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Perceptions About Work/Life Balance Among DU Community Members with Young Children

Sarah Beck
University of Denver

Alexander Brewer-Fong
University of Denver

Samuel Churches
University of Denver

Kyle Cook
University of Denver

Emma Crisman
University of Denver

See next page for additional authors

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Beck, Sarah; Brewer-Fong, Alexander; Churches, Samuel; Cook, Kyle; Crisman, Emma; Italiano, Dominique; Jackels, Melissa; Rolfs, Elizabeth; Uchiyama, Julia; Weinberg, Nathan; Auerbacher, Isaac; Benson, Mckenna; Chavez, Maria; Dorion, Harriet; Franklin, Liana; Hardig, Harrison; Hu, Jesse Jhan-Jing; Jain, Sabrina; Lang, Victoria; Leach, Daisy; Merritt, Marcus; Morsch, Evan; Walsh, Tommie; Zakarian, Harry; Alsharqi, Sarah; Bell, Ryan; Cassato, William; Curry, William; Marletta, Matthew; Mikols, Hanna; Paterson, Katharine; Peterson, Douglas; Riggs, Nicholas; Smith, Connor; Vellon, Annie; Wilkes, Queen; Wuertz, Natalie; Andersen, Tristan; Bell, Logan; Buchman, William; Chinitz, Taylor; Friedman, Piper; Hamilton, Elizabeth; Hardy, Henry; Medina, Mckenna; Neihart, Braden; Pacheco, Angelica; Rickenbaugh, Samuel; Rohr, Jonathan; Santana, Stormer; Sides, Jenni; Smith, Caitlin; Wilhelm, Justin; Alphas, Tess; Briggs, Zoe; Domme, Monique; Espinosa, Mayra; Gerken, Ashley; Ko, Hanna; Lawrence, J. P.; Lippman, Nicholas; Maina, Yvonne; Ortega, Gabriela; Reese, Traci; Rios-Carmona, Heidy; Rissler, Erin; Wynn, Harry; Perreira, Cathryn Lynn; Brereton, Elinor; Hagan, Samantha Grace; Hall, Kristen; and Cerón, Alejandro, "Perceptions About Work/Life Balance Among DU Community Members with Young Children" (2017). *Anthropology: Undergraduate Student Scholarship*. 1.
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Perceptions About Work/Life Balance Among DU Community Members with Young Children

Comments

The study was designed and coordinated by Winter 2017 Cultural Anthropology's Graduate Teaching Assistants Elinor Brereton, Samantha Hagan, Kristen Hall and Cathryn Perreira, under the direction of Alejandro Cerón, course instructor. Data collection, analysis and report writing was carried out by the sixty-six undergraduate students who took the class, as part of the course requirements.

Authors

Sarah Beck, Alexander Brewer-Fong, Samuel Churches, Kyle Cook, Emma Crisman, Dominique Italiano, Melissa Jackels, Elizabeth Rolfs, Julia Uchiyama, Nathan Weinberg, Isaac Auerbacher, Mckenna Benson, Maria Chavez, Harriet Dorion, Liana Franklin, Harrison Hardig, Jesse Jhan-Jing Hu, Sabrina Jain, Victoria Lang, Daisy Leach, Marcus Merritt, Evan Morsch, Tommie Walsh, Harry Zakarian, Sarah Alsharqi, Ryan Bell, William Cassato, William Curry, Matthew Marletta, Hanna Mikols, Katharine Paterson, Douglas Peterson, Nicholas Riggs, Connor Smith, Annie Vellon, Queen Wilkes, Natalie Wuertz, Tristan Andersen, Logan Bell, William Buchman, Taylor Chinitz, Piper Friedman, Elizabeth Hamilton, Henry Hardy, Mckenna Medina, Braden Neihart, Angelica Pacheco, Samuel Rickenbaugh, Jonathan Rohr, Stormer Santana, Jenni Sides, Caitlin Smith, Justin Wilhelm, Tess Alphas, Zoe Briggs, Monique Domme, Mayra Espinosa, Ashley Gerken, Hanna Ko, J. P. Lawrence, Nicholas Lippman, Yvonne Maina, Gabriela Ortega, Traci Reese, Heidy Rios-Carmona, Erin Rissler, Harry Wynn, Cathryn Lynn Perreira, Elinor Brereton, Samantha Grace Hagan, Kristen Hall, and Alejandro Cerón

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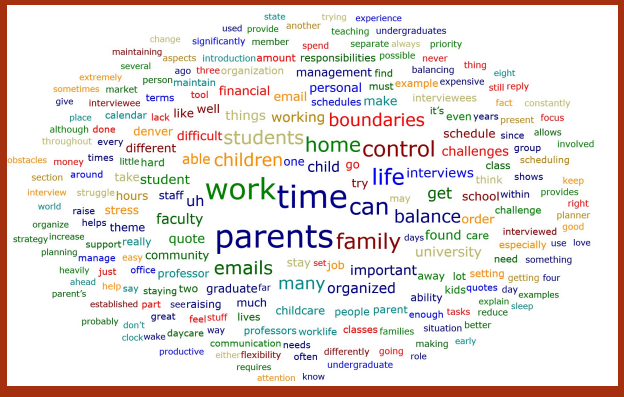
PERCEPTIONS ABOUT WORK/LIFE BALANCE AMONG DU COMMUNITY MEMBERS WITH YOUNG CHILDREN -SUMMARY REPORT-



UNIVERSITY OF DENVER Department of Anthropology

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to the faculty, staff, and students at the University of Denver for sharing their thoughts, opinions, and experiences through their interview responses.

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This summary report was prepared by Sarah Beck, Alexander Brewer-Fong, Samuel Churches, Kyle Cook, Emma Crisman, Dominique Italiano, Melissa Jackels, Elizabeth Rolfs, Julia Uchiyama and Nathan Weinberg, under the supervision of Alejandro Cerón.

The summary report is based on the following four reports that include more detailed findings:

The report for "Section 1: Work/life balance" was prepared by Isaac Auerbacher, Sarah Beck, Mckenna Benson, Maria Chavez, Emma Crisman, Harriet Dorion, Liana Franklin, Harrison Hardig, Jesse Jhan-Jing Hu, Sabrina Jain, Victoria Lang, Daisy Leach, Marcus Merritt, Evan Morsch, Tommie Walsh, Nathan Weinberg, Harry Zakarian, under the supervision of Cathryn Perreira.

The report for "Section 2: Family dynamics" was prepared by Sarah Alsharqi, Ryan Bell, Alexander Brewer-Fong, William Cassato, Kyle Cook, William Curry, Dominique Italiano, Matthew Marletta, Hanna Mikols, Katharine Paterson, Douglas Peterson, Nicholas Riggs, Connor Smith, Annie Vellon, Queen Wilkes, Natalie Wuertz, under the supervision of Elinor Brereton.

The report for "Section 3: Personal challenges" was prepared by Tristan Andersen, Logan Bell, William Buchman, Taylor Chinitz, Samuel Churches, Piper Friedman, Elizabeth Hamilton, Henry Hardy, Melissa Jackels, Mckenna Medina, Braden Neihart, Angelica Pacheco, Samuel Rickenbaugh, Jonathan Rohr, Stormer Santana, Jenni Sides, Caitlin Smith, Justin Wilhelm, under the supervision of Samantha Hagan.

The report for "Section 4: Support" was prepared by Tess Alphas, Zoe Briggs, Monique Domme, Mayra Espinosa, Ashley Gerken, Hanna Ko, J. P. Lawrence, Nicholas Lippman, Yvonne Maina, Gabriela Ortega, Traci Reese, Heidy Rios-Carmona, Erin Rissler, Eliza Rolfs, Julia Uchiyama, and Harry Wynn, under the supervision of Kristen Hall.

Executive Summary

Background: In the past fifty years, families in the USA have changed in configuration, size and dynamics. The percentage of families that do not conform to the traditional family unit (married mother and father with children) has increased as there are more single-parent families, LGBTQ families and interracial families. The proportion of unmarried or divorced families has also increased, as it has the number of married and unmarried couples that opt to not have children and, additionally, more couples are opting for adoption and foster parenting (Pew Research Center 2010). Furthermore, the percentage of households where all the adults work has increased, which impacts the amount and quality of time available for family activities and household chores (Bianchi, Robinson and Milkie 2006). These and other trends have led to the identification of "work-family balance" as an important challenge of our times, one that families have been facing for decades and that institutions are only starting to pay attention to (Hochschild 2013). Although there are many aspects of family life that are challenging to balance with workplace demands, childcare has been specifically identified as one that needs attention (Desilver 2014).

Methods: *Study goal*: To describe the perceptions that some DU community members with children have about work-family balance with attention to challenges, difficulties and institutional responses. *Study design:* Descriptive, cross-sectional, qualitative study. *Population and sample:* We recruited 63 University of Denver students (13), staff (14) and faculty (36) who are responsible of parenting at least one child under 10 years of age. We used purposive sampling. which consists in actively finding individuals who meet the criteria. *Data collection:* Semi structured interviews (January 23-February 8, 2017), in person, audio recorded and transcribed within one week. Participants' autonomy, confidentiality and anonymity were protected throughout the process. *Data analysis:* Thematic analysis, which consists in the systematic identification of themes in the interview transcripts, followed by their conceptual organization and hierarchization. *Research team:* sixty-six undergraduate students taking Cultural Anthropology (ANTH 2010) in winter 2017, four graduate teaching assistants and one course instructor.

Findings: Student participants portrayed work/life balance as set of interconnected situations and relations that go from the deeply personal to the interpersonal, communal and institutional. Aiming at capturing such complexity, we organized our findings in four themes: work/life balance, family dynamics, personal challenges and support. Participants told us about their struggles when negotiating work and life responsibilities which often lead to feelings of guilt, which are mediated by their colleagues' reactions, schedule flexibility, their job situation and the presence or absence of maternity leave. Family dynamics reflected a tension between a narrative of independence and one of dependence in raising children, highlighting the importance of social networks, both of which are also affected by immigration status and intra-household negotiations particularly,

with their partners. Personal challenges relate primarily with time management and establishing clear boundaries between work and family, which related to managing emails, organization and scheduling of activities, maintaining a financial balance, and solving transportation needs, all of which were mediated the ability parents have of controlling a flexible work schedule, an ability greatly diminished among students. Support parents need related to child care goes from the one that happens in interpersonal interactions with neighbors, friends, relatives and colleagues, to the institutionalized forms of support, where participants expressed their frustration for the insufficiency of accessible options in Denver, the lack of options at DU, and the inaccessibility of DU's Fisher Early Learning Center.

Conclusions and recommendations: Participant's ability to control their schedules together with their financial and social capital seem to shape important differences in the ability that parents have for balancing work and life. Students, single parents and recent immigrants seem to have a combination of elements that add to the challenges. At the interpersonal level, simple acts of kindness, sympathy and empathy in the everyday interactions seem to make an important difference to parents. The perception that many of the student participants expressed about the academy not being comfortable with children, families or parents could be addressed by making it normal to talk about all these aspects of life. At the institutional level, efforts could be made at reaching out to parents, especially students and single parents, to offer them guidance and support that is already in place at DU, such as counselling and wellbeing resources, as well as orientation related to institutional policies. Policies related to maternity and paternity leave should be refined to ensure that they do not negatively affect those they are supposed to support. Convenient, affordable and sustainable on-campus child care options should be seriously considered given that they would enhance the possibilities for parents to participate in activities at DU. Events should be organized where members of the DU community have the opportunity to share not as students, staff or faculty, but as members of families.

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Introduction

This study is a product of the University of Denver's Winter 2017 Cultural Anthropology (ANTH 2010) class. The creation of this study originated from the class's interest in unpacking the perceptions of work/life balance held by members of the University's community who are parents to children under the age of ten. Through structured interviews with various members of the University of Denver community who are parents to young children, including staff, faculty members, and students from an array of departments, our class was able to locate several similarities and common themes among the perceptions held by parents at the University. This ethnographic research was done through the process of data collection, coding, and analysis.

Before discussing those findings, however, it is important to identify how the researchers for this study defined the elusive concept of "work/life balance," the basis of all subsequent findings and assertions regarding those findings. For the purposes of this study, "work/life balance" will refer broadly to the concept of time allotted to paid work or work for school in association with time designated for non-work-related activities, including childcare and activities related to leisure. For our purposes, "work/life balance" is intended to capture a variety of subthemes, all intended to pinpoint the community's shared perceptions regarding how to balance the time spent on work and the time allotted for free-time and family activities.

To accurately capture the complexity of our findings, our researchers organized them in the ideas of Family Dynamics, Support, Personal Challenges, and Work/Life balance. Further, these concepts all include related subthemes that aim to form a more cohesive picture of the overall perceptions of work/life balance at the University of Denver, which will be discussed at a later point in this summary. These themes were not constructed prior to the semi-structured interviews that were conducted for this research, but rather were discovered from the content of these interviews. In other words, students conducting these interviews were not seeking out responses related to these themes, but rather allowed participants in the study to answer open-ended questions according solely to their personal beliefs and experiences. We were then able to examine the results and identify themes and subthemes in an unbiased manner to ensure that our categorization would accurately reflect the perceptions held by members of the University of Denver community.

The concept of work/life balance is particularly relevant today in the context of a culture that promotes individualism and increasingly emphasizes hard work as a means to success and happiness. As we will discuss momentarily, recent studies report changes in family dynamics, family composition, trends in the workforce, trends in the workload, as well as changes in the economy and in how parents balance work and life in the United States accordingly. These findings suggest that research on how people within this cultural context perceive and experience

these changes on an individual level is not only important but potentially crucial for identifying the needs of the increasingly-busy American juggling their work/life balance. Identifying the experiences and needs of parents in the University of Denver community can potentially reveal the changes within the institution that are necessary to effectively support all DU community members.

Background

Within the last 60 years, the image of the traditional family has drastically shifted from the two-parent nuclear household to a vast array of different family structures and living situations. These changes are demonstrated by trends observed and quantified over this time period. Both structural and functional changes in family composition, as well as workload, have the potential to impact the lives of all family members. Therefore, comprehending and identifying these trends is essential to understanding and addressing how modern families balance the different aspects of their lives.

Findings that demonstrate new trends in family composition since the 1960's are depicted in part by surveys conducted by the Pew Research Center. These findings identify changes in family structure, particularly increases in divorced couples raising children, unmarried couples raising children, single mothers raising children, and same-sex couples raising children (Pew Research Center, 2010). Additionally, it has been determined that while in 1960 nearly 87% of children were being raised by two married parents, in recent years this number has declined to only about 64%. In addition, they found that the percentage of children born to unmarried women increased from only 5% to 41% over the same span of time (Pew Research Center, 2010).

Just as the structure of the modern-day family has undergone drastic shifts within the past half-century, so has the roles of its members, particularly regarding the amount of work they undertake, including both household and workforce labors. Identifying these new trends pertaining to workload in addition to the trends in family structure is critical when examining the lifestyles of today's families, as they provide context for patterns in challenges that many families face in today's society.

One such change that has occurred is a large movement to include more women taking jobs and working outside of the home. This addition of women into the workforce has become much more common place, and continues to grow. This change lead to other observations pertaining to how the workload of parents has changed over time.

The book "Changing Rhythms in American Life" discusses workload trends of the modern family. The studies in this book show that the workload (specifically paid market work) of today's parents, both mothers and fathers, have increased over the last half-century (Bianchi, 2006). Parents tend to put in more hours at their jobs than they have in the past in order to help support

their families and provide luxury items in addition to necessities. Within this trend of increased paid market work, there is an even further distinction between fathers, mothers, and single mothers. It is shown that more women are entering the workforce, thus increasing their time allotted to market work, where as they were traditionally responsible primarily for housework and raising their children. It is also stated that this increase in market work is highest for single mothers (Bianchi, Robinson and Milkie, 2006).

Aside from discussing trends concerning paid market work, Changing Rhythms in American Life also examines how unpaid work has changed over the last 50 years. In this section, the authors identify an imbalance in nonmarket work between fathers and mothers, with mothers having a tendency to put in more unpaid work hours than fathers. According to their findings, this disproportionate balance of nonmarket work has not changed significantly over the years, and while the overall workload of parents has increased, it is not due to an increased amount of nonmarket work. The relative amounts of housework and childcare for both fathers and mothers has stayed constant over the years. Yet due to increases in paid market work, workload has increased for both parties.

Overall, identifying trends in family composition and relative workloads helps contextualize the mechanisms modern families use in balancing their lives with their work. Research demonstrates that the aspects and perspectives on what constitutes a family have evolved, and continue to do so. Thus these changes in the structural components of the new “traditional family” have further societal implications. In order to understand these implications a foundational knowledge of how family composition has changed is necessary. In addition, the workload of parents has shown increases as time has gone on, thus further impacting the lives and challenges today’s families face.

The difficulties surrounding work/life balance for staff at DU are rooted in the economic context of America, which is constantly evolving. Modern family structure and the resulting challenges are a consequence of America’s long history of adapting to these economic changes. The changes in the economy are straining families in challenging ways, which is well described by Harris (1981) and more recently by various authors in the Cultural ANTHRO2 textbook written by Robbins and Dowty in 2014.

In the textbook, Robbins and Dowty summarize the current capitalist economy as a credit based economy, which originated as a system in the USA around 1931. While money is often thought of as bills and coins, this form of currency actually only makes up about 5% to 10% of the economy, while the rest exists as figures, or in the computers of institutions, such as banks (Robbins & Dowty, 2014). Credit money can be promised from the borrower of money to repay the money plus interest at a future date. This means that as a country, the net growth of the USA money supply must increase yearly to account for debt money that requires interest payment

from debtors. Since the economy makes money with money, perpetual economic growth is a necessity. When this system failed in 2007, decline in GDP lead to historic levels of unemployment, bank closures, and institutional collapse from which our society is still recovering. Neoliberalism became a dominating philosophy in the United States in the early 1970s to account for this threat, as it allowed for this perpetual economic growth by limiting governmental involvement. The reward is a system that provides all the materialistic desires of the modern capitalist at "low" prices, and continues to profit as well. Robbins and Dowty (2010) cite Catherine Lutz and Anne Lutz Fernandez, who note that these low prices have negative externalities, and point to the automobile industry as a useful example. There are many costs hidden within a car that quickly exceed the sticker price, including interest payments, insurance costs, and accidents, which for an average family totals about $1,000,000 a year, but also road construction and maintenance, which are paid for by the same families through taxes.

