

## **6. Major Themes of Survey**

### **6.1 Is Work/Life a gender issue?**

The survey results seem to indicate work/life issues are of more interest to females than males. Most of the respondents were full-time employees and a majority of the respondents were women. Overall, 62% of the survey respondents were female (66% of staff respondents and 45% of academic respondents). Despite the fact that the actual number of male academics is almost twice that of female academics (2002 UCSB Campus Profile, Institutional Research & Planning), the level of responses from academic men and women was about even. This may indicate that a greater percentage of female academics responded to this survey due to interest about work/life issues.

Females in our society have traditionally taken on more of the caretaking responsibilities in their families. Work/life areas such as childcare, elder care, and community issues (such as commuting, cost of living, etc.) are all associated with caregiving. Alternative work arrangements (such as job-sharing) and the Staff and Academic Reduction in Time Program (START) may provide increased support and opportunities for caregivers.

### **6.2 Flextime and telecommuting issues**

Flexible work arrangements are a low or no-cost method that employers can implement to assist employees with work/life needs. Flexible work arrangements take into account each employee's individual differences in work styles, optimal work times, family responsibilities, and personal and career interests. There was a high level of interest in flexible work arrangements, followed by compressed workweeks, and telecommuting. This topic was the most frequently mentioned in the "comment" section (293 comments), as an aid to arranging childcare, elder care, managing stress, and reducing commute times.

The survey results indicate that flexible work schedules are the most commonly used form of alternative work arrangement at UCSB. More staff respondents have spoken with their supervisors about flexible work arrangements, but less so with compressed workweeks and telecommuting. Telecommuting and compressed workweeks are much less commonly used forms of alternative work arrangements on our campus. It is little surprise that employees feel more comfortable in discussing flexible work arrangements with their supervisors, than they do when discussing compressed workweeks and telecommuting. Supervisors are somewhat more likely to have a flexible work schedule. There was no significant difference between supervisors and non-supervisors in interest about flextime, compressed work week and telecommuting.

The largest group of respondents in this section of the survey was female staff from the Administrative Support/Clerical group. This group may be somewhat more impacted by work/life issues than other groups and might benefit from having more flexible work arrangements to accommodate these needs. It's worth noting that more than 50% of both male and female staff report being "fairly satisfied" with their work schedules.

### 6.3 Childcare

Thirty-three percent (33%) of survey respondents were parents. However, 28% of respondents' children are 16 years of age or older. Over three-quarters (82%) of families with children have 1-2 children and 20% of survey parents have young children (age 4 or less). Sixty-five (65%) of survey respondents who are parents report having of children of school age. It was assumed that these parents do not have as much day care needs as those parents who have younger children and these parents were excluded in the following analysis regarding childcare.

A work/life issue which is a problem for most working parents is when their children get ill. Seventy-five (75%) of respondents (or their spouses) use personal sick leave to care for their children, as most childcare programs will not accept children when they are sick.

Forty-seven percent (47%) of respondents who are parents use outside daycare (other than themselves or their partners). Sixty-two percent (62%) of respondents answering the childcare portion of the questionnaire felt that it would be helpful to have a UCSB office to assist with finding childcare services.

Forty-five percent (45%) of survey respondents spend more than \$500/month on childcare. Forty-one percent (41%) of respondents take advantage of the UC DepCare program and 59% of respondents use the Federal tax credit. It appears that a Work/Life Office that assists with childcare information, especially with developing more resources for affordable, quality childcare, would be beneficial to the campus.

### 6.4 Elder care

Elder care issues will have an increasingly greater impact on our national and campus workforce. The largest number of survey respondents were from the "baby boomer" generation, those born from 1946 through 1964. In 2003, this group is 39 to 57 years old. The need for elder care information, especially financial and legal, is becoming more crucial. Survey results show that most elder care (50% of staff respondents, 73% of academics respondents) is paid for with personal funds.

A majority (85%) of survey respondents have living parent(s) or in-law(s), with about one-third (34%) of the parents residing in the local community. Survey results indicate that long distance caregiving may be a bigger issue with academic respondents, as staff respondents appear to do more local caregiving. Since more staff respondents have aging parents living in the community than academic respondents, it is also likely that staff provide more of the caregiving themselves. The data show 28% of staff respondents and 42% of academic respondents have hired outside help to assist them with caring for these aging parents.

A greater percentage of survey respondents who assist with caregiving (75% of staff, 53% of academics) thought that it would be helpful to have a UCSB office to assist with finding elder care services. It appears that a Work/Life Office that assists with elder care information, would be a benefit to the campus.

## 6.5 Housing/Commute

Most employees (82% of survey respondents) have commutes of 20 miles or less (each way). More staff respondents (19%) than academic respondents (9%) live more than 20 miles from work.

Most survey respondents have monthly housing costs ranging from \$1,000-\$3,000 per month. Seventy-nine percent (79%) of academic respondents own their homes, and the remaining 21% rent their homes. Fifty-eight percent (58%) of staff respondents own their homes, and the remaining 42% rent their homes.

Fifty-one percent (51%) of survey respondents have lived in their current residences for 5 years or less. Employees who have lived in their homes 5 years or less are probably more likely to be dealing with work/life issues such as commuting and/or high rents/mortgages because of the phenomenal increase in housing costs in our community during this period. Almost half (48%) of written comments offered by survey respondents addressed housing costs in Santa Barbara, salary or wages, and cost of living (including parking fees).

## 6.6 Cost of Living/Salaries

Seventy-two percent (72%) of academic respondents and 41% of staff respondents report household incomes of more than \$75,000 per year. Twenty-six percent (26%) of female staff respondents have an annual household income in the \$25,000-\$41,000 range. Thirty-seven percent (37%) of staff respondents report annual household incomes below the \$51,500 range. Combined with the data regarding average monthly housing costs, a substantial amount of salary goes toward housing and living expenses.

