

A14. Lean In, Lean Out, Stand Tall: Navigating Career and Motherhood as an Admission and College Counseling Professional

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Outline of the presentation

- **Outcomes of NACAC Career Paths Survey**
- **Survey**
 - Who responded?
 - Findings
- **Suggestions/Conclusions**
- **Sharing of Personal Stories**
- **Open Discussion**



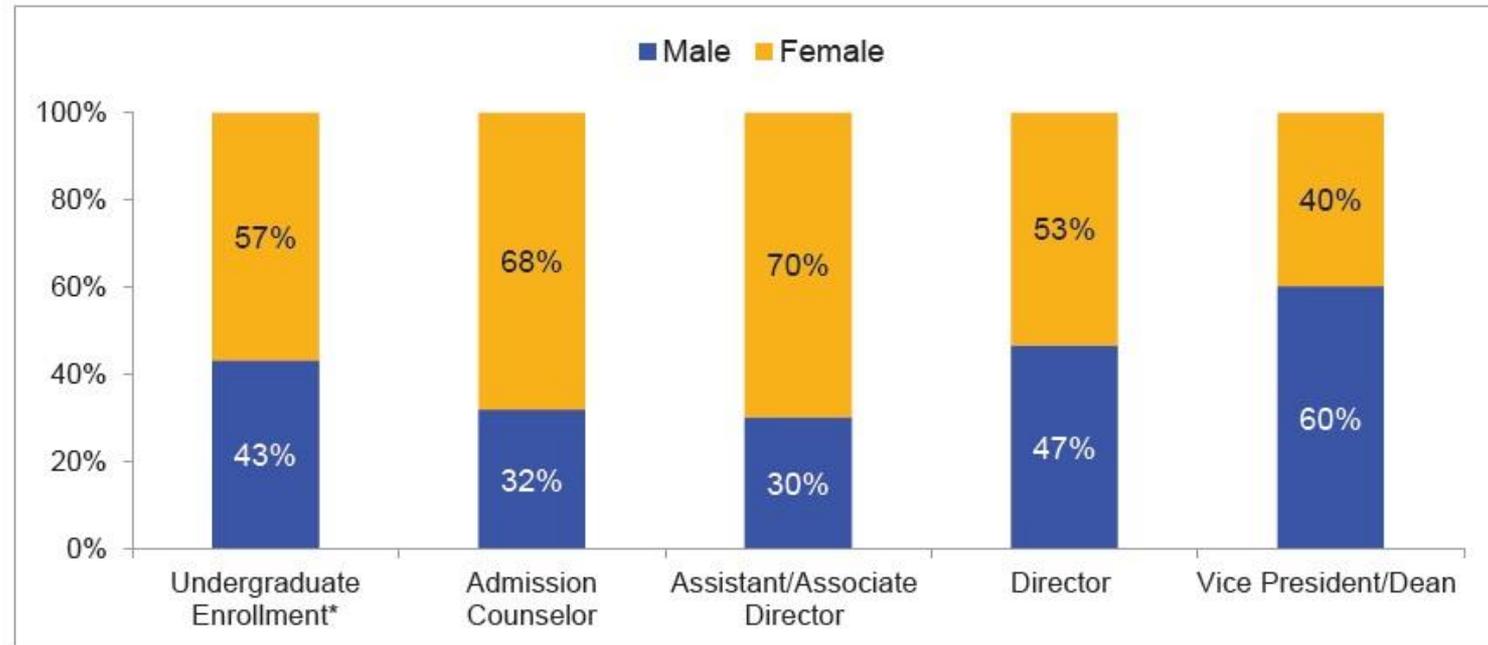
July 2014 NACAC Career Paths for Admission Officers Survey

- Survey conducted October and November 2011
- 1492 NACAC members responded, representing roles in every level of admission
- Survey limited to NACAC members; many young/new professionals do not yet have a NACAC membership



Women comprise about 70% of entry- and mid-level positions, 53% of directors, and 40% of VP/Deans of Admission & Enrollment

Figure 3. Gender of survey respondents, by position level, compared to undergraduate enrollment



Source: NACAC Admission Officer Career Path Survey, 2011.