The structure of American families has evolved to this changing economic environment, most notably by changing from a single breadwinner based income to a dual earning family. Harris (1981) describes this change starting in the early 1960s with consumer expectations aimed towards owning the many new or previously prohibitively expensive products such as dryers, washing machines, televisions, household furnishings, and automobiles (Harris, 1981). Purchasing these items pulled married women who previously relied on their husbands for money into the job market to supplement income. Married women's' work then became as much for purchasing power as it was for upkeep, even if at the same time it was linked to women's rights and liberation. Harris describes this as an "iron first inside the glove of planned obsolescence", because what good was it to own cars or dishwashers that were breaking down? At this time, new seldom meant better, and old really just meant broken. The supplementary salary originally was more for essentials than frills and luxury items. While a novel strategy at first, a dual earning family quickly became the norm and capitalism maximized its profits, leading to today's situation. Nowadays it is almost essential for families to be dual earning, and from an economic standpoint, staying afloat while having children is difficult without the two incomes, which highlights the difficulties faced by single parents.

Having both parents working creates many challenges when raising children, but is now equally essential considering the costs of education, activities, essentials, and child care. The way that parents deal with these pressures is what constitutes their work/life balance. As mentioned above, Bianchi, Robinson and Milkie note the trend has been towards both parents working more hours on the job to offset the staggering amount of bills, as well as to fulfill professional and personal goals. On average parents continue to work about the same amount of time at "unpaid work" when raising children and maintaining the house. The way that parents balance these two types of work in their lives is their work/life balance. The question that remains is, what do we do with the kids when we're both working to pay the bills?

In Hochschild's "So How's the Family?" (2013) it is argued that the wall between non-market life and the marketplace has evolved to be largely permeable, and some families have chosen to show love for their children and manage their non-work lives by paying for a "Rent-A-Mom" to do it for them. This option has ironically opened up an entire field of jobs for moms that have entered the workforce that specialize in home keeping and sentimental family oriented activities. Another option that is increasingly necessary for dual earning families with children is child care. Families that are making enough money can hire a caretaker to fill the role left by the mother who is now part of the workforce.

However, in response to the cost of childcare, some mothers have chosen to forego their paid work to be a "stay at home mom", as their work is not profitable enough for them to pay for childcare (Desilver, 2014). This option serves as a strategy for parents who are against outsourcing childcare to a provider other than themselves. But this decision comes with an increased financial burden at the same time that it interferes in one of the parents', usually a mother, professional development. This burden is a consequence of the economic environment of the United States, and is a relatively new challenge for the modern families of 2017.

Methods

Study goal: To describe the perceptions that some DU community members with children have about work-family balance with attention to challenges, difficulties and institutional responses.

Study design: Descriptive, cross-sectional, qualitative study.

Population and sample: We decided to focus on "DU community members with young children".

- We defined "**DU community member**" as any individual who at the time of the study was a DU student (a person whose main activity and affiliation is being an undergraduate or graduate student at DU) and/or employee (a person whose main employment is with DU, in any capacity as faculty, staff or administrator). We excluded from this project people whose main activity was working outside of DU even if they are also DU students or employees.
- We defined "**with young children**" to include people with parenting responsibilities (financial, care, guidance, leisure, discipline, and others) towards at least one child under 10 years of age. This includes biological parents, stepparents, foster parents, divorced parents, single parents, and other categories as long as the individual is involved in parenting responsibilities.
- There is no available database that gives us an estimate of the number of "DU community members with young children", so the population size is unknown. In consequence, we used **purposeful sampling** (also known as purposive sampling or judgement sampling), which is the most common type of non-probabilistic sampling technique used in qualitative research,

and which consists in actively finding individuals who meet the criteria (Guest 2015: 234) described above.

- **Recruitment**. Each of the 66 students taking Cultural Anthropology in Winter 2017 identified and approached one individual who meets the criteria and who would be available for a 30-minute interview. The four Graduate Teaching Assistants and the Instructor advised and supported this process. Prior to recruiting them, participants were presented with a statement that summarizes the project, where we offered to protect participant's confidentiality, along with contact information for the instructor and the name of the student conducting the interview. **Informed consent** was secured verbally. DU's Office of Research and Sponsored Programs was informed of this project (see appendix).

Data collection: Each student conducted one semi structured interview (see appendix), audio recorded it and transcribed it within one week, a process that happened between January 23 and February 8, 2017. Audio recordings were destroyed after transcription. No personal information was recorded and audios and transcripts did not include any information with the potential of breaching anonymity.

Data analysis: Thematic analysis was performed, consisting of the following phases: familiarization with data, generating initial codes, searching for themes among codes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the preliminary report (Braun and Clarke 2006). Analysis was performed in groups, where students shared their interview transcripts and discussed collectively about themes and concepts that emerged from the data.

Findings

General characteristics of participants

A total of sixty-six participants were interviewed, but three of the interviews were discarded for the analysis phase of the study, due to low quality. Of the sixty-three participants whose interviews were analyzed, the majority were female, faculty members, between 30 and 49 years of age. Participant distribution by age, gender and type of job at DU are shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1.PARTICIPANTS BY AGE, GENDER, AND MAIN TYPE OF JOB AT DU

	20-29 years		30-39 years		40-49 years		50-59 years		TOTAL	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Faculty	2	1	8	2	11	9	1	2	22	14
Staff	0	1	7	3	0	3	0	0	7	7
Student	5	2	3	1	1		0	0	9	3
TOTAL	**7**	**4**	**18**	**6**	**12**	**12**	**1**	**2**	**38**	**24**
	11		**24**		**24**		**3**		**62**	

*One female faculty member declined to give her age

Participants' main academic or administrative unit of affiliation is shown in Table 2, where it is revealed that one third of participants came from the Division of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (AHSS), but the remaining are distributed in a variety of academic units.

TABLE 2. PARTICIPANTS BY ACADEMIC OR ADMINISTRATIVE UNIT AND MAIN TYPE OF JOB AT DU

Academic or administrative unit	Faculty	Staff	Student	TOTAL
College of Business	5	0	2	7
College of Law	0	0	2	2
Division of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences	15	4	3	22
Division of Natural Sciences and Mathematics	7	0	0	7
School of Engineering and Computer Science	2	0	1	3
School of International Studies	1	1	0	2
School of Professional Psychology	0	0	2	2
School of Social Work	0	0	2	2
Other	6	9	1	16
TOTAL	**36**	**14**	**13**	**63**

About half of the study's participants have spent less than 5 years at DU, as can be seen in table 3, where it is evident that the majority of participants with more than 5 years at DU are faculty members.

TABLE 3. PARTICIPANTS BY TIME AFFILIATED WITH DU BY ACADEMIC UNIT

Time at DU	Faculty	Staff	Student	TOTAL
Less than 1 year	6	2	4	12
Between 1 and 5 years	8	3	9	20
Between 5 and 10 years	14	5	0	19
Between 10 and 20 years	6	4	0	10
More than 20 years	2	0	0	2
TOTAL	**36**	**14**	**13**	**63**

Participants had between one and six children, with an average of 1.98 children per participant (standard deviation= 1.08, median= 2, mode= 2).

Theme 1: Work/Life Balance

Work / Life Balance can be defined as the ability that one must time manage and create a balance between their personal home lives and their work-related lives. In this study we specifically looked at students, faculty, and staff at the University of Denver who currently have children under the age of ten. These parents all had their own struggles concerning this topic, and each individual managed their life in different ways. This larger theme of Work / Life Balance was separated into five separate sub themes. These include Job status, Guilt, Maternity leave, Schedule flexibility, and Colleague reactions. Here, we briefly present these sub themes.

Many participants mentioned that having a child / being a caregiver does not interfere with their ability to be a successful and responsible student, teacher, or faculty member. One interviewee said that she had not had to miss work to participate in childcare activities, but her husband had, stating in the interview "I have been pretty consistent with my work. I haven't missed anything because of my daughter. But for example, my husband has missed some things or has taken her with him to class." There were some differences depending on the type of job.

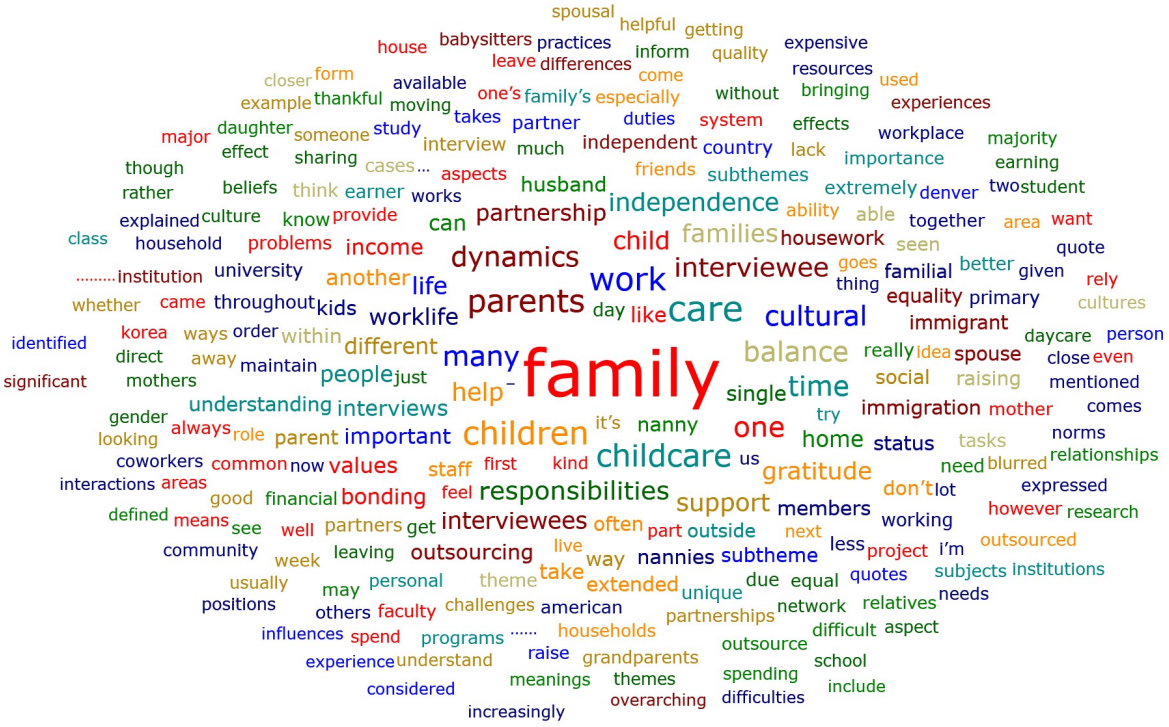
Respondents from each category had individuals that felt guilt due to their inability to always be available for their child. The students stood out in this category. One student explained her guilt to her interviewer by saying that she is one of the lucky parents that is able to see her child every day, but she still thinks that she needs to spend more time with her daughter. The following is a direct excerpt from her interview; "It's definitely that guilt, like, that I'm not spending enough time with her. When, I mean, I know I spend a lot of time with her. Some people I know hardly see their kids, and I see her every day, even if she's asleep. I just have to keep telling myself and her that, you know, like "mommy and I will be around a lot more soon" sort of thing. And she's young, but kids get it, I think."

Participants talked about reactions from faculty and staff to the participant's parental responsibilities. For example, one woman said "I was afraid if I went on maternity leave that, um, they would try to get rid of me. Which they did try...Yah, um there was a, you know, there were other people who thought they could do my job, that sort of saw that as an opportunity. Um, so yah, I was uncomfortable about that." This shows that she was worried about what the University of Denver staff would do to the status of her job once she went on Maternity Leave, a feeling that was echoed by other mothers and which relates to vulnerabilities related to job insecurity.

Other participants mentioned the reactions students have to the participant's parental activities. This could be a student parent having to struggle with group meetings due to their child becoming sick, or a faculty member who cannot meet with their students because they must pick up their child from school. This can be seen in the following quote from a student: "And you know, it's like these horrible awkward times and I think some of that stuff you're just kind a like "Really?" And you can never say, "You know that's pick-up time. Would it be okay if we met earlier?" You

know someone else would be like, “Oh yah, 2:30. That’s a great time.” I could maybe say, “I’m unavailable at that time, could we meet, noon would be better for me. I could meet for 2 hours at noon!” But you don’t feel like you can say it’s because of my kid.” Participants talked about how these feelings related to their ability or not to control and modify their schedules, an ability students had notoriously diminished as compared to their faculty and staff counterparts.

Theme 2: Family Dynamics



Family dynamics is a broadly encompassing theme which defines the familial structure and responsibilities of family members towards one another. It consists of implicit and explicit values stemming from social interactions between family members as well as from the larger community culture. Family dynamics vary from family to family yet also reflect the society's cultural perceptions of family roles. For this ethnographic study, we looked at how family dynamics are defined or changed by the responsibilities of the workplace, and the need for balance between raising a child and participating in the DU community. Interviews consistently demonstrated the difficulties of balancing parental duties with duties to the DU community. Family dynamics play a pivotal role in the decision-making process that parents must constantly make concerning the distribution of responsibilities and willingness to compromise social values.

The single most common topic discussed was the solutions that families found to deal with this seemingly unavoidable lack of time to both raise a child and fulfill work/ student responsibilities. Babysitters and daycare centers were the most frequently discussed solutions, but the opinions of interviewees on their use of these resources revealed somewhat contradictory results. What we found is that there seems to be two opposing social narratives that formed interviewees opinions on childcare. The first stance taken was one of complete independence. Parents either expected to or wanted to assume all of the responsibilities of parenthood without any outside help at all. This seems to fit well into American culture which highly values independence and self-sufficiency. The second stance we observed was seemingly oppositional to the first: a desire for help and shared responsibilities across the family and larger community, whether coming from the help of babysitters or solutions provided by DU. This valuation fits perfectly into the proverb "it takes a village to raise a child", with the perplexity being how these two generalized opinions can equally be informed by American culture.

Parents who preferred independence in raising kids seemed to primarily do so to maximize personal bonding with their child. Regardless of other responsibilities, these parents viewed any time that their child spent with a babysitter (or non-family care taker) as a loss. One interviewee summarized this opinion, saying "it's not important to us that we have work carriers where we get to afford a nanny but we're missing out on having time with our own kids." These parents valued spending time with their kids above all else. The economic costs and benefits of outsourcing care typically become irrelevant for these parents who see time spent with their children as limited, and thus organize the family dynamic and work balance in a way that gives them time. Children often become the center of the familial unit and raising children can additionally be seen as something that parents must go through together. In this way, raising children also becomes an activity that parents and other family members can bond with one another over. Coded in the language used to describe these tendencies, there also seems to be an underlying suspicion of outside help as inferior to parental care. Parents are naturally protective of their children and such tendencies may also contribute to this desire to care for their children themselves. It is also necessary to discuss here the extreme costs of childcare services. Many interviewees discussed how it was simply not within their means to afford a babysitter or daycare center for their children. One parent explained that they made the decision not to hire a nanny because they could not afford to "economically" or "emotionally." The value of raising kids independently could also thus be in part a rationalization of the benefits of independence versus the costs of outside help.

While some parents thus exhibited a desire to raise their children on their own, what was striking was the extreme gratitude that parents who did have help from other family members, babysitters, and daycare centers showed. Aside from extended family, support networks are often drawn together from friends, neighbors, and coworkers. One interviewee explained their

relationship with their neighbor: "we have neighbor with children of the same age [as ours]. If you need to run one of them to the doctor because they cut themselves, you could call the neighbor. I don't see how people would do it if they were new to the city and they don't have that support network." The community thus becomes an extension of the family, helping parents with the responsibilities of raising their kids. In return, parents are perhaps expected to help other parents with their kids, or in the case of babysitters simply pay them for their time. It is also important to note that many interviewees explained that hiring a nanny would be too expensive for them and is not an option. While it's impossible to say whether they would be satisfied with hiring outside help, the frequency that it came up seemed to suggest that a significant number of parents who don't have sufficient outside help acquired with social capital (having neighbors or friends babysit) would greatly appreciate the option of hiring help at a lower financial cost. The need for childcare was not only to free up working time, but also often in order to do social things. Parents spending time together as a couple, and going out to have fun were also all reasons that parents need help raising their kids.