## 6.7 Employment

More than one-third (36%) of staff respondents and 23% of academic respondents have worked in Santa Barbara County for more than 20 years. Twenty-two percent (22%) of staff and 25% of academic respondents have been employed in this county for less than five years. The need for programs to increase UCSB's ability to recruit and retain quality employees is important as older staff and academics approach retirement.

## 6.8 Spousal employment

The majority of survey respondent households (81%) have spouses/partners who are employed. Fifty-five percent (55%) of these staff spouses/partners and 50% of academic spouses/partners work outside the home.

Traditionally, the issue of spousal employment has been more of an academic issue. Twenty-four percent (24%) of academic respondents reported that their spouses/partners had difficulty finding employment when relocating to Santa Barbara. Four percent (4%) of staff respondents reported that their partners/spouses reported had difficulty finding employment when relocating to Santa Barbara. Not surprisingly, more academic respondents (44%) than staff respondents (18%) thought that it would be helpful to have a UCSB office addressing this issue.

## 6.9 Professional development

More than half (54%) of staff respondents thought there were enough professional growth opportunities at UCSB. The most commonly used resource for professional development is Human Resources Training and Development, followed by Software Training at Instructional Computing. Thirty-three percent (33%) of staff respondents have attended Learn at Lunch workshops and 28% of staff respondents have taken courses at UCSB Extension. Only 11% of staff respondents have used the reduced fees for UCSB courses. This may be due to the difficulty with scheduling classes while working full-time as mentioned several times in the "comments" section at the end of the survey.

## 7. Written comments

The questionnaire included a final open-ended segment in which respondents were invited to express additional opinions about UCSB-offered services that could ease work/life problems and some of the obstacles that create work/life problems. Sixty-two percent (62%) of the survey respondents provided written comments, which ranged from a single sentence to several pages of comments. In all, there were 894 comments categorized into 32 different types of work/life issues. The largest number of comments (293) addressed the issue of flexible work arrangements (primarily a staff concern). This was followed in volume by comments on housing (154), improved wages and benefits (145), childcare (121), cost of living (80), elder care (59), and parking (48). See Appendix 10.3 for some examples.

## 8. Focus groups

A surprisingly large number of survey respondents volunteered to be a part of focus groups to discuss work/life concerns. More than 200 female staff respondents and almost 100 male staff respondents expressed interest. Nineteen (19) female academics and 12 male academics were also willing to participate. At this time, there is no firm schedule to establish these focus groups, but the list will be held for possible future action.

## 9. Summary and Discussion

There are a myriad of concerns that fall under the "work/life" umbrella. The main issues identified in this survey interact and impact upon each other, and include the need for flexible work schedules, affordable, quality child care, elder care, and general wellness. Improvements in these areas will most likely enable employees to be more successful at work. Several people mentioned the need for the campus to recognize the importance of a work/life balance. Flexible work arrangements, especially for staff, will help provide employees greater ability to manage their work/life needs. Childcare and elder care information and support is needed for a growing number of employees. Training supervisors and managers to be sensitive to work/life issues is essential to developing policies for balancing work/life issues. Providing workshops on stress management and fitness/exercise will benefit both staff and academics, who report a high level of interest in these subjects.

A number of other factors also contribute to work/life balance. These, not surprisingly, include the cost of living (which affects general stress levels), commuting, improved alternative transportation, and perceived employee quality of life, and employee benefits. As we accept that some things are not under University control (cost of housing, state budget cuts, health care costs), we can identify and enhance programs, policies, or activities where the campus can make an impact in improving the quality of life for its employees.

- **Childcare:** The availability of affordable, quality childcare continues to be an important work/life issue. In 2005, the new Student Resources Building will offer 48 more spaces for infants and toddlers, half of which will be allotted to the children of staff and academics. Additional resources for the future also need to be identified and planned. The campus has implemented a Breastfeeding Support Program and recently obtained a grant from the Orfalea Family Foundation to augment the existing program with the creation of up to eight lactation rooms. The Women's Center currently houses the only existing lactation room and is equipped with a Medela breast pump available for use. The UCSB Bookstore offers breastfeeding supplies at wholesale cost to all UCSB academics, staff, and students. This represents an important campus initiative that benefits both children and their UCSB parents.
- **Elder Care:** In addition to the data provided by the survey, after the first year of the establishment of the Work/Life Office, it became evident that information on various areas of elder care is becoming increasingly critical on campus. A growing number of UCSB's workforce is impacted by elder care needs. In addition, as the data indicate, responsibility for elder care falls disproportionately on female academics and staff, a concern for the campus as it works to establish gender equity on campus.
- **Flexible work schedules** are perhaps the single most important need for staff trying to balance work/life issues. In a campus memo (12/20/2002), Chancellor Yang asked Human Resources Director Cynthia Cronk to work with Wendy Nishikawa, the Work-Life Coordinator, to develop a program for increasing the use of flex time and telecommuting for staff. This statement is an important first step in promoting a healthier work/life balance, and one which will be the focus of the Work/Life Office in the years to come.

The Work/Life Survey provides insight into many of the issues that impact the university community as they balance their work and family needs. As we head into a difficult financial period, work/life programs may provide support in the areas discussed above at a relatively small cost. The results from Work/Life survey will help direct the issues to focus on in the coming years of this new program. This is a critical time for creative solutions in the form of work/life initiatives that may benefit UCSB's entire workforce. Increase in employee morale and lower absenteeism may be the result of implementing work/life initiatives such as alternative work arrangements. Making information about elder and childcare more accessible appears to be appreciated and needed. Work on spousal employment assistance may help with recruitment and retention rates. These areas will be among those focused on by the Work/Life Office.