**Digest of Education Statistics*. (2012). U.S. Department of Education, Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. (Table 263).



NACAC Survey Data on Retention in Admission

- **57% of women planned to leave their current position within 3 years, 40% of them planning to stay in admission**
- **51% of men planned to leave their current position within 3 years, 55% of them planning to stay in admission**
- **More conversation needed about barriers to women staying in field and how to nurture retention**



Observations/Recommendations from NACAC Career Paths Survey

- Mentoring of entry and mid-level professionals in admission, and providing them with a clear career path, is essential for retention
- The landscape of admission is changing: greater emphasis on data, analytical thinking, integration w/financial aid, enrollment, and student affairs
- Projected areas of growth at colleges & universities: multicultural, transfer, international & non-traditional student recruitment
- Increase awareness of Admission as a viable, important, challenging, and rewarding profession
- Graduate coursework in Enrollment Management

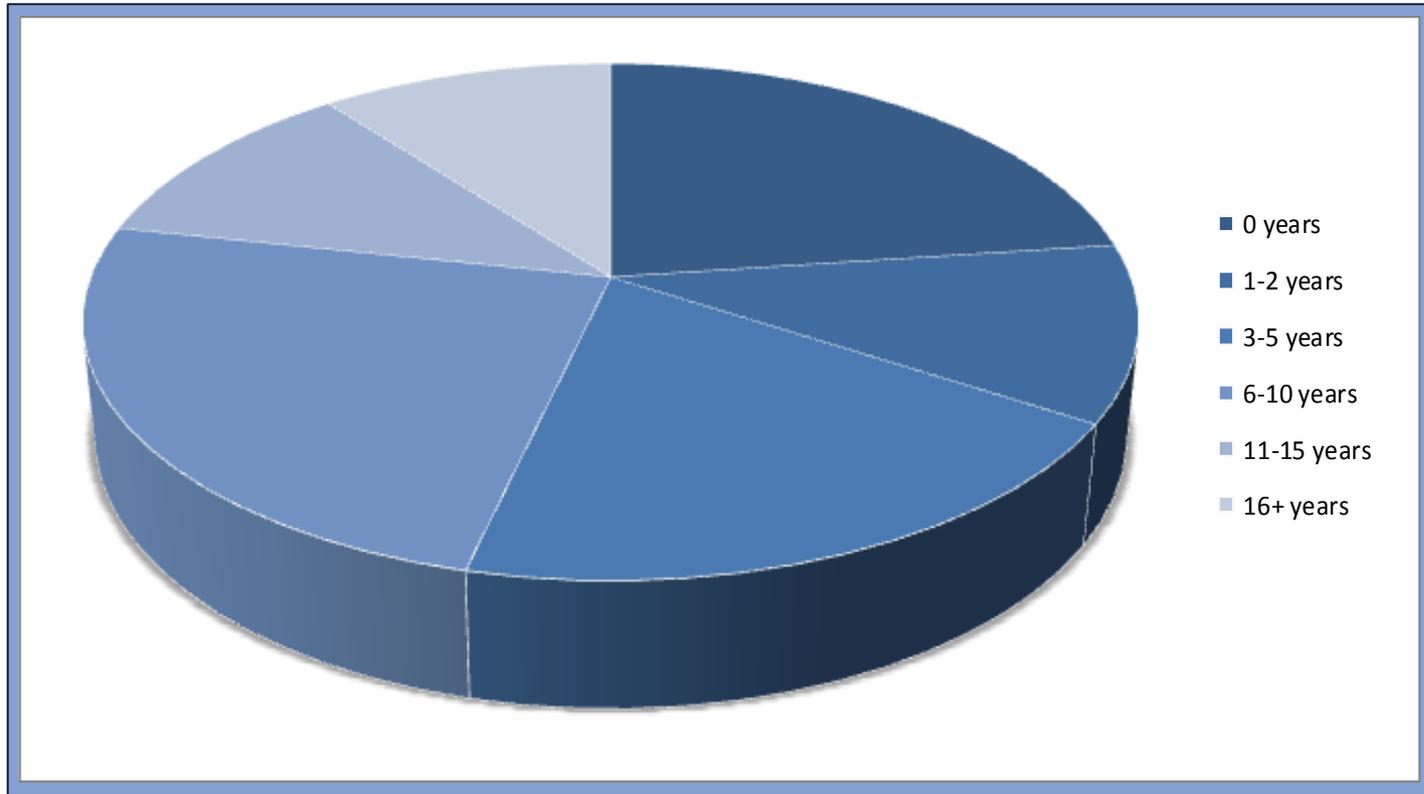


Our Survey Respondents

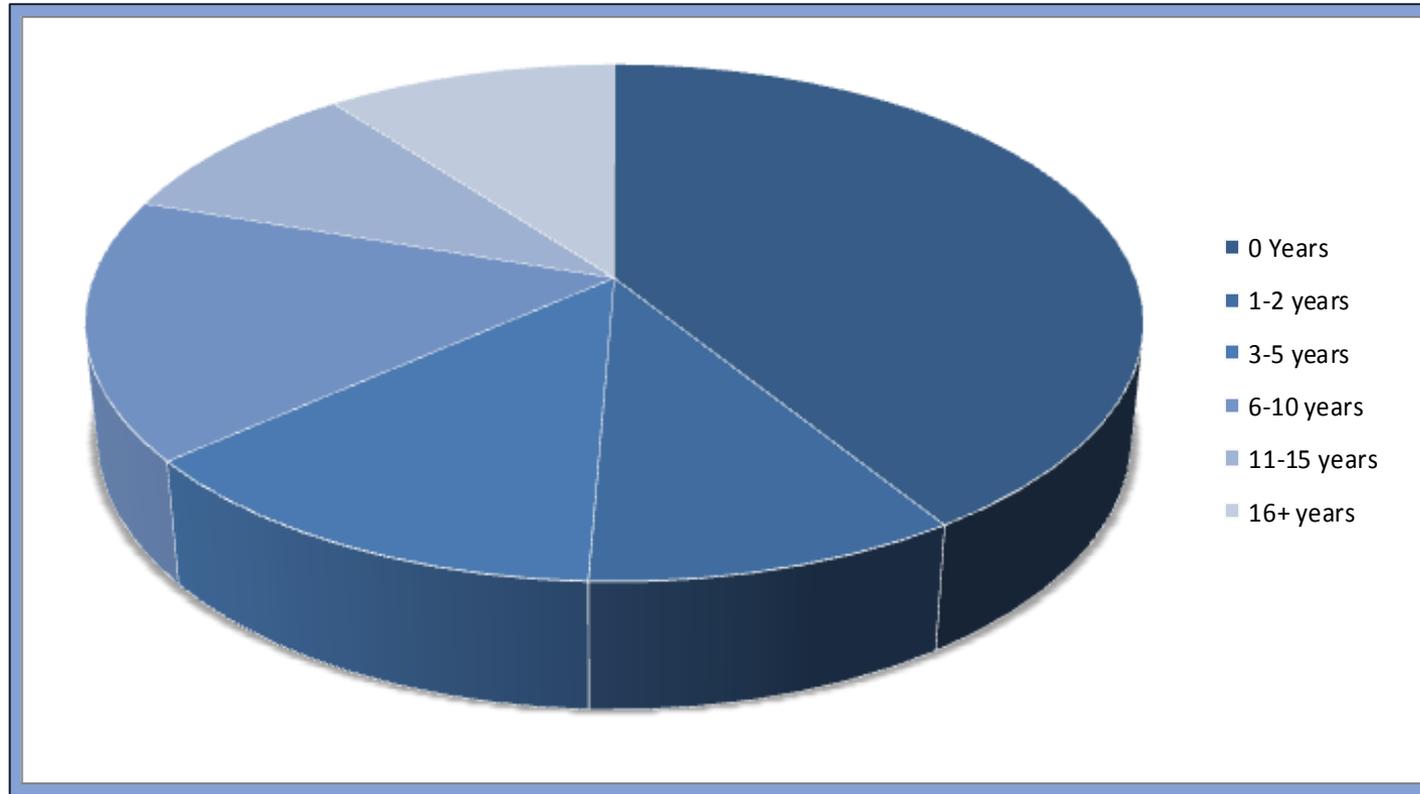
- 779 Responses
- Women only asked to respond
- Not limited to NACAC members/any other affiliation
- Evenly distributed between College Counseling (51%) and Admission (44%)
- About 1/3 of respondents have worked on both sides of the desk
- Age distribution quite even, with about 1/4 under 30, 1/2 between 30-45, and 1/4 over 45
- About 30% have a Bachelor's degree and 2/3 have a Master's degree
- 40% have never worked in College Counseling, and 23% have never worked in Admission