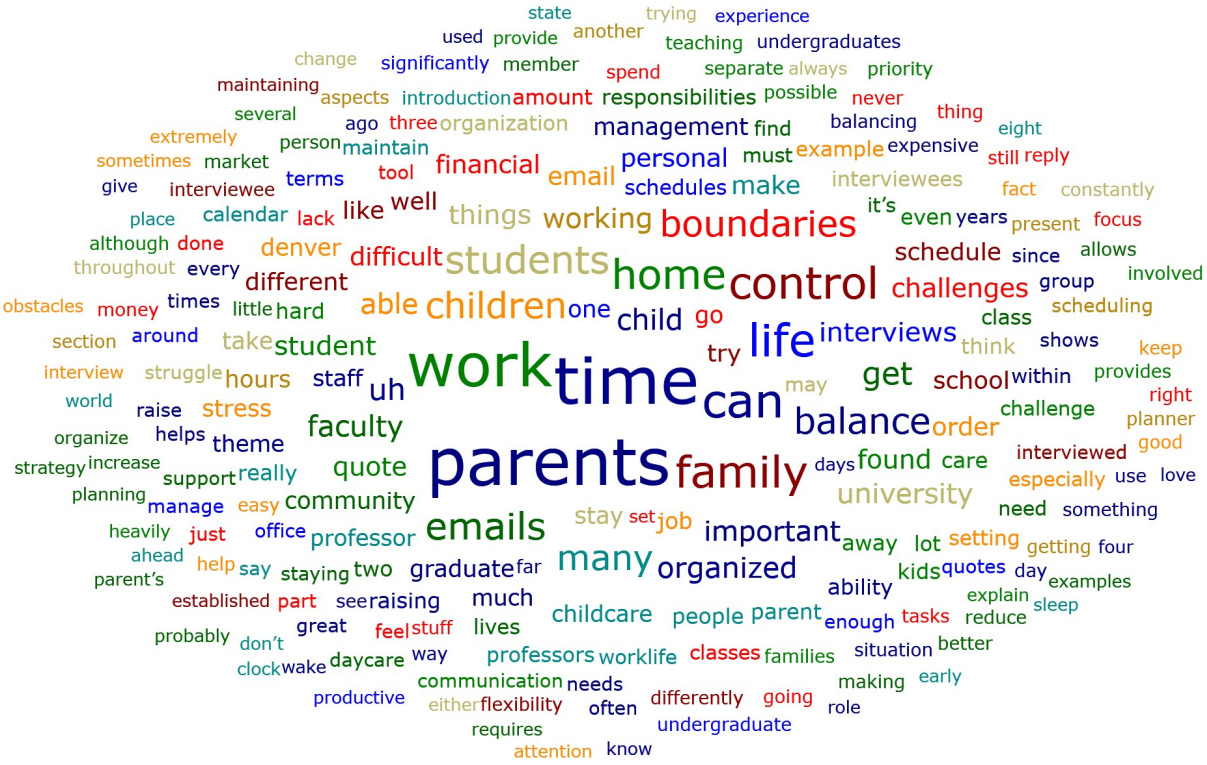
Another interesting signifier seemed to be parents' own childhood experiences. Parents often drew on their own experiences to decide what was right for their children. The varying cultures of different institutions also became an aid or an obstacle for parents to maneuver. One interviewee talked about how her previous job's work culture was much less tolerant of children, saying that "at my previous institution it was a Mid-Western institution and it was far less acceptable to mention kids or have kids be in your life at all. So, I do have a sense that academia isn't really comfortable with it yet my department has been really friendly and bringing their own kids to you know, the end of year faculty gathering or whatever you know it is." Once again, it appears parents are grateful to communities that are encouraging of parenthood.

There are additional mechanisms that seemed to significantly affect family dynamics and childcare. Immigration status was a recurring and contentious subject that had a significant effect on immigrant families. Families that are split up by citizenship are forced to endure additional hardships in raising children with a diminished social network to draw on. The dynamics between partners is also an important function that can determine what options parents have. While it seemed most parents shared childcare responsibilities relatively equally, divorced parents (or couples with a significant difference in wage-earning potential) often found alternative dynamic solutions. In all cases, families who lack the opportunities of child support are often forced to draw on the community for help.

In conclusion, although these two competing childcare narratives may seem contradictory, they not only coexist but affect one another as well. Economic realities, cultural values, and social capital (all largely informed by family dynamics) come together for different reasons to form both the social values of independence and dependence in raising children. Regardless of their stance

surrounding these ideas of independence and dependence, they all make these decisions because they see it as the most fitting solution to fulfill their roles as parents.

Theme 3: Personal Challenges



The Personal Challenges theme has seven sub-themes within it. These include: Emails, Organization, Financial balance, Control, Time management, Boundaries, and Transportation. While compiling the findings it became obvious that most of these sub-themes could be grouped under two overarching personal challenges: Time management and Boundaries. The biggest challenges to students, staff, and faculty seemed to be managing when time would be spent on family and when it would be used for work, and most seek to make sure there was a clear boundary between the two. Each of the other sub-themes can be related to either time management or boundaries.

In the Emails sub-theme, time had to be set aside for responding to emails and a clear boundary was set to keep email during work hours, or when family time was not interrupted. There were also many excerpts from the interviews that showed how email has changed the way that students and professors communicate. Organization relates to how people manage their time and how organized they are about their schedule. Many interviews had some mention of how

much organization they had to devote time to, and the result it had on their work/life balance. The financial balance sub-theme has to do with the income of the family. Factors that are discussed in the interview excerpts include whether both parents are working, how many hours per week parents work, if the family is living in financial comfort, and balancing enough hours during the week toward family. Control is a bit of a vague sub-theme but it generally refers to scheduling and how much control people have over their weekly work schedule. This includes when they can get time off work to deal with child care responsibilities, the ability for students with children can take classes, and the taking control of separating work time from family time. This challenge falls within the time management sub-theme and relates more specifically to how much control the individual has in what can or cannot be shifted around, such as when a class is taught or when they must be at work. Finally, the transportation sub-theme is also in line with the time management section. When a parent can pick up their kids, travel time to and from work, and the after-school activities the kids might need transportation to all must fit into one's schedule.

Time management and Boundaries are the two overarching sub-themes. As previously discussed, time management is part scheduling and planning, and part what must be done during the week that the parents may or may not have control over. This requires a certain amount of flexibility within the schedule and work environment. "I love teaching, I love reading, I love that stuff, and it all requires time so I constantly feel the tension between, either on a daily basis or a weekly basis, trying to find when can I really devote time and be present at home and not be distracted with work. So I get up at 5:30 and leave by 7:00 so I can get things done.". This quote is in line with the boundaries sub-theme, and although it highlights making a clear distinction between work life and home life, the subject also mentions in the following quote how they must manage their time to make sure that distinction remains intact.

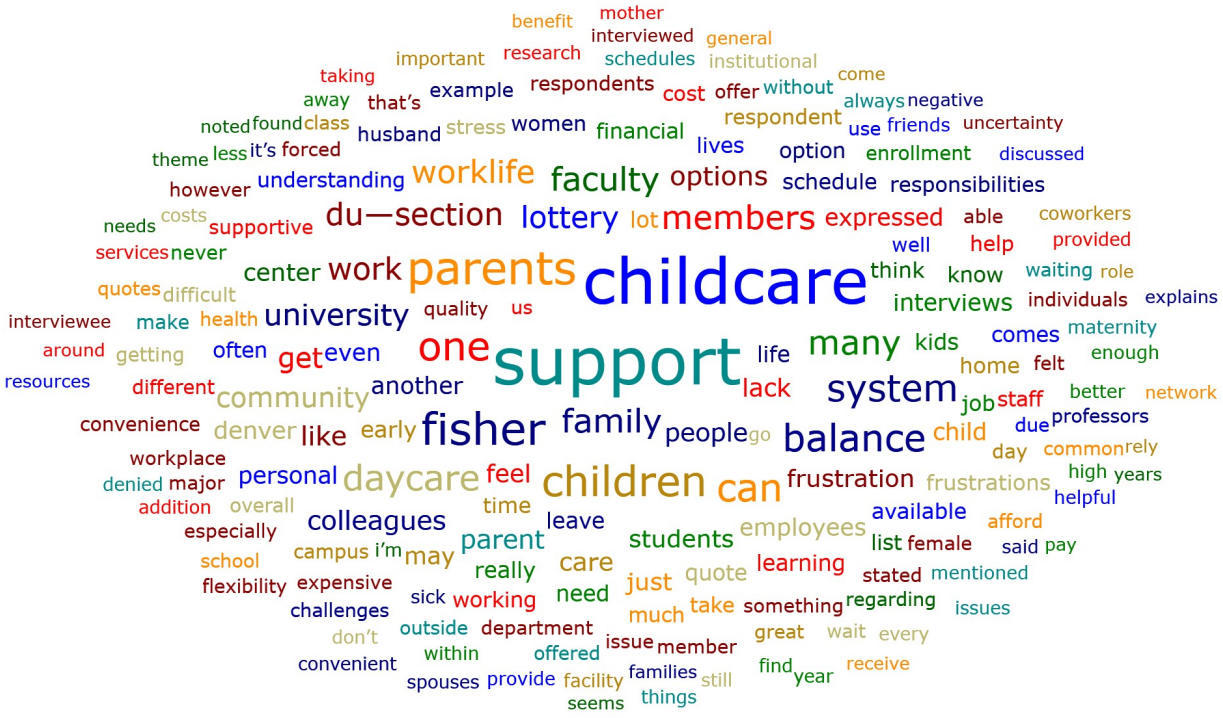
"Umm... (sighs). I guess the biggest thing [challenge] is to... when I am home with my kids and not working, or on the clock to not be looking at my phone checking emails..umm unless I know I am expecting something, uh but what I do is not life threatening (laughs), so um, I feel like I have set up good parameters to stop the clock when I leave here and not be working when I am at home and paying attention to my family." This quote falls in boundaries section and has an overlap with the emails section. These excerpts support the idea that that the goal is trying to keep the time spent on emails separate from family time, thereby keeping the boundary intact, and having specific times for responding to emails, which must be managed.

Boundaries are the efforts put towards making sure that the time allocated between work and family, by means of the time management aspect, remain intact. Thus, boundaries are the efforts made to make sure work and home life are kept separate. The challenge that individuals must face is that they inevitably mix to some degree. "So I've learned that before I became a parent as

an academic I would work like a college student so I would work a lot at weird hours of the day or on weekends. Once I had kids I really tried to keep it till 9:00-4:30 almost every day. When I was still trying to get this position and really had to publish to get that far I would work a lot more at night, lately I've decided that it's kind of not worth it". This quote is emblematic of most of the other parts of the personal challenges section and directly talks about when people work and when they spend time with their families.

These are some of the many personal challenges that parents face while trying to balance work and home life. Often sub-themes can be grouped together under Time management or Boundaries, or both. Differences between faculty, staff, and students most of the time are due to different amounts of control and transportation. The role someone has within the University determines the level of control they have available to balance their time at work or school. Personal challenges grow out of conflict between the time taken to work and time for family. This is the underlying challenge for every subject, but manifests itself differently in each of the themes and their sub-themes.

Theme 4: Support



Support is an idea that can be defined as something that aids an individual with the intention of helping improve one's quality of life. In our ethnographic study, our class interviewed both faculty

and students at the University of Denver with children ten years old and younger to gain a better understanding of the kinds of support these individuals receive and how support can be improved in their lives. Support is a broad topic that has several different parts to it, so we broke it down into different sub-categories which included: the DU daycare system, Frustration of getting into Fisher, Stress about daycare options, Frustration with lack of daycare options, A need for more personal support, A need for more colleague support, and Convenience.

As for the DU daycare system, our class was interested in learning about what options DU offers to students, staff and faculty with children to assist them in finding childcare, but our findings show that these options are narrow to almost non-existent. One respondent stated, "…as far as I know, there is not childcare provided for DU employees who do not get their children into Fisher."

Branching off that, there seemed to be a common theme among the different respondents regarding the frustration of getting into "Fisher", the closest daycare facility to campus. The Fisher Early Learning Center is a private institution that has a long wait list and uses a lottery system to enroll their students. Often times the faculty and students reported that they had to find different options for childcare, like one individual who stated: "We hire a private nanny who comes to our house…we couldn't get in the childcare here at DU. They have a lottery system which was really frustrating…"

This frustration often led to stress about daycare options, which was a common feeling among the individuals interviewed. We found that being able to find affordable childcare was a main source of stress among parents, including one respondent who said, "It costs too much money and I am already having issues as it is…we are just trying to make sure all of the bills are paid and that we buy food and all of that stuff."

As a class, we also found that there was a significant lack of daycare options in general. Because of this, individuals would sign up for daycare wait lists as soon as they found out they were pregnant or have to pay huge amounts for childcare or a nanny. To sum this frustration up, one respondent said, "childcare is a huge, huge issue for every parent on campus…there's just not enough childcare options."

Along with the idea of childcare, a need for more personal support was also a common theme among the individuals interviewed. Personal support could be anything from emotional support to financial support to family support. A female participant stated: "He (referring to husband) is incredible and he is a lot of support, and he's like a feminist man so he understands that I have like a balance between my work." There was also a desire for more colleague support among the different students and faculty who we interviewed. Many interviewees reported that they felt a

lack of understanding from their colleges when dealing with work/life balance and the issues that arise with having a child at home. One respondent who stated that their colleagues were, "just supportive in general so I don't feel condemned or an outcast or that I'm not pulling my weight" is what many other students and faculty members seem to want more of.

The last sub-category, convenience, is referring to the resources and/or strategies that make life easier for those in the DU community. These resources/strategies can be daycare facilities, transportation, family members, nannies, friends, etc. Convenience can be any of these things along with smaller things that make day-to-day life easier, like one respondent who said: "I have like a family calendar that helps me coordinate kids' schedules and then my work schedule, meetings, just different things…"

Conclusions and recommendations

Although the aims of this study were not oriented at designing solutions to problems related to work/life balance, the picture that emerged from these interviews allows us to draw some conclusions and recommendations.

The experience of parents at DU reflects the trends identified at the national level, with work/life balance as perceived as an enormous challenge by people with children. Participant's ability to control their schedules together with their financial and social capital seem to shape important differences in the ability that parents have for balancing work and life. Students, single parents and recent immigrants seem to have a combination of elements that add to the challenges.

At the interpersonal level, simple acts of kindness, sympathy and empathy in the everyday interactions seem to make an important difference to parents. The perception that many of the student participants expressed about the academy not being comfortable with children, families or parents could be addressed by making it normal to talk about all these aspects of life.

At the institutional level, efforts could be made at reaching out to parents, especially students and single parents, to offer them guidance and support that is already in place at DU, such as counselling and wellbeing resources, as well as orientation related to institutional policies. Policies related to maternity and paternity leave should be refined to ensure that they do not negatively affect those they are supposed to support. Convenient, affordable and sustainable on-campus child care options should be seriously considered given that they would enhance the possibilities for parents to participate in activities at DU. Events should be organized where members of the DU community have the opportunity to share not as students, staff or faculty, but as members of families.

Limitations of this study include: lack of statistical generalizability given the sampling approach, and our inability to present the dynamic nature of participants' perceptions given its cross-sectional design. Also, the lack of comparison groups does not allow us to confirm the extent to which these challenges are unique to DU community members with children or if they are shared by members without children.

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Appendix

Informed consent document:

As part of the Cultural Anthropology class I am taking this quarter, we are interviewing DU students, staff, faculty or administrators with children. The interview should take up to 30 minutes. We want to understand their perspective about work-life balance, its challenges and institutional responses. Your responses will remain confidential and I will not record your name or any information that could potentially identify you. I would like to audio record our interview so that I can be more accurate in documenting your responses. I will transcribe the audio by the end of this week and will destroy the audio recording. The transcript will not have any information that can be traced back to you. With the rest of the class, we will analyze qualitatively the transcripts and will write a technical report.

Would you like to participate in this project by allowing me to interview you?

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the course instructor.

Instructor: Alejandro Cerón, Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology (Alejandro.CeronValdes@du.edu; 303-871-2683)

Student conducting the interview:_____

Date of the interview:_____

Interview guide:

Student conducting the interview:_____ Date of the interview:_____

Interviewee's general information:

1. What is your primary occupation?
   - ☐ DU student
   - ☐ DU staff. Please, specify line/type of work:_____
   - ☐ DU faculty
2. For how long have you been at DU (as student, staff or faculty)?
   - ☐ _____
3. How many children do you have and what are their ages?
   - ☐ _____
4. How many adults participate in raising your children? (Are there other adults, such as spouses, stepparents, other relatives, nannies, or other who share with you these responsibilities?)

- ☐ _____

5. What is your age?
   - ☐ < 20 years
   - ☐ 20-29 years
   - ☐ 30-39 years
   - ☐ 40-49 years
   - ☐ 50-59 years
   - ☐ 60 or above
6. What is your gender?
   - ☐ Female
   - ☐ Male
   - ☐ Other, specify_____
7. Which division, college, or administrative unit are you primarily affiliated with? (DO NOT register the specific department you work at)
   - ☐ _____
8. If you are staff or faculty, are you in a tenured or very stable situation, or are you on short-term contracts?
   - ☐ _____
9. How do you maintain a work/life balance? What strategies do you use? (Can you tell me more? Can you give me an example?)
10. What are the main difficulties or challenges you face for maintaining a good work/life balance? (Can you tell me more? Can you give me an example?)
11. How do you go about childcare?
12. How do you distribute childcare responsibilities and tasks with other adults (such as spouse, stepparents, other relatives, nannies or other)? Are you the default person to be contacted by the preschool/school/nanny/coach/afterschool program in case of emergency?
13. What other resources do you have available to support you with childcare? (i.e. relatives, friends, drop-in day care, or other)
14. What reactions have you perceived at work when you miss work-related activities due to childcare related responsibilities? (i.e. snow day, child sick at home, childcare plans fall apart, or other situations). Work-related activities could be meetings, classes, workshops, lectures by visiting scholars, receptions, or other.
15. What support is available at DU, in terms of policies or other resources, which helps you maintain your work/life balance, specifically related to childcare? What other support would you like DU to offer to people with children?
16. Is there anything you would like to add?

Perceptions about Work-Family Balance Among DU Community Members with Young Children

Cultural Anthropology – Winter 2017

Section 1: Work/Life Balance

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to the faculty, staff, and students at the University of Denver for sharing their thoughts, opinions, and experiences through their interview responses.

