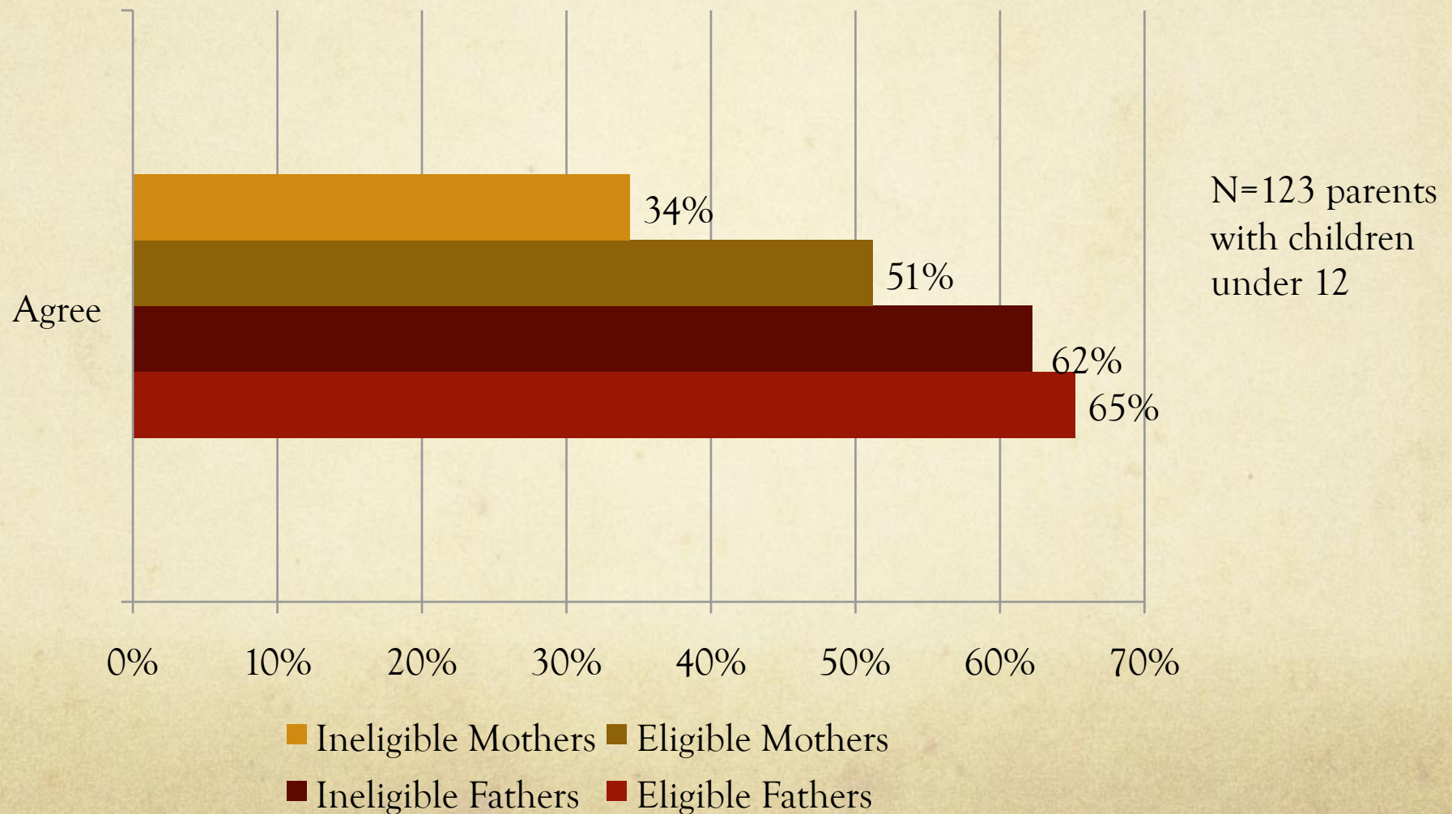
- Men are much more likely to say that their departments/program provide support for work-life (and their professional goals) than women.
- Single men and women, and faculty of color, do not feel supported in work-life balance.

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



Librarians

- Concerns about scheduling – lack of predictability, inadequate coverage, rigidity of hours, weekend, evening, and holiday work
- New technologies, changes in how work is structured, and lack of time for professional development lead to pressures to work on “own” time
- Need for lactation rooms for nursing mothers; replacement hires for parental leaves

Implications for Work-Life in Academia

- Faculty and librarians work a great deal, and their work bleeds into their lives consistently. In addition, work hours combined with housework and care hours, are especially high for women, especially mothers.
- The timing of fertility & tenure tend to clash for faculty for both contract and tenure-line faculty. The traditional path to the professoriate assumes a faculty member with a partner at home, either not working or working close by and part-time, who deals with any caregiving needs. This assumption is not reflected in today's PhDs, and may lead to less diverse faculties.
- Work-life policies – including care leaves, tenure delays, dual career issues, lactation rooms, childcare provisioning – have important effects in addressing these concerns, but require careful formulation. Faculty & librarians need to be encouraged to use these policies. A strong university commitment to and culture of work-life balance makes a difference.
- Policies focused on other issues (e.g., housing assistance, commuter assistance, salaries, hiring, evaluating scholarship, an equitable distribution of service work, email, etc.) also have important work-life implications.

Recommendations from Joint Administration- MSP Work-Life Committee

- *Raise Profile of Existing Work-life Policies Externally & Internally*
 - *Brochures, recruitment, and Provost's website*
 - *Annual presentation by Associate Chancellor Pearson to Deans/Chairs*
 - *Advertise leaves and tenure year delay are available to faculty with a variety of caregiving needs (sick or disabled parents, partners, children)*
 - *Annual announcement that tenure year delay available to all faculty regardless if they take parental leave*
 - *Highlight departments on campus with family-friendly environments*
 - *Promote availability of lactation rooms on campus*

- *Changes to Existing Paperwork*
 - *Provost's memo on promotion & tenure to encourage fair distribution of service by gender and race/ethnicity*
 - *Add space to AFR for life events that affect teaching, service & productivity*

Recommendations

○ *Improve Work-Life Benefits & Policies*

- *Staff member in Provost's office to oversee work-life issues*
- *Extend parental leave and tenure delay to faculty who foster-to-adopt from child's initial placement*
- *Add additional lactation rooms across campus and improve existing ones*
- *Explore ways to address shortage of available and affordable infant and childcare*
- *Explore developing a protocol for University-wide email interaction*