Years of Experience in Admission



Years of Experience in College Counseling

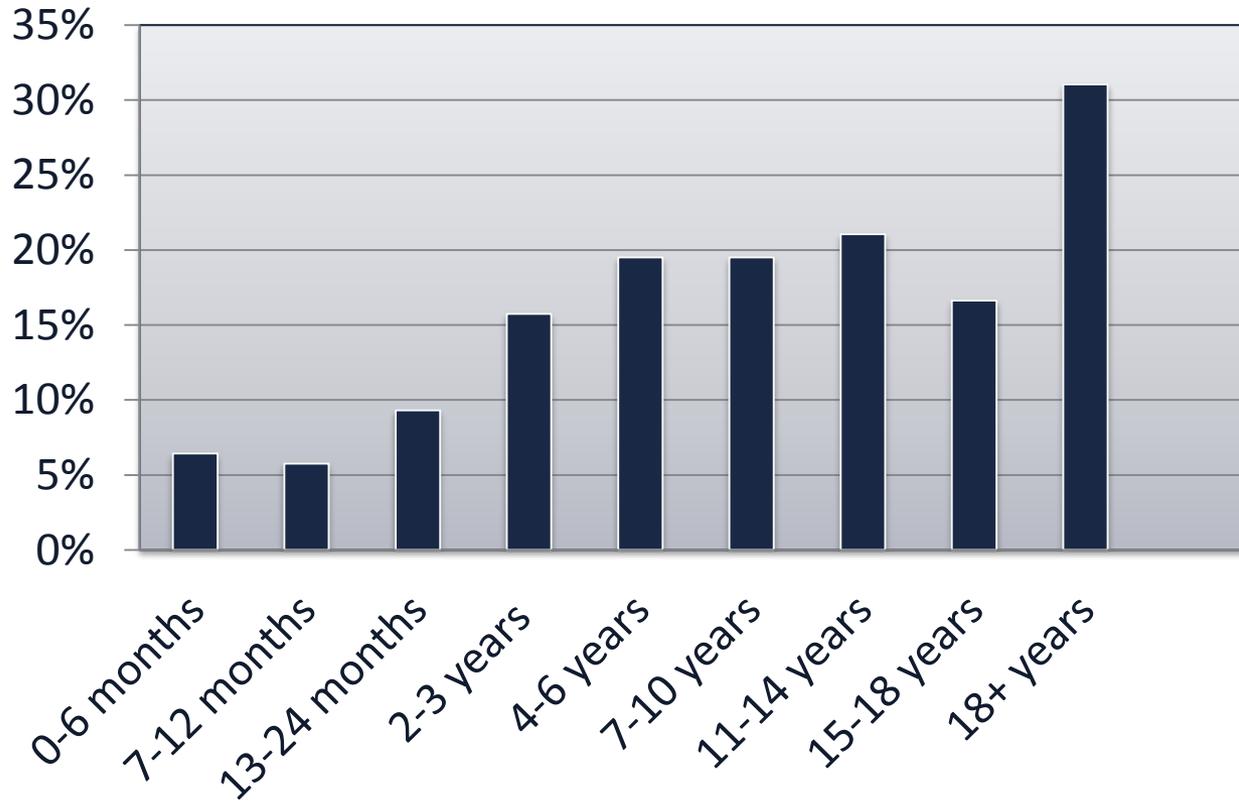


Our Survey Respondents

- About 2/3 of respondents currently have children, and 2/3 plan to have children in the next 5+ years
- Of the 1/3 who did not plan to have children, about 50% did not have interest in having children, about 10% said it was not financially feasible, and 17% said that children were incompatible with career aspirations
- 34% of respondents have one child, 45% have two, 17% have three, and about 4% have four or more
- Split evenly between those that planned their children around their job responsibilities (in terms of timing/spacing)



Ages of Respondents' Children



What don't we know?

- **Race/Ethnicity**
- **Marital Status/Information about Partners**
- **Whether/how long women stayed home with children**
- **Travel schedules and/or job responsibilities**
- **Type of institution**
- **Men in College Counseling/Admission**