This report was prepared by students from the Winter 2017 Cultural Anthropology class at the University of Denver, under the direction of Dr. Alejandro Cerón. Authors: Isaac Auerbacher, Sarah Beck, McKenna Benson, Maria Chavez, Emma Crisman, Harriet Dorion, Liana Franklin, Harrison Hardig, Jesse Jhan-Jing Hu, Sabrina Jain, Victoria Lang, Daisy Leach, Marcus Merrit, Evan Morsch, Cathryn Perreira (Graduate Teaching Assistant), Tommie Walsh, Nathan Weinberg, and Harry Zackarian

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Introduction

The balance between work and life is difficult to manage for professors and students, not to mention those who also have the added responsibility of being a parent. It is hard to take care of your obligations outside of the home, as well as be a nurturing, attentive, and present parent. After interviewing students and faculty with children, five major themes were found among their responses pertaining to the maintenance of that balance. These themes were guilt, job status, schedule flexibility, parental leave, and colleague reactions.

The first theme that seemed to be addressed commonly was guilt. Students and professors feel that there is a constant conflict between spending the appropriate amount of time at work and at home, so as to make sure that both aspects of their lives are being given enough attention. The guilt that people feel about spending too much time at work comes from the belief that they are not allocating enough time to spend with their families, and that their children are going to feel neglected. The other end of the spectrum is parents who feel that they spend too much time at home taking care of their children, and not enough time at work. These parents are worried that they are not pulling their own weight or that they are letting their coworkers down. No matter how time is divided, parents feel as though they are not giving the necessary amount of time to one or both aspects of their lives.

Another theme among the interviewed parents was the impact that job status has on income and benefits. Job status, in reference to both having a job and having a secure job, can have a big impact on way professors and students raise their children. Part time workers fear being replaceable or losing their jobs when allotting time to care for their children or take maternity leave. A lot of full time working professors and students have left their beloved jobs for part time jobs (or no job), resulting in a decrease in job status and household income in order to make more

time to care for their children. However, professors with tenure seem to be pretty flexible and available for their children.

Schedule flexibility was a huge factor that came up when discussing the balance between work and life. Undergraduate students, graduate students, tenured professors, and non-tenured professors all have varying degrees of schedule flexibility, which impacts their ability to care for their children or have a life outside of work or school. Some students believe that being a student makes their schedule more flexible because they are able to create their own class schedule and choose one that works for them to be able to balance school with the needs of their children. Other students find it difficult because of required courses that they have to take at specific times which inhibits their ability to make time for their children. This is the case for tenured versus non-tenured professors as well.

Parental leave was another theme that came up frequently. Parental leave is extremely important in reducing stress, as well as creating meaningful quality time for parents as they have a new baby enter their family. Maternity leave is given for mothers to care for their newborn child and recover from childbirth. New fathers are also sometimes given leave to help out in the care of the new baby. Many parents expressed gratitude for the opportunity to take time off of work to spend with their new family, which is very nice and accommodating for new parents. It is a little more difficult for students, as less accommodations are provided to assist them in managing school work, and less leave time is given to students with a newborn child.

The final theme that was addressed regularly was colleague reactions. Professors have expressed that a supportive work environment is extremely helpful in maintaining a healthy balance between work and home life. When professors feel like they have the support of their coworkers, it is easier to manage when unexpected things get thrown at them. A lot of people feel

as though they will be judged for taking extra time off of work to spend with their children, but overall balancing work and home life is very dependent on the professor and the situation they are placed in.

Overall there seems to be a constant struggle between managing work/school and home life. People often feel torn between where they should spend their time, fear for the status of their jobs, constantly assess their flexibility though the different aspects of their lives, aim to be stress free during parental leave, and question how their coworkers view them. The following sections discuss the struggles of these five sub themes in further detail.

Guilt

A common theme that emerged under the Work/School theme was guilt. Guilt is traditionally thought of and defined by a shame felt by a person who believes they have done something wrong. This feeling can evoke action to make right any wrongdoings. This definition applies to this category because of the incessant struggle to find and outline a work/life balance, however this guilt is not always felt appropriately. There is an internal battle felt by parents that will be explored further.

Overall, the group identified that parents (be it professors or students) feel guilt because they try to devote themselves completely to their family and school requirements, respectively. There is a problem in striking a balance of time that can be spent on each without feeling that the other aspect has been disregarded. This is further investigated through quote analysis provided from student-conducted interviews.

> “It's definitely that guilt, like, that I’m not spending enough time with her. When, I mean, I know I spend a lot of time with her. Some people I know hardly see their kids, and I see her every day, even if she’s asleep. I just have to keep telling myself

> and her that, you know, like mommy and I will be around a lot more soon sort of thing. And she's young, but kids get it, I think."

As this quote demonstrates, it is hard to feel that you are missing out on your child's growth and developments. Seeing them even though they are asleep sometimes is not enough; when the work/life balance is shifted, or even just perceived as unbalanced, the individual will express an under-arching feeling of guilt from one or more aspects. This individual feels this guilt among the family aspect, and worries that he does not dedicate enough time to being at home, although he understands that this is not realistic.

> "Mostly feeling guilt as a parent because I know that, like, sometimes when I have to on weekends do my assignments and, like, not devote time to her it's, like, challenging because I know that I'm showing her how to have a strong work ethic and that education is really important, but at the same time I struggle with guilt feeling that she needs more from me. She needs more time and attention, so it is difficult to juggle around, especially throw in that I was a business owner. I just sold my business so that I could better juggle those things."

This parent is able to serve her child while putting herself through school. One up-side, she feels, is what this struggle and effort shows her daughter in terms of strength and perseverance. The guilt of being self-centered and focusing on her own future is quieted by the reminder that her daughter will benefit from her schooling. Ultimately, though, this individual is not selfish, in fact putting herself through school to benefit her daughter is extremely well thought out, and will support her child further throughout life. There are limits, though, as this individual notes. She had to sell her business in order to become more available for the other aspects of life demanding her attention.

"Sometimes I felt like I was being a bad mom by staying an extra hour at school to get help from my professor." The student speaking in this quote describes what guilt feels like perfectly, since she states that she feels like a bad mom because she stays at school extra to get help with her work. This feeling of being a bad parent because they (she) sometimes have to put schoolwork as a priority seems to be a common theme among students in particular. This mom struggles with wanting to be a good student, but also wanting to provide proper attention and time for her child.

There have been overwhelming instances of interviewees feeling that they are unable to carry their own weight and do their part in either role, which is another theme seen throughout the subcategory of guilt. "I was really stressed, because I was a single mom, when I started to work here that I be perceived as if I couldn't carry my own weight because I had two kids at home and things like that." Professors feel guilty because they need to be there to take care of their children and have a home life, but they also have responsibilities at school to their coworkers and their students to get their work done and be a good teacher.

"Yeah, and now I feel a little bit more guilty when I'm at home and it's just us I need to give her my full, undivided attention."

This family is juggling the work/school life balance of a parent, which is significantly more challenging when additional factors (such as struggles on family life to properly allot time and making sure the time is well spent) are superimposed by a demanding job. While many cultural anthropologists are recording working family time allotment, there is definitely a lot to be said in the avenues of family life of a student-work struggle. Time is the most important thing any parent can commit to giving their child, and quality over quantity is necessary in a stable household.

The common theme among these quotes is that no matter what happens, no matter how their time is divided, parents feel as though one, or both, areas of their lives are suffering. Some

of the interviewees were students, whose lives become more complicated with the necessity of studying and preparation for class. Having a child and trying to earn a degree is a level of stress virtually unparalleled. For instance, one interviewee is able to "quiet" the feelings of guilt by remembering that her actions are important life lessons for her child, as this difficult task shows strong work ethic, and determination. At the same time, though, there are things that she has to give up, such as sleep. What is the line, then? At what point is this feeling of guilt validated, and when does the person need to reevaluate their priorities, or at least the balance between the demands of their life?

Professors ultimately understand this debacle as well. Instead of studying, they have to fit in time for lesson planning, grading, and their continual research. This leads to long hours, and potentially returning home late. Personally, the professor I interviewed would make sure to handle this by going to work early so his job responsibilities could be finished at a reasonable hour to make time for family dinners. He also is trying to address this by finding ways to incorporate his children into his work, like bringing them on class trips so they can, too, can see the work ethic of their parents.

Job Status

Job status refers both to having a job and the level to which this job is secure or not. Job status varied widely across these interviews. The interviews conducted included both university employees and students. In the group of employees, some were part-time and full-time staff, and some were tenured and non-tenured faculty. All of these statuses impacted income and access to benefits.

The interviews showed that parenthood is frequently associated with the fear of losing a job or needing to quit a job. Despite maternity leave procedures, the respondents often felt

obligated to quit their job or feared being replaced. For example, one respondent expressed her fear of being terminated when she became a mother, "I was afraid if I went on maternity leave that um they would try to get rid of me. Which they did try...Yah, um there was a, you know, there were other people who thought they could do my job, that sort of saw that as an opportunity. Um, so yah, I was uncomfortable about that."

Other respondents discuss voluntary changes to their jobs, “So she works from home and she, uh, she hasn’t, uh she hasn't had to have a job outside of the home since she got pregnant the first time.” In this quote and many others, there is a theme of parents, particularly women losing their job status because of the demands of parenthood. Spouses quit fulfilling work, or fear losing their work, and in many cases are forced to take part-time work because of family demands.

This appears to be an issue in the DU community because the school employs a large number of part-time faculty and staff. We found that the fear of losing a job due to parenthood had a push effect on employees. There were people who were either pushed away from parenting and away from employment with the school. The majority of the respondents have full-time job status, but the idea of working part-time came up frequently in the interviews. We found that many also seemed to have someone working part-time in their family. For example, a respondent talks about leaving a beloved teaching position for part-time hourly work when she had children,

“Well, my husband is a high school teacher, and so that poses a particular dilemma, because we would have had to have child care at six in the morning…even when they are school age, we would have to have someone for two hours before school and several hours afterward, and so, at that point, I stopped doing it. I wanted to be home with them anyway.”

This quote also echoes another common sub-theme. Taking part-time work can lead to a decrease in job status, but for many parents, it is worth it because it allows them to spend more

time with their children. Part-time work also reduces the stress of juggling schedules. In all of our research we found that a large number of the women interviewed saw a decrease in job status to part-time work by personal choice. While some in the sample did feel forced to move into part-time employment, the majority made the decision for themselves.

In some cases, child rearing can impact an employee's ability to do his or her job effectively. One woman, for example, was forced at times to bring her baby to work, "My little son was little, he was like maybe 3 months old when I started MIT. And so, yeah, so I was still nursing him and everything, so he would come with me sometimes." The respondent's job status at this time was that of a part-time faculty member of another university. Clearly this effected both her ability to care for her son and her ability to work as she had to bring her child to work. This demonstrates how often part-time work can be detrimental to work life. With better benefits it is likely that this woman would have been able to see more flexibility in her role as a mother and as a teacher.

We also observed a number of respondents who were looking to change their job status, "I anticipate that will happen again [taking on more childcare obligations] when my wife gets a job, especially because the jobs my wife is interviewing for are saying that she will have to work weekends pretty regularly." The search for new work can cause stress and disruption in the family unit, as parents worry about how they are going to balance their lives in light of the time that is required for interviewing and possible different hours from a new job. Parents also worry about the financial cost of moving from a higher status, higher paid position to a lower paid position. The interview process, too, was seen to be quite arduous and a disincentive to leaving low paying part-time work.

This belies another theme often discussed in these quotes, seniority. The most senior workers seem to have fewer issues with parenthood than the junior ones, "And I am very privileged that I'm in a tenured position, I have a lot of flexibility which I think is nice for raising children because if I have to pick someone up early and I'm not teaching I can plan around so that I can work on the weekend or later at night so I can make up for what I missed earlier." Tenure is the most common marker of this theme and is well discussed. The respondent above is especially happy to be in such a privileged status, which gives her greater flexibility. Seniority plays a large role in the lives of the respondents with worries over job status highly magnified by those lacking seniority. This was not true in every case; for example, one student who worked in a restaurant and many part time employees felt as though they had adequate flexibility, but it was true in enough cases to suggest a trend.

Ultimately, job status is a current that runs strongly through all of these people's lives. It conjures both worry and happiness in its various forms. Job status represents an important social hierarchy in almost all of the interviews conducted.

Schedule Flexibility

Schedule flexibility is the availability to arrange time freely. People who have schedule flexibility are more in charge of their time. In this study, schedule flexibility refers to having a balance between family and work/study life. The interviewees in our project include both professors and students, and we can see many of them struggle with schedule flexibility. The degree of flexibility is different from case to case, depending on the assistance they received from the school. For example, offering days-off, childcare, and financial support, or flexibility in their class schedule as a whole. The work and study environment is crucial to all the interviewees because a good balance can help them take care of their children and maintain their jobs at the

same time. Time management is also an important factor, which can make a huge difference in their schedule flexibility. We found that a great aspect of time management is related to their job title. There are many differences in the people that were interviewed, from undergraduate students, graduate students, to professors. The interviews provided insight into their daily lives, the struggles of scheduling time, and even personal frustrations.

Among professors, those who were tenured compared to those who were not have very different experiences. One faculty member mentioned that having a tenured position at DU helps their schedule flexibility, "And I am very privileged that I'm in a tenured position, I have a lot of flexibility which I think is nice for raising children because if I have to pick someone up early and I'm not teaching I can plan around so that I can work on the weekend or later at night so I can make up for what I missed earlier."

Another professor briefly mentioned the difficulties in having children and attending faculty meetings, but the professor then indicated that the supervisors were understanding to their situations,

> "A number of faculty have children and so for instance, if I'm in a faculty meeting and the meeting is scheduled from 1:30- 3:30 a few faculty members if they don't have alternatives for childcare that day sometimes were able to leave the faculty meeting a little bit earlier than we normally would and it's understood that you know picking up our kids is something we have to do because if we don't have an alternative caretaker it means we're the ones picking up our kids and there's not a lot of flexibility around that."

Through the interviews, we further learned that there were two strong views students had in regards to schedule flexibility. Half of the students thought that due to their life as a student they

did not have any schedule flexibility, as some required classes only offered at certain times. There was one male graduate student who was very committed to his schoolwork. This may be because getting a Master's degree plays a more prevalent role in their lives; thus, graduate students have less flexibility in their schedule as shown in the quote below, "I try and do my work-study in the morning and then have my grad classes. After all that's done I pick up the baby. I don't have much of a life besides school and the baby."

The other half of the student group felt that being a student gave them the most flexibility, as they could schedule their classes to avoid conflicts between their responsibilities as both students and parents. Undergraduate students have more flexibility in their schedule since they have more options to choose from, and they have four years to take all of their required classes. Simply based in the fact that they are completing their undergraduate degrees they have a bit more flexibility. They can decide how they can balance between their schoolwork, work life, and family life,

> "Exactly. But now its new managers, so it's like, you need me, or I need you on the weekends. It's like OK, or its either you take it or you lose it. And I'm like OK, my reason was, I'm not going to pay a babysitter the whole day on the weekend and I'm not even making what I'm going to pay the babysitter. So I'm like, fine I stick with two days. So I stick with two days. That's what they give me, so that's what they put up for me, so here I am only Monday and Wednesday."

Ultimately, both perspectives gave a great emphasis on the importance of schedule flexibility.

In America, there is a great desire for a better quality of life. Life itself has become easier in terms of communication, but more hectic in terms of the constant notifications coming from one place or another. With an increase in women in the workforce and as a result an increase in

housework, time has become even more of a commodity then before. This was proved through the many interviewees who spoke to their desire for greater schedule flexibility, especially with being a parent and affiliated to DU in some way.

Parental Leave

The theme of 'parental leave' is important for expecting mothers and fathers because it allows parents extra time to be with their families during a period of major change. In addition, certain parental leave policies alleviate the worry of having to lose pay or job status position while spending time away from work. Such parental leave policies reduce stressful factors in the lives of families, which allows for more meaningful family time. However, some institutions, depending on the policy, may not be able to accommodate every parent's specific needs.

Parental leave policies allow for the parent of a newborn child to take time off in order to care for the child and adjust to the differences this type of life change can bring. In most cases, parental leave is mainly given to mothers, since they need to provide for the newborn nutritionally in the first few months after their birth, and also recover from childbirth. However, there are cases where fathers are granted leave as well to help the mother care for the child. The University of Denver parental leave policy is granted to faculty, staff and even students for mothers and fathers who just had a baby. Granted, there are contingencies to this policy that apply differently to parents depending on their affiliation with the University.

On one end of the spectrum, members of the University have had very beneficial experiences with the policy. These members of the DU community are very happy with the opportunity they we granted and the way they were supported during their parental leave. In one example an interviewee states, "I felt very supported. I started my position here at DU as staff, full-time, four weeks or six weeks after my daughter was born." This example, and others like it,

show that faculty/staff members who already had a child before working at the University were pleased with the amount of paid time off they received as well as the freedom to be able to spend time with their families after they already had their baby.

In another example, an interviewee explains, "Yeah, so most companies don't provide paternity leave. Moms get maternity leave typically but, um I got ten weeks of paid paternity leave, plus I could take an extra two weeks of sick time to make twelve weeks." This faculty member provides another positive example of the University's parental leave policy. They were able to benefit by being able to support their family while at the same time not have to worry about losing their job. Although these two examples show the benefits of the policy, it is clear that not every parent can be satisfied in the same ways.

There are different ways in which the parental leave policy at the University can be accommodating. For example, some parents were happy to be able to take leave to spend time with their family away from work. When that was no longer an option due to various reasons (i.e. they were in the middle of teaching a class when they had their baby), other parents were happy to be supported by faculty members when they had no other option but to bring their children to campus so that they would not fall behind in their class work. One interviewee said,

> "Oh yeah, of course, two years ago I got to bring my baby to work with me...He was here let's see October, November, December... um three and a half months. I would come to work part time during the day and help extend my maternity leave um and everybody here in the office was gracious enough to allow me to let him come in and he was so tiny that he would just eat and sleep the whole time."