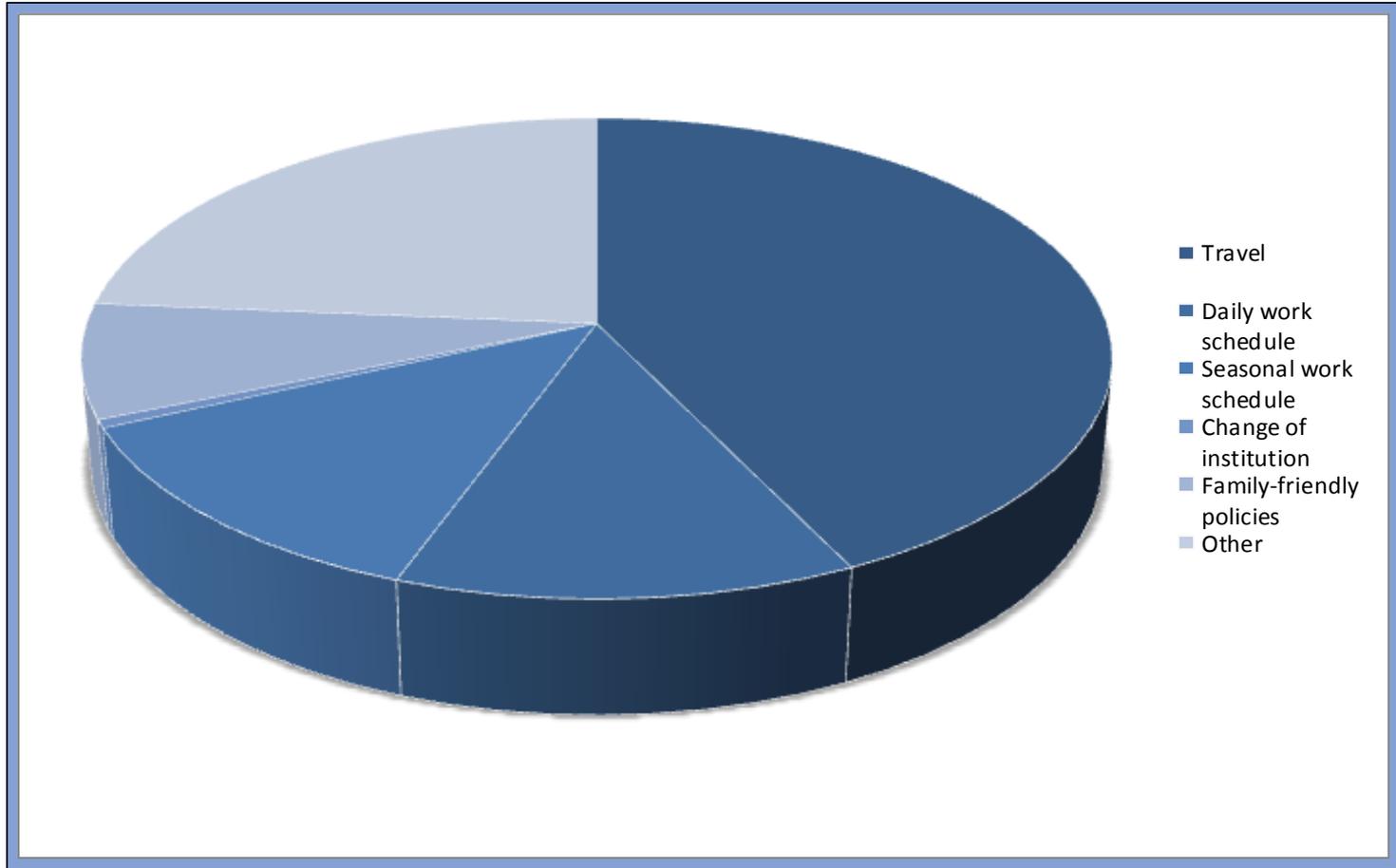


“Switching Sides”

- **56% of women surveyed considered a move to the “other side of the desk”**



Reasons for moving to “other side of the desk”



Maternity Leave Policies

- **Maternity leave policies appear to be similar for both College Counseling Professionals and College Admission Professionals.**
 - Most women responded that they were entitled to twelve weeks, but were mainly paid for around six weeks
 - Many added sick time, vacation time, and short-term disability to extend paid portion of leave



Flexibility

- **95% said that having a flexible schedule was “very important” or “somewhat important” to returning to the same position after having a child**
- **College Counseling is slightly more accommodating with flexible work schedules (4 percentage pts)**
- **71% say their workplace is flexible for people with children**
 - **Free responses show a more complex story**
 - **“somewhat,” “maybe,” “only for certain people,” “yes, but it’s looked down upon,” “depends on the role”**
 - **Of those who say workplace is NOT flexible**
 - **65% : job responsibilities do not allow for a flexible schedule**
 - **61%: employer or supervisor is not receptive to and/or has a policy against flexibility**



Family-Friendly Policies for Supervisors

- The ability to work from home and have flexible schedules when it works for them and their offices, especially in the summer
- The ability to take time away from the office for child-related events, care of a sick child, or school/day care closures
- Some supervisors need more support from their supervisors or the institution more broadly to implement family-friendly policies
- Part-time work/job sharing when desired, 10 month contracts
- Proactively offering flexibility to employees so they don't have to ask
- Help promote better work/life balance among employees by encouraging them to take time away from the office when possible
- The option to shift travel territories closer to home if desired



Family-Friendly Policies for Institutions

- Offer more paid parental leave
- Campus day care options/subsidies
- Establish clear policies on nursing/pumping mothers
- Offer non-traditional and flexible scheduling
- Create “in-house” positions to alleviate the travel demands
- The option for “family leave” time as opposed to using sick and/or vacation time for family obligations



Innovative Suggestions

- “The school I work at is a results only workplace - during times of year when I am working many evenings, they give me the flexibility to have mornings at home. Over the summer, I have a lot more flexibility to work from home.”
- “Allows a flexible lunch hour for employees so you can take lunch first thing in the morning or at the end of the day”
- “Our school offers free after school care to those faculty whose children attend our school in the elementary grades”
- “As Director of Admissions, I offer flex time for my team, they can come in beginning at 7 am, and work a 30 minute lunch and leave by 3:30, we also allow later start times.”



Innovative Suggestions

- “Employees working 20+ hours are eligible for full benefits”
- “Paternity leave equal to maternity leave, but it can be staggered. One colleague stayed home after his wife went back to work, so their baby was at home with a parent longer than she might have been.”
- “Our Principal will send email reminders to parents to take time from work to attend our children's holiday programs, classroom parties, performances, athletics, etc. and let him know if we need office/classroom coverage. The emails are powerful tools to send an important message.”