In this example, the flexibility of the University's policy is apparent in doing the best they can to accommodate new parents during times when additional childcare is not an option. Other examples

like this one show how the University adjusts to specific needs of the parent under certain circumstances. However, sometimes the timing of the childbirth does not allow for such flexibility of the policy.

There are circumstances where people can take advantage of the leave, but it can come at a less opportune time. When instances of pregnancy conflict with class schedules people feel torn between their work obligations and their newfound responsibilities as a parent. An example of this can be seen in the quote, “So you also can’t let your students down so it is a really hard choice because you also don’t want to let your baby down.” As you can see, this can make things difficult for the parent with their normal workload and their obligations to take care of their families. While the University’s parental leave policy allows parents to be with their families for some extended time, their commitment to their work is still a priority.

On the other end of the spectrum, members of the University run into issues with their work life-home life balancing act. This disparity came up specifically in the eyes of a graduate student at the University when she was torn between her schooling and her new child. She says, "Yes, because it was only like 10 days of maternity leave, because I was a graduate student." This is a clear example of how the amount of time allotted for leave can differ depending on the affiliation with the school. While staff/faculty members receive 10+ weeks off of paid leave, graduate students only get 10 days off. This student was not able to benefit from the same leave given to other members at the University and because of that she struggled with these differences in her schoolwork and her home life.

Parental leave is a very helpful benefit in a new parent’s life, whether it takes place during the birth of their first child or additional child in their family. These quotes demonstrate the topic of ‘paternal leave’ in a way that is positive at times, but also slightly negative. Most of the quotes

affirmed that they received some kind of maternity leave right after their family had a baby. This is beneficial because these parents received an opportunity to spend quality time at home with their families while keeping their job. However, these quotes also showed that the amount of time they got off either was not enough time to completely be able to take care of their family or they showed that the amount of time they got off was not satisfactory for the amount of work they had to do to keep up on all of their classes. This can especially be seen in the example about the graduate student. Although these quotes are positive in the respect that all interviewees got some time off for maternity leave, they also negatively reflect how the University falls short of providing adequate forms of maternity leave for all families and parents.

Reactions of Male Faculty

Paternal leave policies at the University of Denver seem to have a positive response with the male faculty that utilize this time to foster a better work/life balance. Unlike maternal leave at the University of Denver, which seems to have created a more negative response, paternal leave has been utilized and praised by the men interviewed at the University of Denver. Although more male faculty members were involved in the interview process than male students, the faculty's response had an overall good experience with the university's policies. The ten weeks given to male faculty allows for new parents to spend time at home with their spouses and their newly born children. Some of these male faculty members even mentioned taking some of their vacation time to extend their leave as well, making for a more convenient experience when starting or expanding a family. This male faculty member mentioned during an interview his experience in terms of the time he was given: "Ya, so most companies don't provide paternity leave. Moms get maternity leave typically but, um I got ten weeks of paid paternity leave, plus I could take an extra two weeks of sick time to make twelve weeks". By his mentioning and comparisons to other companies that

do not provide this time to new fathers, this faculty member seems content with the University of Denver's policies.

The male faculty at the University of Denver mentioned their agreement with the policies offered at the University of Denver. In terms of childcare, most of the men involved in the study felt relatively comfortable with their work/life balance. In one interview, a male faculty member mentioned that missing work related responsibilities because of his kids makes him uncomfortable.

> "It always makes me feel uncomfortable. And I can't say I've faced any sort of uh resentment or you know discrimination or anything like that but I always feel like when I have to say that 'I can't do this because of my kids…' I always feel like maybe I'm not quite pulling my weight as a faculty member or as a colleague. Um so it's sort of...it might just be sort of perception as opposed to reality."

Most departments at the University of Denver are filled with faculty members with kids, which can make it difficult to arrange meetings around childcare. In comparison, a male faculty member also weighed in on how the University of Denver makes him feel about these situations by stating that, "the institution I used to work at before DU...was much more kind of um grumbling about [missing things because of childcare] um there was much more grumbling about people that were unavailable at times because of parenting. And I didn't find that to be very healthy for me…at DU I think it's a lot better though." Although finding a work/balance can be difficult for anyone, it seems that the University of Denver does a good job of allowing male faculty to at least have the opportunity to do so.

Colleague Reactions

Colleague reactions are highly influential on a person's ability to have a work-life balance, especially if they have a child. An unsupportive colleague presence in the workplace can make it

extremely difficult to have flexibility in a childcare schedule. On the other hand, supportive colleagues can be very helpful and provide reassurance when a parent is trying to balance childcare with work. There are an incredible variety of reactions that colleagues can have in regard to those with children. In addition, the reactions people have can be dependent on their own experience, as well as their placement in specific departments and universities. Certain reactions could also depend on differences in gender and background. A supportive work environment is vital to helping struggling individuals in maintaining a work-life balance.

One element that appeared in the interviews was the influence of a spouse in maintaining a work-life balance. "Other faculties who have a wife who stays home doesn't have to worry about if their kids don't have school or if their kids are sick, you know, time for research." This quote represents a good majority of the working class single parent. The lack of support that singles are given dramatically affects them and how they are able to live their own lives. Many similar opinions occurred in the interviews and overall were a major aspect of this topic. It can seem unfair that those with a stay-at-home spouse are given the chance to thrive, and are given more time in comparison to those who do not have this luxury. Those parents who have primary custody are often found to be facing many more hardships than those who only see their kids on the weekends. This can also lead to judgment based on gender differences and personal background.

A supportive work environment is vital to maintaining a work-life balance. Especially with younger children there are constant curveballs. Anything can happen to disrupt a schedule. Having colleague support can make it easier to deal with these curveballs. Having respect for scheduling obligations is very important for having flexibility with children: "I felt very supported. I started my position here at DU as staff, full-time, four weeks or six weeks after my daughter was born."

On the other hand, an unsupportive environment can be extremely stressful and difficult to handle: “One day one of mine got sick on that really bad snow day. I thought I was in the clear because they only asked for non-essential personnel. But I was later reprimanded by the head of my department.”

Many interviewees were often embarrassed to have to ask for exceptions because of children. The lack of support in this environment and negative reactions on the part of colleagues can be extremely harmful to someone who is already struggling to have balance:

> "And you know, it’s horribly awkward at times and I think some of the stuff you’re just kinda like really? And you can never say, You know that’s pick-up time. Would it be okay if we met earlier? You know someone else would be like, Oh yah, 2:30. That’s a great time I could maybe say, I’m unavailable at that time, could we meet, noon would be better for me. I could meet for 2 hours at noon! But you don’t feel like you can say it’s because of my kid."

This person did not feel comfortable explaining that she was restricted by her child. She was afraid that she would be judged for not being able to put in the extra time required of the job.

Another aspect that can make a large difference is the way in which university policy or ideals impact the attitude of employees. If family is prioritized by the school, employees are far more likely to be supportive of someone with children: “There’s a definite kind of respect for kind of our obligations elsewhere, and for scheduling around those as much as possible. And that if you can’t make something work because of kid stuff, so be it. I feel like the University’s actually pretty good about that too.” A certain respect for obligations outside of work is key to a supportive environment, and makes a large difference for those who do not have the kind of support systems outside of school that can act as a safety net if something comes up.

This respect for obligations is created by university and departmental attitude as well as a colleague's own personal situation. If co-workers have children of their own, the shared experience can help them empathize and therefore respect obligations outside of school and work. This can even go as far as offering direct help to someone who might be a single parent, or be in a similar situation in which they are the sole caretaker of a child.

There was a large variety of reactions from colleagues mentioned throughout the transcripts. One largely recurring theme was that people felt as though they would be judged by colleagues for taking extra time for maternity leave or childcare purposes. This being said, there were many cases where people felt supported in their decision to take time. The overarching theme was that people had different experiences; some people felt threatened, while others felt supported. This fact may have had something to do with the status of the interviewee. Professors often felt less judged than students, and women felt more judgement than men.

Conclusion

Creating a stable, loving household full of achievements and aspirations is the goal of all moms and dads as they venture into parenthood. Within the stable household many aspects are necessary to create this, including work, school, economic stability, emotional support and physical, in-the-moment participation. Parents juggling all of these things, in addition to learning a new trade or who are teaching and lesson planning, experience an unparalleled circumstance of difficulty. Parents who are students or professors experience an array of situations which they must face in the swift, unforgiving environment of the classroom.

Guilt is a main proponent in any parent's life, which will constantly result in second guessing their decisions to ensure the best start for their children. As a result, students and

professors alike emphasize the amount of time dedicated to academics outside of class and its interference with the already small allotment of time a working parent has with their child.

Another aspect of parenting is job status and job security. The trend among women is an apprehension toward maternity leave for fear of their job security, or they demonstrate variance between preference for full-time work or full-time parenthood. Inconsistent job variances add another layer of stress onto the family unit. On the other hand, the University of Denver offers its students, staff and faculty parental leave for both mothers and fathers for varying amounts of time. Professors benefit more greatly than students in these times because schedule flexibility is not always possible for students planning their classes.

In respect to campus/colleague professor opinion, it varied greatly. In general, people experienced supportive colleagues. While having an understanding work environment is important, many parents, particularly mothers, had a hard time taking additional time off for fear of judgement.

Finally, the importance of schedule flexibility. Undergraduate parents reported to have more flexibility in their schedule in terms of classes being taken over a four year span and the ability to choose them. Professors faced the occasional faux pas of leaving a faculty meeting to fetch a child from school, but graduate students seemed to struggle the most when planning their schedules and obligations around child care with very little schedule flexibility.

Many problems arise from being a parent while involved in the world of academia. The added pressure of being a student or professor while parenting is many-faceted and varies from household to household. The student, staff and faculty of the University of Denver face a great deal of adversity while simultaneously caring for a family and continuing their education and building careers.

Perceptions About Work-Family Balance

Among DU Community Members

With Young Children

CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY – WINTER 2017

SECTION 2: Family Dynamics

Acknowledgments

Special thanks to the faculty, staff, and students at the University of Denver for sharing their thoughts, opinions, and experiences through their interview responses.

This report was prepared by students from the Winter 2017 Cultural Anthropology class at the University of Denver, under the direction of Dr. Alejandro Cerón. Authors: Sarah Alsharqi, Ryan Bell, Elinor Brereton (Graduate Teaching Assistant), Alexander Brewer-Fong, William Cassato, Kyle Cook, William Curry, Dominique Italiano, Matthew Marletta, Hanna Mikols, Katherine Paterson, Douglas Peterson, Nicholas Riggs, Connor Smith, Queen Wilkes, and Natalie Wuertz,

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Introduction

Throughout the interviews that were conducted for this project, many reoccurring themes arose. One of the main themes that was discovered was family dynamics. Family dynamics is expressed in the interactions that occur between family members, the composition of a family, and the way that it functions. In regards to a work-life balance in the DU community, family dynamics influences many other areas. These areas were identified as the sub-themes and relate to different aspects of family dynamics. The sub-themes identified were as follows: immigration status, independence, family bonding, gratitude, cultural values, outsourcing care, and partnership equality. These sub-themes affect family dynamics in unique ways.

Immigration status effects family dynamics in the context of a work/life balance through different areas of life. The immigration status brings challenges to family dynamics mainly as it relates to bringing different familial customs and leaving other family behind as resources for outsourcing care. Independence is defined as the ability of the parent or parents to take care of their children without relying on the help of others. Family bonding is the experience of the family spending quality time together and becoming closer. Through family bonding, families can create relationships that are mutually beneficial to all the members. Gratitude is showing thankfulness towards programs or people that help people maintain their work/life balance.

Cultural values inform family dynamics through beliefs, social norms, practices and meanings. The use of outside help to care for children is considered outsourcing care. Outsourced care has effects on family dynamics as they integrate other people and programs into family life. Partnership equality as a subtheme is defined as the sharing of responsibilities for those who care for the children.

The overarching theme of family dynamics is expressed through the different sub-themes and they in turn affects the work-life balance for a family. Family dynamics are increasingly important to understand the University of Denver community. The previously mentioned sub-themes of family dynamics are analyzed in quotes from the transcribed interviews in the following sections.

Immigration Status

As a parent working or studying at DU, immigration status plays a significant role in Family Dynamics. Moving to the US from another country comes with many challenges that a family will need to take on and attempt to overcome. These difficulties include language barriers, unfamiliar customs and traditions, and even political and socioeconomic shifts. Immigrant families will most likely have different cultural practices in their home and family make-up than those born in or long term residence of the United States.

After conducting several interviews with members of the DU community, we discovered that multiple individuals are familiar with difficulties related to immigration. One interviewee in particular revealed in their interview that their family was an immigrant family from Korea; "No, we don’t have any nannies or babysitters. We’re actually very unique because we are an immigrant family from Korea, so we try to raise our kids on our own..." The decision of whether to hire a nanny is one every family must consider at some point while raising a child. The background of the parents and how they themselves were raised impacts this decision heavily.

Another interviewee briefly touched on some challenges their family faces due to their immigrant status. This person expanded on a distinct difference between the cultures of their home country and that of the U.S: “… because I am from another country so I have an

international background, sometimes we do need to deal with the cultural differences. Like here the parents take care of the children/baby but in my home country we do rely on grandparents to take care of the baby most of the time." Through our interviews, we repeatedly found that the child rearing strategies and norms of other countries differ greatly from those in the U.S. Rather than discussing the more logistical difficulties that can arise from immigration, these interviewees focused on the cultural changes they have experienced. Both of these interviewees discuss how heavily their native cultures influence their opinions and likeliness to outsource childcare.

The last interviewee is an American citizen with an immigrant husband and exemplifies the experiences of immigrant families. She directly spoke about the issue of not having a local familial network to help raise their child: "My family is not in the area, and my husband, he's not from this country so his family are halfway around the world. So we don't have extended family here to support [us]." The loneliness many migrants experience when moving to a new country, even when coupled, can at times be incredibly difficult, especially when raising children.

These interviews illuminate stark differences between the United States and other countries. Immigrating certainly puts a strain on families, particularly on parents. The second and third quotes demonstrate how being away from one's native country complicates secondary care for a child. Both interviewees were either from another country or are married to someone from another country and because of this they are left with few direct family members to help care for their child. These difference in family's views of outsourcing care and ability to have extended family assist in child rearing impacts immigrant families' abilities to balance work and life.

Independence

Another subtheme of Family Dynamics is independence, which is the ability of a parent or parents to provide care for their children without outside help. Levels of independence vary, from a single parent with financial independence caring for the child in tandem with a childcare worker, or a family who does not believe in outsourcing childcare to a nanny and relies on their extended relatives instead. The definition of independence differs depending on the makeup or cultural values of the family. The way that independence is viewed within a family is important to understanding the way that family functions. By looking at different types of families and parents many insights can be learned about what it means to be independent as a family.

Throughout the interview process and transcription, most interviewees discuss some aspect of independence and how it impacts their family life and childcare. There are many ties between independence and partnership, as well as cultural differences between the importance placed on raising a family with help from the extended family and the importance placed on not outsourcing the childcare responsibilities to formal programs. This is seen in the quote from the immigrant family from Korea and the case where extended family is not close by. "No, we don't have any nannies or babysitters. We're actually very unique because we are an immigrant family from Korea, so we try to raise our kids on our own..." The values of different cultures depict a unique familial emphasis on independence. The t previous quote reflects the importance of cultural values and influences in independence. Some cultures view independence as not being reliant on outsourcing childcare responsibilities and parents solely raising their children. It is also seen that help from extended family in the area such as from grandparents is often perceived as beneficial and reliable in last minute scenarios. "Things have always worked out to where we

were always available for the children or when not possible my parents would be absolutely willing to step in and kind of take on that caretaker role." Evidently, many parents leave responsibilities to their partners which allows them to be independent from other aspects of childcare and family life. In a sense this creates a dependency, but a kind that is contributive and not hindering family life and identity.

Many people recognize that being completely independent from help is incredibly challenging. The common proverb "it takes a village to raise a child" highlights the American culture of raising children with more than one person. "Understanding that there's a, that I, I can't do everything myself. And so, we have to trust others. So, like my husband will help with lunches." Though there is a great deal of dependency between partners in many cases, they are still exhibiting independence when looking at the family unit as a whole. In other cases, though some parents were adamant about not having outside help, the majority of families rely on nannies or other forms of childcare. "Not really just the nanny. We don't have our relatives here. We have some friends that are good. They could assist us, but we live that far outside the margins so it's for something really important so it's not a frequent scenario." These quotes reveal that many people rely on a significant other, extended family, or other forms of outsources care, yet they each discuss the division of child care tasks as a way of retaining independence. Idealy, many people interviewed believed in the importance of being the primary care givers for their children and remaining independent from outside care: "We don't like leaving them with Anonymous (nanny) for too much of the day. We want to make sure that the girls have enough time with us." Some parents feel that having a nanny takes away from their connection with their children, however, other families see nannies as a necessity. Depending on the values,

socioeconomic status and habits of each family the idea of outside help for childcare responsibilities greatly changes.

Financial independence for some families presents pros and cons. There are some sacrifices, as there are in raising children in general, that are made clear when financial independency is assessed. "I was not the primary income earner in my household. That kind of had its pluses and negatives so we were able to hire sitters but I couldn't count on my husband to be home to do like a fair share of child care at all." The primary income earner usually spends less time with the children in the family, but contributes in other respects. If the primary income earner is also the only caregiver, this presents more challenges in the ability to be completely independent in respects of who takes care of the children.

The aforementioned quotes present how families are independent or try to be independent. In some cases, this means a single parent and other cases, this means that the parents provide all the care for the children and do not rely on outside help such as daycares. Some parents feel that their children spending a lot of time with nannies or other caregivers takes away from their bond with their child. Others view outside daycare as against their cultural beliefs. Single mothers try to be independent as much as possible, but this is also very difficult. The dynamics of families with single parents or dual parents is much different and independence has a different meaning between these households. It is interesting to see how families perceive childcare and this is one of the most important aspects of this theme. Some families view daycare and nannies as positive additions to raising their children, whereas some other people and cultures see this as a bad thing. Looking at family background is extremely important when assessing independence because it has so many different meanings and implications.

The multifaceted sub-theme of independence is best understood in multiple scenarios throughout the interviews. Through this acknowledgment of all the aspects of independence, a clearer image of the impact on family life is brought to light in many perspectives. Through cultural familial influences, partnership, and financial capabilities, a robust picture of independent childcare shows its effects on Family Dynamics. Understanding the different definitions of independence to individual families is important in understanding the overarching theme of Family Dynamics.

Family Bonding

Family bonding is an experience in which a family comes closer together by spending quality time together. Ideally the children in the family bond to their parents by looking up to them and viewing them as role models. However family bonding can be as simple as disciplining your kids, making food for them, or driving them to school/daycare. Finding this time is a constant struggle for many families who value spending quality time together. Some parents often need to give up more time at work/school, additional income, or accept the addition of a nanny/daycare to look after the children. Throughout all of the interviews, family bonding and the relationships within a developing family (one with children under 10 years old) played a massive role in the dynamics the parents were hoping to create within their family.

Many interviewees shared their struggle with logistically getting enough time with their children. For successful family bonding, it is imperative to build relationships within a family, and this can’t be done if the family is never together. "Me and my husband I guess, spouse, but not in the house during the week he is a graduate student in boulder for weekdays, but he helps out on the weekends." This family exists in an unusual scenario. One of the parents is a graduate

student in Boulder, CO, so he is unable to be at home to spend time with his family during the week. However, the quote explains that he comes home on the weekends to get some quality time with the children. This shows that there is a big spectrum as to how people handle their bond with their family and their balance of work and life. Every family will have challenges in front of them and their own unique route to creating relationships within the family will differ with the values they bring.

In many interviews, the concept of a nanny came up. "It's not important to us that we have work careers [where] we get to afford a nanny but we're missing out on having time with our own kids." This interviewee described their internal conflict between bringing in an income to support their family and outsourced care needs, while sacrificing time with their children in the process. Family bonding is about the family coming together and the balance between time at work and time with the child is important for these particular parents. This balance speaks to values of individual parents; their careers and their family bonding. This balance appeared as a source of conflict for many interviewees, some of whom opted to stay at home to raise their children instead of having the entirety of their wages syphoned off to outsourced care.

Certain parents opened up their idea of family bonding to include extended family members. One of the interviews displays this perfectly, "I don't want them to be like bonded to some person who's gonna come in and out You know? Like that. This developing time with their grandparents is a good thing. Um, so I don't feel as guilty (laughs), when I'm at work, as I would if they were with a nanny. I don't think I could've emotionally and financially, I couldn't have done it with a nanny." Clearly the interviewee did not want to outsource their day care with nannies because they didn't want their kids to get used to, and influenced by, people coming and going. Instead of acquiring nannies these parents used their child's grandparents. This way the

kids are bonding with someone in their family, and parents are still able to accomplish their work and personal responsibilities outside of the home.

Family dynamics appeared in the interviews in several different ways, especially in the decision to balance time/income with work and outsourced care. For those who worked to support the cost of outsourced care, they were able to fufil their work and personal responsibilities but expressed guilt over missing time with their children. A compromise mentioned by some interviews was to extend the care to other family members in order to ensure familial bonding while simultaneously fulfilling their other responsibilities.

Gratitude

After reviewing several interviews, a definition has been derived for how gratitude is being displayed in this ethnographic project. Gratitude has been seen in situations where the interviewee is thankful for the company and help of their spouse. Having a second person that is available to take care of the child while the other parent is unable to has shown to be a crucial part of why some interviewees are grateful. There have also been instances in which interviewees expressed gratitude for the lack of judgment passed by coworkers when they must leave work due to a family emergencies.

One of the underlying sub themes within gratitude was gratitude for the interviewee's spouse. The following quote speaks to this aspect of gratitude: "I think making sure that we work with each other since there are two of us raising the children. So we are very thankful for that. I think about that a lot in terms of people that are a single parent. So I think it's just working with each other the best we can and so that everyone can sort of have their time." The interviewee is expressing gratitude for the help of her spouse in managing her work/life balance by sharing the

work load at home. Another interviewee expressed this same various of gratitude when speaking about her husband who is away at school during the week: “Well I mean he’s in grad school right now. So like all week he’s in labs and classes and on the weekends he’ll come in on Friday night and he’ll take care of everything all weekend. You know, with the kids and house and dog and car. So that’s a huge help.” Another quote was chosen due to the fact that the interviewee speaks about her husband being a crucial part of the support network that helps her maintain a good work/life balance. “I never had any of my kids in childcare or daycare. I don’t know how that even works. It’s also very expensive, so my family has always helped: my brothers, I have two brothers, my mom, my aunt, my husband, everybody who’s available.” While analyzing the theme of gratitude that was prevalent in the interviews, a specific gratitude for spousal help was seen as a recurring pattern. Gratitude for one’s spouse usually insinuated an interviewee was having an easier time balancing their work and life responsibilities than those interviewees without that spousal support.

Another part of gratitude that was seen was social support. Social support means the support one receives from others outside of their spouse. One interviewee said, “I have a large support system. I think that’s the main thing. That helps me to maintain both work and what is family/work balance. So, having that support system and network of just family, friends, who are always helping.” The interviewee is clearly grateful for their friends and family due to the fact that they help her greatly in maintaining their work/life balance. For those interviewees whos extended family were far away or non existant, many relied of their network of friends to help them: “My friends are super helpful. My daughter is a little old for day care and that stuff. I for sure used day care a lot when she was younger but now she just goes to school all day so that makes it easier. My friends are great with her, I have them babysit sometimes.”

A final aspect of gratitude that was seen came from a lack of judgment from coworkers. One interviewee said, "I think people in general are super supportive at DU and I think that's really helpful. Whether or not they have children, they all kind of understand that life happens." This lack of judgement from co-workers was understood to encompass times when interviewees had to leave work or reschedule meetings in order to take care of their children. This lack of judgment allowed parents to navigate both spheres of their responsibilities without adding an additional stressor of colleague disapproval. .

Gratitude for spousal support, social support, and co-worker understanding all appeared as aspects of gratitude in the interviews. Spousal and social support allowed interviewees to better balance their work responsibilities because other networks were able to provide care for their children. The same is true in the inverse for the gratitude of co-workers; their understanding allowed interviewees to take care of their home responsibilities without feeling that their work responsibilities were not being handled. Gratitude was derived from situations where the interviewee was thankful for external support in their lives. If this support was not present, the interviewees would not be able to maintain a good work/life balance.

Cultural Values

Cultural values are the social norms, beliefs, meanings, and practices that inform Family Dynamics. They set the standards for how family members interact, what they can expect from one another. During our interviews, the subjects often reflected on their cultural values in relation to child rearing and their work/life balance.

One of the first instances that came up occurred when an interviewee began talking about the hardships that she faces and how her husband and her cope. After calling raising kids

"meditation" she continued, "So that's one way it's kind of like a practice it's getting-getting to be better people. That's how we deal with it." The way that an interviewee rationalized the struggles that she faced while raising children was that it was a practice in becoming a better person by serving someone other than one's self. This rationalization reflects an assumption in American culture that a parent's identity comes from dedication to their child. Children often become the center of a familial unit that expands to the extended family.

This valuation of children does not always expand past family, and institutions may not place employee's children in such an esteemed position. Though an interviewee's coworkers at DU are extremely accepting of the needs of her children, she recalled, "at my previous institution it was a Mid-Western institution and it was far less acceptable to mention kids or have kids be in your life at all. So I do have a sense that academia isn't really comfortable with it yet my department has been really friendly and bringing their own kids to you know, the end of year faculty gathering or whatever you know it is." Traveling through different institutions, the interviewee noticed that the cultural valuation of children was vastly different in-between schools/ regions. In the East Coast, talking about children in the workplace was extremely taboo as well as in another mid-western institution. This impacted her ability to take time off for family emergencies and made her work/life balance more difficult.

One of the cultural values that an interviewee viewed as having a profound effect in the workplace is gender. She speculated, "I think there's a residual gender thing where it was the dads who were the professors so they never had that problem, they had a wife at home so it's a gender thing." Cultural values inform gender roles, which an interviewee explained, have a significant effect on the socio-economic expectations of professors. She argued that because the cultural awareness of the demands of being a parent and working as a professor had not caught

up with the reality, that mothers and fathers alike are now both working and raising kids, professors are unduly being expected to have the resources to raise kids with very little support.

As mentioned before cultural values are the social norms, beliefs, meanings, and practices that inform Family Dynamics. Some of these aspects that families form do not translate well into maintaining a work/life balance. The cultural values that some families form do not always match up with the culture of a working environment. The crossroad of the workplace environment and raising children is inseparable from cultural values because both areas are so integral to the social functioning of communities and families.

Outsourcing care

One of the themes our group found is outsourcing care, which is when parents seek help from someone to help care for their children. This can involve grandparents, family members, relatives, or nannies, In cases where parents are separated and live in different homes, seeking help from the other parent could also apply as a form of outsourcing care.

Today parents usually both have responsibilities in their workplace, meaning many parents are both in full-time jobs, due to higher economic demands. As a result, they often spend most of their time at their places of work. Many of those parents then necessarily have less time with their children, and less time to provide childcare. In response to this, outsourcing care has become increasingly popular for many families. After conducting this research we came up with two distinct categories that are most common amongst parents for outsourcing care; family reliance and paid agencies.

Some people work near their families and may have relatives near them who can assist them in child care while parents are at work. To these people, childcare centers were considered

to be too expensive and unnecessary thanks to their familial support. One interviewee explained: "My husband's sister Sandy is living in town She is really nice and we are very close …. I don't see how people would do it if they were new to the city and they don't have that support network." Our data indicates a high reliance on family members and close relatives, as childcare centers are getting more expensive and less available due to large waiting lists. Another interviewee discussed these high expenses, saying,

> "(laughs) yes, definitely we had to pay for childcare, very expensive especially because they were all back to back.…Basically if you were doing a little bit better [than the poverty line]…the state thinks that you don't need help financially…so in order to continue in the program either my husband and I had to split up, and then if we were to separate I would have to file child support against him, just to get help from the state."

It is difficult to get in such programs, as our interviewee shared, in the first place. And once in, continuing with the high costs provide impossible. She later explained that her parents moved closer to them, and they rely one hundred percent on them with taking care of their children now.

However many of our interviewees do not have the comfort of close family members who live near their homes, and those individuals will often resort to hiring a private nanny, or enroll their children in childcare centers: "Um, we hire a private nanny who comes to our house. Yeah, we couldn't get in the childcare here at DU. They have a lottery system which was really frustrating because that would be the perfect scenario for us to have her here. So that would be um. You know when I was first hired here I was told that DU offers childcare, so I was assuming ok there would be no problem." This interviewee shared the struggle of getting into the DU childcare center, which would be ideal for an employee of the University. This frustration has been consistent throughout our interviews. Being unable to get into Fisher forced families to outsource other child care in other ways: "Not really just the nanny. We don't have our relatives here." This was a common response. When staying at home or utilizing the University's

childcare was not an option, most families outsource care to nannies or other childcare programs in the city.

From the observations, we can conclude that work responsibilities are forcing many individuals to outsource their childcare. This may mean extended family and friends, nannies, or formal childcare programs. Because of this demand for outsourcing care, many parents have less time with their children and their work/life balance becomes slightly skewed.

Partnership Equality

Within the overarching theme of Family Dynamics lies a sub-theme entitled Partnership Equality. Partnership is defined as the allocation of childcare, housework, and income earning responsibilities between the interviewee and their spouse. In some families, especially single mother households, this may also include the participation of other adults such as grandparents, boyfriends, ex-spouses, and babysitters. Many interviewees acknowledged that sharing childcare and housework duties is a necessity to maintaining a good work/life balance, but the way that families approach this varies. The equality of these partnerships is determined by how much time each parent contributes to these three tasks and how equal the parents feel their partnership is. For example, a partnership may be balanced even if one partner does the majority of childcare and housework because the other partner takes on the responsibility of money-making for the family.

One defining characteristic of a partnership is the need for a source of income for the family. This income can be generated by one partner or by both. Given that the concept of the single earner household has been highly contested in the area of partnership equality, our research attempts to introduce another perspective to the issue. In American culture, the ideal

family consists of a breadwinning father and a homemaking mother. Nevertheless, recent social and economic changes have led to an increase in "non-traditional" American families, and many have begun to question the equality and feasibility of single earner households. However one must not simply go off of assumptions, but also consider whether the partners see their relationship and allocation of tasks as equal.

It is important to note that our qualitative research limits our ability to represent partnership equality with quantitative data such as the distribution of work hours per week. For the purpose of our study however we will assume that these partnerships are equal, as reported, and focus our analysis on the ways in which partners divide up responsibilities and tasks.

A key attribute of single income households is evident in the interview of one interviewee whose spouse is a surgeon. In the interview she states, "I would say that in a month he probably does maybe one pickup. So, I probably do more than 90% of the pickups and drop-offs." She goes on to say that her spouse leaves for work at 4 am every day and arrives back home at 7pm. Their partnership has established a way of sharing responsibilities whereby one partner focuses on generating income for the family and the other on household duties and childcare. This is their negotiation of equal partnership. In another interview, a male interviewee mentioned that it is difficult to find ways to designate tasks, yet "it is helpful that my wife only works part time so she takes care of our daughter for most of the day while I am in class or doing work." From both of these examples one can see that the flexibility of the mother's time is imperative when the father's work schedule is demanding and inflexible.

In contrast, many other interviewees said they and their spouse split up childcare, housework, and income earning responsibilities evenly. This situation is common where both partners have jobs, thus requiring both partners to participate in childcare and housework as well.

One parent described it as “teamwork” with her spouse, "my husband and I tag team everything. You know one works on dinner and one works on bed-time we both work on um you know getting them out of the door in the morning (chuckles)... it’s totally a joint effort." In another interview, an interviewee stated, “So my husband is really hands on. Like it’s, I have no complaint about that. He’s always taking care of our child so we do have this equal partnership.” In both of these cases the interviewee clearly appreciates their partner’s contributions not only to income earning activities but also to housework and childcare responsibilities.

Another key feature of dual earner households is the need for parents to alternate childcare shifts. It seems that many parents distribute childcare and housework much like one does when running a relay race. As the mother returns home from work, her husband grabs the torch, leaving the children with her and running off to work. As one interviewee pointed out, she and her husband wanted to take care of the children themselves and therefore had to adjust their schedules creatively. She explained, “[s]o he has switched his work schedule around so that I am here sort of when I need to be in the daytime and then he's working and then I go home and then he goes out and works.” This allocation of responsibilities throughout the day likely permits these parents to achieve a better work/life balance.

The characteristics of single mother households have increasingly become an area of interest in the subject of work/life balance. With this family dynamic, there is one parent who serves as the sole caregiver, homemaker, and income earner of the family. In order to maintain a form of balance in the midst of these demands, single mothers often partner with an ex-husband, boyfriend, extended family member, or nanny. In these cases, the focus is less on a partnership between two people, but rather on the mother’s partnership with a village of people who help her with childcare and housework duties. One single mother mentioned the ways in which her ex-

husband and boyfriend help take care of her daughter. “She is with me the majority of the time. She usually sleeps at my house and all that stuff. But her dad is in Denver too so they spend a bunch of time together especially when I’m busy.” The interviewee goes on to say that having her boyfriend live with her and her daughter has also been a helpful support system. Another interviewee stated, “I’m a single mother so I have a lot of people helping me while I’m in class or working,” pointing to the ways in which single mothers partner with a multitude of people within their community to achieve a better balance between work and childcare duties.

In summary there are three types of partner equality strategies that parents employ. The first and least common is the “ideal American family” where the father is the primary income earner and the mother is the primary caregiver. Nevertheless, most interviewees that fall under this category still feel that they have equal partnerships because responsibilities are allocated in a balanced and specialized way. In many cases, the father’s job has extremely demanding work hours that prohibited him from participating in childcare and housework related tasks. The second and most common strategy is employed by parents where both have income earning jobs. In these partnerships, the strategy consists of dividing up housework, childcare, and income earning activities equally between partners. In these instances, both partners take on tasks within the home often while the other partner is at work and then switching off. Lastly, single mothers take on a third strategy of partnership in order to manage primary income duties with childcare and housework responsibilities. They do so by utilizing non-traditional partnerships with ex-husbands, boyfriends, family members, and nannies to maintain a good work/life balance. All in all, the majority of these partnerships are seen as equal by the partners themselves and each family type strives to allocate tasks in a way permits a healthy work/life balance.

Subgroup: staff

In reference to this project, "staff" are a particular interviewee group that expresses a different set of commitments and circumstances in relation to childcare than the faculty and student interviewees. This was seen through their relatively adaptive positions and unique workplace dynamics which puts them in situations that are unique to their employment status.

We found three categories distinctly associated with staff for this project; "blurred" work boundaries, issues of job insecurity, and flexible work schedules. Staff reported that their work/life balance was more "blurred" than other interviewees because it is often more acceptable to bring home life into the work space. This included bringing children to their offices and often having to leave abruptly for family emergencies such as a sick child or a parent/teacher conference. In the same respect, it is common for staff to bring their work responsibilities home, often finishing up projects while away from their office, as they are often have more self-defined deadlines. This makes it more difficult to separate home life and work life leading to the "blurred" work boundaries category that was observed by interviewers.