Career Advancement

- **Only 40% of women said that their career was NOT hindered or slowed by having children**
 - **Open responses ranged from personal choice to blatant discrimination against mothers**
- **Opportunities within the workplace**
 - **Lots of mixed responses shows possible office culture issues**
 - **Those without children feel forced to take on more weekend/evening roles if no children**
 - **Those with children feel that they can't advance because of extended hour requirements and/or inability to jump at a work opportunity because of family commitments**



What is the single most important thing that admission/college counseling workplaces can do to support women with children?

Flexibility

Empathy and Trust

Paid parental leave

On-site childcare

Nursing/pumping facilities on-site

Modified job responsibilities

Acknowledge them as role models

Communication and transparency



In your words

- “Admissions is not really a good job for people with children unless they have a partner in the house or a great support network.”
- “Show young women in the profession that they can stay in the field and have a family. It takes some juggling and a supportive spouse, but you can do it if you earn the trust and respect first.”
- “They really just need to be as flexible with us as they expect us to be with our own schedules.”
- “When I was in admissions from age 24-27, I wasn’t a ‘road warrior.’ I was really just an average admission counselor. I worked ridiculous hours, all year, and I was single with no kids. The director and senior associate director of admission, who were women with families, worked MORE than I did. They were terrible role models for the idea of work-life balance, even though as supervisors they encouraged flexibility for others. I only saw my future as being how they were, and I left. I now work for an admission vendor and I have wonderful balance for 10 months of the year.”



In your words

- **“Don’t dismiss women with families. Many remain just as talented and motivated to move ahead and grow in their work as they did prior to having children. Also, there is no ‘one size fits all’ approach to women with families. Each woman will feel differently about how to balance work and family and where they may see their careers going as they negotiate the demands of job and family. Appreciate our individual goals and outlooks just as you would any other employee.”**
- **“Make the work atmosphere family friendly. That is, understand that not all success comes from career.”**



What piece of advice or a survival tip would you give to women with children in the admission/college counseling?

- Find quality day care and have back up sitters
- Be organized
- Connect with other mothers in the profession
- Accept help from family members
- Separate family time and work time
- Be honest with your supervisor – ask for what you want
- Consider part-time arrangements
- Foster a cooperative work environment
- Do not apologize for prioritizing your family



In your words

- “This is not a one-way street. The job of being flexible is not entirely on the employer. Employees need to be willing to go an extra mile, chip in above and beyond at times, and sometimes make sacrifices of their own to make the arrangement work. Sometimes we forget that part. Again, employee attitude goes a long way. Flexible arrangements are great and important, but nothing is an entitlement.”
- “Don’t try to be perfect. Even if you were a stay at home mom, you would screw up! Also, don’t feel guilty because you want to work. I am a much better working mom than a stay at home mom. Finally, you don’t need a clutter free house. Just one that won’t cause a HazMat team to come in! Embrace the noise, chaos and clutter.”
- “Don’t feel guilty if you are making the choice to work. Showing your children that women can be strong, work, and be happy is a good thing!”
- “Don’t bake from scratch!!!”



In your words

- “Turn off your phone between 5-7 pm. Remember that there are truly no emergencies in college counseling. There are in your family.”
- “Get those Halloween costumes ready in September, because the last week in October is the worst!!! Unfortunately college deadlines are not very holiday friendly.”
- “Start when you are young and be ambitious, so you can land a higher level position at a younger age and still have a family. It’s a great field with terrific benefits if you can manage it.”
- “Understand that you will not be able to do it all. You will miss work activities. You will miss soccer games or other important events for your children. There will be times when you feel that you are not doing either job well. However, you are accomplishing a great deal every day and your focus should be on these accomplishments and not the things you can’t do or have missed.”



Personal Stories from the Panel



Discussion

Best practices, ways to improve, examples of what should/shouldn't be done to create a positive office culture –we want to hear from you!