Another component unique to the staff interviews was the fear or hesitation of speaking critically of DU policies due to lack of permanency in staff positions. This observation was more sub-textual and viewed by the interviewing team rather than direct quotes from interviews. It is assumed that this is because most DU staff do not have the same tenured positions or more permanent work status as faculty and therefore would not want to risk their positions by speaking critically about things such as the short maternity leaves and lack of access to Fischer daycare center. They would rather seek alternative child care options than advocate for more satisfactory one's through the University due to this fear of work repercussions or even losing their position altogether.

The scheduling of both the staff and the staff's partner was also important as their level of flexibility determined how the staff distributes child care responsibilities in their everyday life. Though this is not uncommon among other interviewees, staff reported more flexibility than was observed by other interviewees. Because so much of their work/life balance is "blurred," they are able to take on more household responsibilities than a faculty or student who may have a more set and rigid schedule with a less child-friendly work environment.

Family Dynamics Conclusion

Family dynamics, meaning the many internal-familial relationships that derive from cultural, financial, and work and life obstacles, is an essential theme for this ethnographic study. Because the goal of our project is to better understand the relationship between personal life and work responsibilities for parents within different departments of the University of Denver, understanding commonalities and problems that permeate through "family dynamics" will is an extremely important part of this study. After analyzing the preliminary steps of the research process as a group, our section broke "family dynamic" down into 7 different subthemes: immigration status, independence, family bonding, gratitude, cultural values, outsourcing care, and partnership equality. All 7 of these subthemes held major importance for our primary project goal of understanding the relationship between work and personal life.

Any small variable in a given family's dynamics can have a major effect on the way they go about their everyday life in terms of balancing the family and the professional parts of life. Immigration status is one of these variables that have a profound effect on the problems that an immigrant family may encounter. Besides the direct problems posed to immigrants from United State's legislation and immigration laws, immigration status has a serious influence in day-to-

day family life, as seen through beliefs on appropriate childcare resources and the absence of close extended family. In conclusion, it is extremely important for an institution like DU to understand a worker, student, or faculty's immigration status to provide them with necessary social and personal assistance.

Allowing a family to operate as they prefer fosters their ability to maintain "independence," which is our next subtheme within "family dynamics." Cultural factors and money seem to be the biggest indicators behind a given family's independence. For some families, having greater income has enabled them to find good childcare services for their infant, giving them a greater degree of independence in comparison to a poorer family with parent(s) working more hours a week, giving them less free time to. Other families, like the Korean immigrant family example used throughout this theme, have cultural preconceptions born from their childhood experiences that sway them away from resources like nannies or babysitters. A given family's independence, whether born from cultural or financial preconditions, are very important to understanding the families involved in our study.

Family bonding is an overlooked subtheme in family dynamics that is extremely important for a family's emotional and fundamental growth. Simple, everyday interactions between parents and their children have resounding effects on the growth and maturity of all family members, and difficulty in balancing work and life responsibilities can make these vital familial interactions hard to come by. In the example interview in the family bonding section, we see how a family with a grad-student father has trouble making time for these family moments, leaving the work load on his wife throughout the week. A lack of positive family bonding can have serious negative effects on the family and the personal growth of each individual member, which is a concept that should be regularly considered within academic institutions.

Gratitude, which is our next subtheme, is the result of being able to practice a positive work/family life balance. The subjects in our study exhibited gratitude for many different life experiences, from being thankful for being able to spend time with their family, to being grateful that their child was able to enter a childcare program when others were not. The most important aspect of understanding "gratitude," then, is understanding why some subjects lacked gratitude, and therefor displayed frustrations with the university. A major reoccurring theme was frustration with not being able to get into the DU daycare facility, and if we break down commonalities like this we can begin to highlight the weaknesses employees identified in regard to DUs support of their work/life balance.

"Cultural values," our next subtheme, are very important to understand when analyzing the way a family reacts to certain support systems the university offers. A major commonality between the subjects who had systematic problems with the school was the fact that they were interacting with a system that wasn't sympathetic to the family's cultural needs. For example, some subjects came from a culture where using a babysitter or child support is seen as bad parenting, leaving them vulnerable to the American society that doesn't share the same social and cultural viewpoints. If any institution like DU wants to move forward and progress toward a better employee support system, it will need to recognize the cultural differences in their labor force and try and appeal to their needs.

Our next subtheme, "outsourcing care," highlights many issues that permeate between many other subthemes within "family dynamics". Not only does idea of outsourced care fit directly into the discussion of cultural norms, it also has direct implications as to how a given family manages to balance their time and work-life responsibilities. Some subjects revealed problems simply trying to enter systems of child support where they could outsource some of the

necessary care, and others simply rejected the idea based on cultural and social dispositions. Overall, this subtheme was extremely revealing of certain problems evident in our institution's current system.

"Partnership equality," our final subtheme is very important for understanding how many familial problems begin in the domestic setting. It highlighted the importance of distributing specific roles between parents and other care givers. This subtheme not only showed the significance of work responsibility and how it creeps into regular family-life, but it also highlighted the importance of supporting faculty and other employees who are operating within a one-parent household. This subgroup is very vulnerable – especially when trying to balance care for a child under the age of 10 – and they should be a top priority for institutions like DU moving forward.

Overall, Family Dynamics is extremely important for understanding where many of the familial problems we are trying to address in this study come from. Moving forward, DU needs to continue the investigation of each one of the subthemes presented with family dynamics, and continue learning how they can further support of the vulnerable subgroups highlighted above.

Perceptions About Work-Family Balance

Among DU Community Members

With Young Children

CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY – WINTER 2017

SECTION 3: Personal Challenges

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to the faculty, staff, and students at the University of Denver for sharing their thoughts, opinions, and experiences through their interview responses.

This report was prepared by students from the Winter 2017 Introduction to Cultural Anthropology class at the University of Denver, under the direction of Dr. Alejandro Cerón. Authors: Tristan Andersen, Logan Bell, Will Buchman, Taylor Chinitz, Sam Churches, Piper Friedman, Samantha Hagan (Graduate Teaching Assistant), Elizabeth Hamilton, Henry Hardy, Melissa Jackels, Mckenna Medina, Braden Neihart, Angelica Pacheco, Sam Rickenbaugh, Jack Rohr, Stormer Santana, Jenni Sides, Caitlin Smith, and Justin Wilhelm.

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Introduction

After carefully reviewing several interviews with DU community members, it can be concluded that there are many personal challenges that affect the families of the University of Denver community. In the end there are eight personal challenges found to be common throughout the interviews. These challenges affected each family in a similar matter but each family handled them differently.

The first item to address is the theme of Boundaries. In the interviews some interviewees specifically stated they made boundaries between family life, work and recreation. These boundaries are in place so parents do not have overlapping duties depending on their current activity. However, in the modern era with increasing technology it is hard for parents to get away from their work. Today most people have smartphones or laptops where they can receive emails and notifications from all over the world. At the University of Denver it is hard for a professor to get away from work if work is always in their pocket. It creates yet another struggle of how to set boundaries.

An additional aspect was the theme of control where parents would struggle to control their work life, family life, and even social life. Some interviewees were more stressed about this point than others, but they all wish to maintain order over their respective tasks. Control also goes along the line of the Time Management theme. This theme came up in almost every interview, where the parents would struggle to figure out how to handle the healthy work/life balance. In many cases where both spouses worked, it became harder to find more family time and more frequent to have someone other than a parent watch their children.

There was also a personal challenge of Transportation among the parents that were interviewed. Since the interviewees had very young children, most of them complained about the transportation situation for their children to get to school. Drop off and pick up times were hard with work hours and it became difficult to find carpools or nannies to watch their children. This is a difficult problem because parents have to organize transportation, work schedules, and many other things around each other.

A big concern for many families was their financial balance. It is very expensive to raise a child today in America and this is proven by the financial stress in families and the increase in number of households where both parents are working full-time. In some interviews there was a discussion about job salaries and how some institutions do not provide enough child support services, or affordable services.

We found differences in how student parents struggled compared to faculty and staff. This group may have the most personal challenges, where the student parent must study, work, and raise a child so time management is extremely important. Raising a family and working or going to school at the same time has many challenges, but the key to success is balancing them.

Home Challenges

Organization

Being able to stay organized is one personal challenge that many students, faculty, and staff experience while working at the University of Denver. Staying organized is needed in order to maintain happiness and reduce stress. Most interviewees explain that their ability to stay organized is about having an established system or way of doing things to prevent chaos. Being organized helps when times get tough and also helps to prevent mistakes in the future. Their ability to stay organized relies heavily on and directly correlates with their ability to manage time. Furthermore, staying organized within the context of family dynamics consists of being aware of all situations within the family. For example, who is going where, how they are getting there, who they will be with, how long they will be there for, and many other moving parts related to the family. Here are some examples of parents at DU staying organized with an established schedule or laid out plan.

This quote demonstrates and explains the importance of a calendar as a tool to help working parents stay organized. It also shows that staying organized under their circumstances is done by planning days or even months ahead. It also illustrates that organization is not only used to plan the parent's life, but the child's life as well. "I have like a family calendar that helps me coordinate kids schedules and then my work schedule, meetings, just different things that I need to prioritize throughout the day, and like every day and even months away."

The next quote demonstrates a different side of organization by suggesting that without enough time, being organized can be difficult precisely because it includes scheduling beforehand. When circumstances change, it can be difficult to make those plans ahead of time. This professor goes as far as to say that Google Calendar is their best friend to demonstrate how working parents rely heavily on calendars to stay organized.

> "Um, so our schedule. That's probably the hardest part. The days I have class and Denver Public Schools is out of school. With enough notice, I can schedule so that my husband will take them skiing or something like that. So, because I have to be here...Google Calendar is our best friend, because, like you can sync up everybody's calendar in the house."

This example describes a personal schedule and how the use of a planner is extremely important when trying to stay organized.

> "I try to get sleep. I am a much happier person when I sleep. Kiddos can disrupt sleep a lot though so I don't always have a lot of control over it but I try to go to bed around 10 every night and wake up at 6. I try to exercise when I can by either walking to work or biking, but that can sometimes be hard in the winter. Yes, I use a planner."

Finally, this excerpt provides a new insight aside from the other three quotes. The respondent confirms the use of a "schedule" of some sort but explains further that it is not the hardest part about the work/life balance. Rather, this quote suggests that the uncontrollable/unchangeable obstacles that come with working at DU are far more difficult.

> "Oh yeah, um I just mean that its really easy for me to block out my schedule. Like I can have two or three days a where I have class. Or I could take all night classes or all morning classes. So that is so nice. It's not really the scheduling that I have a hard time with, it's the work. I can totally take care of my daughter and work a little and be in classes. But it's the homework and the group meetings and stuff that kills me. It's really hard to make time for that stuff. Especially when I am home. But I make it work."

All four quotes rely on some sort of tool, whether it be a planner or a calendar to stay organized, as well as having an established predetermined schedule that they try and follow as closely as possible in order to stay organized. A planner is a great way to be able to write down the entire family's schedule, and keep important reminders. Organization is a personal challenge that many students, faculty, and staff have to overcome.

Boundaries

Many of the interviewees involved in the project cited their ability to set boundaries or compartmentalize as one of their most important tools in parenting while working. Broadly, we can identify the sub-theme of boundaries as a means of separating work life and home life. The sub-theme of Boundaries is present in nearly every interview transcript. In fact, some interviewees went as far as to say that setting boundaries and compartmentalizing time are their most valuable strategies for maintaining work/life balance.

Setting boundaries is an absolutely vital part of juggling many different tasks and responsibilities. This technique is especially invaluable for working parents, who not only have a variety of chores, tasks, and responsibilities, but who also have to behave differently at work and at home. They must be professional and productive at work, while at home they have to be good role models for their children, while still leaving time for some rest

and relaxation. In this, compartmentalization is an invaluable tool. By completely separating work from home, parents of the DU community can get all their work done while in "work mode" and can easily transition to a different state while at home, one that allows them to parent and get their housework done. Another service that setting boundaries can provide for parents in the DU community is the fact that it can help to reduce stress. By not bringing work home, parents can focus on spending quality time with their kids. Below are some quotes and examples of students, teachers, and faculty discussing their boundaries.

A professor sets boundaries in the following manner,

> "I love teaching, I love reading, I love that stuff, and it all requires time so I constantly feel the tension between, either on a daily basis or a weekly basis, trying to find when can I really devote time and be present at home and not be distracted with work. So I get up at 5:30 and leave by 7:00 so I can get things done."

This quote is a great example of setting a boundary to make time for oneself and personal interests aside from work. They explain that they wake up early and get to work so they have a sufficient amount of time to get things done and therefore are not working constantly at home. That is a great strategy, and although it may not be pleasant to have to wake up that early to get in some extra work, they can give their full attention at home. Another professor describe boundaries and his struggle to spend time with his children in the following quote,

> "Umm... (sighs). I guess the biggest thing (challenge) is to... when I am home with my kids and not working or on the clock to not be looking at my phone checking emails… Umm unless I know I am expecting something, uh but what I do is not

> life threatening (laughs) so um I feel like I have set up good parameters to stop the clock when I leave here and not be working when I am at home and paying attention to my family."

This quote was eye opening. It is true in terms of what they said about their job not being life threatening. Work can wait sometimes, especially if you are off the clock, and it is easy to see that they are putting importance on making that boundary between home time, and work.

Many professors also critiqued email heavily for making it difficult to separate work and personal life. A professor said,

> "Uh, the invention of email is probably the single worst thing that has happened to academia in terms of work life balance. So, it's very good, I think, for professor-student communication, but it's really hard to work-life balance, uh, because uh... In previous epics at the university and when I was in university 25 years ago, uh 24 years ago, uh professors would have office hours. Uh, they would be very standard, it would often times be four to eight hours per week. They would be in their office and you would go see them. And that was your communication. Uh, you didn't, you would never call them, uh, say after hours. And you certainly would never, there was no email, but you wouldn't even have thought of that. So I think faculty had it a little easier in terms of student relations and maintaining a work life balance."

This quote illustrates how vital setting boundaries can be, and how emails have proven to be a challenge that the interviewees face when trying to compartmentalize work life and home life. Emails threaten the boundaries that DU faculty, staff, and students put in place in order to maintain work life balance.

Emails

According to class data, emails are an important but also stressful part of the population here at the University of Denver. Emails require people to take time away from their family and other leisure activities in order to reply. Often emails can easily pile up, which can cause an increase in stress and anxiety. This can cause bad moods as well as not being able to keep up with other important parts of life, for example, household chores and taking care of kids. Professional emails also take time to formulate before being sent. In addition to formulating an email, sending a grammatically correct email can be stressful as well. There are many factors that play into emails, and one major factor is the Internet. If there is no Internet, then emails cannot be sent.

This quote shows how emails can dramatically change lives, how efficient they can be, and how communication is different from person to person. This quote is from a faculty member of DU and shows how they despise the amount of time that is taken away from them for just replying to emails. In the past, they explain how people use to be more social with each other, and how professors are now sending emails instead of just walking two doors down to say something.

> "Uh, the invention of email is probably the single worst thing that has happened to academia in terms of work life balance. So, it's very good, I think, for professor-student communication, but it's really hard to work-life balance, uh, because uh... In previous epics at the university and when I was in university 25 years ago, uh 24 years ago, uh professors would have office hours. Uh, they would be very standard, it would often times be four to eight hours per week. They would be in their office and you would go see them. And that was your communication. Uh, you didn't, you would never call them, uh, say after hours. And you certainly would never, there was no email, but you wouldn't even have thought of that. So I think faculty had it a little easier in terms of student relations and maintaining a work life balance."

The next quote is a great example of how a professor has been able to manage their time. It also gives an example of a strategy to spend more quality time with their family. "I'm not sure if you noticed, but I just won't email you back if it's past 5pm, um, I won't read that until I get in at 8 o'clock in the morning..."

They were able to create a system that improves his/her life and gives them the ability to focus on themselves and their family outside of work. The mind is not always thinking about the emails that are pouring in and there is no more worry about having to constantly reply to emails.

The last quote gives an example of how another professor has been able to adapt to the world of emails in order to keep themselves under a certain amount work time. He/she will limit their students from sending them any emails and have the students reach out to other resources in order to get help. This professor also makes sure that they don't spend too much time with anything, even when it comes to their own kids. If they feel that they are spending too much time with their kids, they will make them do tasks, such as cleaning their rooms, to allow him/her to reply to emails.

> "Right, so in general I'm aiming for keeping teaching below 50 hours a week. Right, so that's 25 hours for your class and 25 for their class. And if it gets significantly over that limit, I try to make an effort to try to make you guys not email me all the time or make these guys go to office hours of TA's right. Things like that. Or conversely, if my kids are taking significantly more time than I deem appropriate, then I um, you know, make them go clean their rooms or stuff. You get it?"

In conclusion, we have found that emails take much needed time away from both home life and work life. Whether it is to reply or to create an email, it still requires people to take time away from their family. With these interviews, our findings shed a new light on how

professors who work at the University of Denver have shown how emails have impacted their lives.

External Challenges

Control

Control was a theme that appeared consistently while students analyzed their transcripts. These transcripts were a result of interviews conducted with people whose primary association with DU was a student, faculty member, or a staff member with a child under the age of 10. The definition of control is the power within an individual to conduct or direct one's personal actions as well as influence the behaviors of those around them. Control can also be viewed as the direct handling and manipulating toward a desired result. Quotes taken from these interviews reflect this viewpoint.

The three quotes below, taken from three interviews, show that the theme control was prevalent in a multitude of interviews. There is a need for control in different aspects of the interviewees' lives. They need to be able to separate work and family to an extent.

> "I think the biggest thing is to be present where you are. And when I am at work I try to be completely focused on my players and my team and what we're doing at work, and when I'm home I try to focus on my husband and my kid's um and try not to let the two blend in as much as possible"

On the contrary, there needs to be a time that you can let go of control and allow for your children and family to grow. "You have to kind of, I can't hyper control every part of what they are doing too, and they need that time to try things and have it not work"

Control, like many other things involved with raising a family, does not come in the blink of an eye. There needs to be a lot of practice and building of family relationships and dynamic before control really clicks into a family. "…There is a huge learning curve like time management…we had a lot of control on that (being able to do whatever they wanted at whatever time they wanted) …before and it's not like that anymore…" The first quote exemplifies how important it is to maintain control over different aspects of life. This specific interviewee mentions how it is important to not only perform well in both aspects of their life, but also make sure work stays at work. This provides this interviewee the ability to stay focused in the situation they are in, and control it when necessary.

The second interviewee shows that while control is important, sometimes letting go of control is necessary to have better family dynamics. By letting go of control the interviewee benefits their own life as well their children's, giving them the ability to make decisions for themselves, while giving the parent time to do their own things. The interviewee's last quote shows that control, whether it be of your life or another's, is something that can be practiced. Working to gain the insight into when it is appropriate to increase or decrease your control over a situation can be a valuable tool not only for yourself, but for those around you. Control or lack thereof is an important challenge faced by parents in the DU community.

Financial Balance

There are many things that go into being financially stable and balanced while still being able to take care of other aspects of your life. Financial balance is what

keeps most families going, it is primarily what allows people to get food and other necessities for life.

In the context of DU, financial balance determines how well a person may care for their child, what they will be able to give to their children, and what kinds of things they can do as a family. Finance plays a big role in the care of a child in terms of handling basic needs or in extras such as having a nanny or day-care. Not everything in regard to caring for a child revolves around money, but it does play a distinct role in the free time and stress caregivers may have. Some of those interviewed were not as worried about money and were able to talk more freely about other things regarding the care and upbringing of the child. Other parents and caregivers, however, felt that there was a great burden on them because they did not have as much money readily available, causing more stress.

Many of the students and the faculty of DU have expressed their frustration at the cost of childcare and how much support they are or are not getting from DU.

> "Professors used to be much better paid from the normal salaries that used to be out there in the world so I think the idea of not being able to afford childcare has not really caught up with academia certainly the administration has not- we can't POSSIBLY pay for childcare on our salary."

Those interviewed have expressed their frustration with the fact that it has become more expensive and there is little that DU itself offers to the students and faculty to accommodate their lives as parents.

Many of the student parents spoke about the fact that getting a job and being able to do things outside of school is becoming more difficult while supporting their family. Although they see that there needs to be a change in the financial state of their lives, they

cannot seem to find an easy, stress-free way of doing that. The more difficult the job market gets, the more difficult it is to support a family.

> "I think that a lot childcare takes effect before you're hired they talk about leaky pipelines and there are a lot of leaks to tenure and there's a leak to associate professor but I think there's a huge leak of people who don't get jobs to begin with who had kids in grad school or right after especially as the job market becomes more difficult."

With the ever-changing job market, it gets increasingly harder to find a job that is financially stable and that makes it easy to raise a child. It is the same for students who are having issues with finding a job that pays well enough to let them support their family.

It is important to have a proper balance, not only for students, but faculty as well. There is a wide range of things that can upset that balance and throw everything else out of order, making life more difficult. Financial balance is seen differently among the various interviews: stress levels, option of day-care or a nanny, and time spent with family are a few examples. Those who do not have strong financial balance appear to be more stressed and do not have access to day-care or a nanny and spend less time with family. Finances affect how one is able to raise their children and support their family. There are many struggles involved in family life and finance is a prominent one. It is important that a family does not feel overwhelmed with the state of their finances, in order to raise a child in a happy lifestyle.

Issues Common to Students at DU

Throughout the course of our interviews we found that there were stark differences between student parents and faculty or staff parents. Students were found to encounter far

more obstacles and difficulties when adapting to being a parent. This group of students that were interviewed was broken up into undergraduate and graduate students. When analyzing these two subgroups we were able to differentiate several challenges between the two when raising a child. Within these subgroups, several subthemes were found. These consisted of time management, experience and flexibility.

Time management was found to be the most consistent theme between the two subgroups. Both groups had to balance the responsibilities of raising a child while also attending classes and working. The lack of ability to freely choose a range of times for classes, as well as a lack of registration priority, seemed like the largest conflict for student-parents. Undergraduate parents claimed to enjoy a bit more scheduling flexibility as compared to the more rigid scheduling and responsibilities of a graduate student. We were very surprised to find out through our interviews that student-parents were not given priority when registering for classes. We thought that this would be a crucial aspect that could drastically help these students with their time management and scheduling.

A significant difference between undergraduate and graduate parents was the amount of life experiences they had. The responsibilities of raising a child as an undergraduate can be shocking, unexpected and vast. The graduate students we interviewed were significantly older, ranging between mid-20's to early 30's. With this age gap, we found that the amount of life experience and maturity of graduate students provides them with a large advantage when balancing parenthood with their studies.

As students move forward in their studies, the rigor and flexibility of their schedules become much more intense. Between undergraduates and graduate students, the results of our interviews found that graduate students found the lack of flexibility extremely difficult

to manage. Group projects and intense class schedules resulted in more reliance of outsourced daycare and childcare.

Regardless of age or academic status, throughout our research we found that raising a child while still involved in academics posed some serious management and balancing skills. The responsibilities of being a student posed more difficulty when raising a child than it did for a faculty or staff member.

Conclusion

In this report, we examined constraints and obstacles faced by working parents with children under ten years old in the University of Denver Community. Specifically, this section discussed some of the many personal challenges facing parents. These challenges—Boundaries, Control, Emails, Financial Balance, Organization, Time Management, and Transportation—were discussed as they apply to parents. Since this is a university, it was important to include student parents, who face many of the same challenges as faculty and staff.

The section on Boundaries explored how parents separate spheres of their lives in order to function more effectively. This allows parents to separate their work self from their home self. For parents, being home and present for their children requires more effort than coming home and going straight to a room to keep working. Setting effective boundaries is an important tool for parents as it helps their mental health, allows for better time management, and results in better nurturing time with their children.

Related to Boundaries is the theme of Control. This section showed how parents attempt to assert control over their work and home lives, and to what degree control is

possible or useful. Parents assert control by setting boundaries as discussed above. An important question that parents must wrestle with is what level of control they should have over their children. Micromanaging is neither practical nor preferred, but unhindered children may get themselves in trouble. The degree to which control is possible in a parent's life, as in control over their schedules or in unforeseen situations, is a question parents struggle with, and approach in different ways. In many ways, it is a constant balancing act for parents.

Conflicting with the above two themes are Emails. This breaks down boundaries between work and home as they are accessed from both places. They reduce the amount of control one has over their schedule since people constantly check their email either on their phone or on a computer. Even parents who are successful at creating boundaries between work and home have difficulty not letting work enter the home through emails. Emails cause anxiety when not answered, and they take away from family time when they are. Some parents do successfully maintain a separation between work and home. Although it may be frowned upon and not appreciated at the workplace, some parents will not answer emails when at home. Email inundates and can overwhelm parents today, but that does not mean that strategies are not developed to maintain a healthy home life.

Financial Balance is crucial for parents, and children are expensive. What we found is that parents believe raising children is becoming more expensive. This is a push and pull dilemma. On the one hand, children's activities, such as childcare, sports, or outings can place substantial financial burden on parents. On the other, some parents are finding the job market not sufficient in finding adequate jobs that fit their qualifications and pay for their mounting expenses. Stress over making enough money to pay for childcare, or taking

time off to personally take care of children, is a situation that many parents are in. This stress impacts their work and their home life, and seems to only be increasing.

With all these burdens, remaining Organized is essential for parents. Parents must organize their own time, cooperate with their spouse or partner if they have one, and organize their children's time. This takes considerable forethought and planning. Staying organized with different tools was a strategy that we found parents employ in order to stay afloat and reduce stress. Given the multifarious demands and requirements of parenthood, this seems to be the only way to functionally operate a family.

Similarly, Time Management was a theme that parents brought up consistently in the interviews. This is different from organization as it is less about "planning ahead" and more about being productive with the time you have. Work often comes in waves. When parents are especially busy they need to adjust how they allocate their time in order to make room for their increased workload. Successful time management helps facilitate a successful work-life balance.

Transporting children, especially from school, is one of the major duties that parents must manage. For most parents, the time their children need to go to school and the time they get home somewhat defines their day. The expense associated with before and /or after school childcare, or the lack of its availability, often constrains a parent's workday as they try to coordinate getting their children to and from school. Although professors in the DU community arguably have the most flexible schedule, many must condense their teaching into the time between school drop off and pickup. This task is compounded when a parent has multiple children attending different after school activities. Also, an interesting comment brought up was simply the time wasted driving to and from places. For a parent

strapped for time, the minutes that it takes driving without their child and not being productive is frustrating.

The above themes apply to all parents, but we wanted to focus some special attention on members of the DU community that were student parents. Within the subgroup of student parents, graduate and undergraduates dealt with their dual responsibilities differently. Graduate students were typically older, and had more rigid and demanding academic schedules. Undergraduates on the other hand had schedules that are more flexible. Undergraduates struggled more with their dual identity of student and parent. Neither group receives priority registration, which is surprising since they have a lot to manage and face a considerable amount of time constraints.

Our research resulted in two recommendations for the University of Denver. First, provide a childcare or daycare option that is available to everyone. Fisher exists, but for many it is not feasible financially and it is not a day care facility for those with younger children. Second, the university needs to give students with children preferential treatment. At the very least, they should be entitled to priority registration. Additionally, resources for student parents should be made more accessible and visible since most students do not even know what kinds of options DU provides. We feel these recommendations will significantly ease the burden placed on parents within our campus community.

PERCEPTIONS ABOUT WORK-FAMILY BALANCE AMONG DU COMMUNITY MEMBERS WITH YOUNG CHILDREN

CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY – WINTER 2017

SECTION 4: SUPPORT

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks to the faculty, staff, and students at the University of Denver for sharing their thoughts, opinions, and experiences through their interview responses.

This report was prepared by students from the Winter 2017 Cultural Anthropology class at the University of Denver, under the direction of Dr. Alejandro Cerón. Authors: Tess Alphas, Zoe Briggs, Monique Domme, Mayra Espinosa, Ashley Gerken, Kristen Hall (Graduate Teaching Assistant), Hanna Ko, J. P. Lawrence, Nicholas Lippman, Yvonne Maina, Gabriela Ortega, Traci Reese, Heidy Rios-Carmona, Erin Rissler, Eliza Rolfs, Julia Uchiyama, and Harry Wynn

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Introduction

Throughout the interviews we conducted, parents of the University of Denver's community discussed a common theme--support. Support within their lives facilitated the proper balance of their work and home schedules, as well as helping assist in childcare. Every parent interviewed identified the other people and programs in their lives that make what they do possible. These parents are community members across DU's campus including full-time students, both undergraduate or graduate, faculty members, and staff members.

Humans today live in a fast-paced world that is constantly evolving. Working parents have their own unique set of problems and challenges including balancing both their careers and home lives. These challenges have increased as more women are entering the workforce and needing outside support. Through our research, we have found that many support networks are needed when it comes to having a career and raising children. Support can come in many forms and from various aspects of a person's life. Through our interviews, we found that family members, coworkers, friends, and early education facilities are significantly important in establishing support networks for parents. The idea that parents' success in the home and in the workplace is attributed to support networks was a cohesive message across our interviews.

While support is a broad term encompassing many different structures and people, it is immensely important because of its ability to help assist parents and individuals. With proper support, individuals can successfully balance a home-life

and career. Through our interviews, we found that parents face a variety of tough decisions that force them to make sacrifices. Without the worry of who will take care of their children or if they will face negative repercussions in their careers for family emergencies, parents reported being able to operate with less stress and more efficiently. Coworkers and proper daycare systems can give parents the ability to complete everything they need to do. They can advance in their careers or education, ensure the proper care of their children, and complete their household responsibilities, such as cooking and cleaning. Support allows parents to be their best selves, advancing within their careers and maintaining a healthy family life.

In contrast, the lack of support is just as substantial to parents. If one lacks support within their lives, it can manifest itself through many negative outcomes and feelings. Parents reported missing work and meetings, sacrificing their careers, if they did not have adequate support in taking care of their young children. Without childcare support, a person's professional life, whether it be their career or furthering their education, could suffer. In addition, they frequently make sacrifices in their home lives, such as giving up quality time with their spouse and children. Furthermore, the uncertainty of proper support can lead to stress, frustration, and worry over one's child and career. Long term, chronic stress has implications of its own if left unresolved. Lack of support can also increase tense relationships parents have with family members and coworkers. If parents feel like the people surrounding them do not understand their struggle or are not empathetic, it can cause strains, leading to feelings of isolation from the people crucial in their lives.

Overall, lack of support in a parent's life can lead to stress in many aspects of their lives and increased challenges managing everything.

Support is an integral part of a person's life and important in influencing one's success. Parents from all walks of life at the University of Denver identified the types of support present or absent in their lives. In addition, they discussed what is currently working with their support systems in their personal lives and within the DU community. In addition, parents also identified many aspects that need to be improved. The theme of support has therefore been categorized into seven sub-themes: the DU daycare system, frustration getting into Fisher, stress over DU daycare options, frustration with lack of daycare options in general, personal support, support from colleagues, and convenience. These subthemes further analyze the communal problems and amenities by many parents across the DU campus as well as illustrate priorities of parents.

Personal Support

Personal support is a broad term that offers several categories for the different ways individuals require support within their own lives. Some subcategories of these necessary supports are financial support, emotional support, and family support. A positive personal support system is crucial to creating a healthy work and life balance. Emotional support can involve anything from having empathetic colleagues at the workplace to family members being understanding if you miss a child's school event or a spouse's work party. Financial support can relate to having a spouse who also has a job that can add to the overall income and

contribute to the costs of living These costs of living include: childcare, housing, food, and health costs. Financial support can also mean the ways in which the workplace provides benefits for you and your family, such as health benefits or parental leave benefits. Financial support is a crucial sub-category of personal support, because certain areas of childcare cannot be accomplished if the financial means to achieve them do not exist. Finally, family support can mean that you have a relative outside of the home who can come and watch your children, or something as simple as a spouse claiming responsibility for tasks such as cooking or driving the kids to school or daycare. Family support is also an important part of overall personal support because it hopefully will lead to a healthy family dynamic that can contribute to an individual's overall satisfaction with his/her life. Personal support is a vital part of a person's well-being and holds a lot of power in creating a balanced life.

Many quotes pulled from different student's interviews directly relate to the concept of personal support in different ways.

> "Um, I mean I think that there should be health plans that are provided. Right now, they have this thing where you pay a thousand dollars a month and that's your health plan, but, like at MIT they pay for your health care, so that's like a big deal when you have kids. I don't know, there's a lot of stuff that DU can do to make families feel more welcome. Like at MIT they have different lists where kids can be involved in some level in activities at MIT, stuff like that makes you feel like families are encouraged or something. I don't know. None of this will change

> overnight. DU is a bit behind the ball in some different things when it comes to supporting diversity, and they want to do something about it which I think is great but."

This quote shows that there are services that interviewees feel should be provided for workers and professors at DU to give them an upper hand in personal support. Having to pay for health insurance can be expensive and working to pay for such can take away from personal time. Employees for whom healthcare is not provided by DU may feel stressed due to the lack of personal support and financial support granted to those with better benefits.

Another interviewee discussed that personal support, noting, "He (referring to husband) is incredible and he is a lot of support, and he's like a feminist man so he understands that I have like a balance between my work." This quote highlights how spouses can provide personal support to one another, with the respondent and her husband having an open dialogue regarding the equitable division of shared responsibilities. Having an understanding and supportive spouse could foreseeably lead to a relationship with less emotional conflict between partners.

A third quote illustrates the support an employee receives from coworkers. "My colleagues have been tremendous on a personal level. So I feel like my department at language and literature everyone are really friendly, I get jokes from colleagues about when are they gonna babysit." This relates to the emotional aspect of personal support, as the individual has a strong sense of belonging in their workplace and feels as if other people around him/her are supportive even if they

cannot relate to the experience of having children. The individual also feels as though he/she has colleagues who are willing to help pitch and offer help and support.

Parental leave is an aspect of personal support mentioned by an interviewee, saying,

> "One thing that I think is great about DU is that they have a parental leave policy so you get basically a quarter off, paid, when you have a child. And that is not typical, when I was on the job market that was the first thing I asked and DU had it, so I think that is a great perk. But in terms of childcare I think there is a lot more that could be done to accommodate the parents. Having more access to quality childcare, so in other words, if Fisher was a lot bigger and serviced a lot more faculty and staff that would be really useful."

This quote revolves around the benefits offered by DU. The respondent mentions how the quarter leave policy was a draw for them when considering a job at DU, since it was not common in the job market. Parents need time with their children, so it is important to them that their jobs have some programs and structures that benefit their family and personal life. The respondent is still seemingly dissatisfied, as she wishes there was more to benefit them. Some of the other interviews mentioned frustration with the support from DU, such as poor health insurance, "Right now they have this thing where you pay a thousand dollars a month and that's your health plan".

The final quote, "I have always felt very supported in the environment that I work in, very family oriented; prioritizing family, family comes first," directly ties into the sub-category of emotional support because the interviewee talks about how he/she feels "very supported in the environment" he/she works in, which is a large factor in having quality personal support. If people in the workplace are understanding and helpful regarding an individual's need to have more family time, it can make balancing family life and work life much easier.

All of these quotes directly show how important personal support is in an individual's life and how much of a difference it can make. Without it, one's home-life can be unbalanced leading to instability within a family.

Support from Colleagues

Many of our interviewers reported that there was a common theme and need for more support from their colleagues. Support from colleagues may encompass a certain level of support that a DU employee desired but is not currently present in his or her everyday life. There may be a lack of understanding regarding work-home balance and the issues that arise with that. For example, one gentlemen interviewed had an uneasy experience regarding the lack of understanding from coworkers. He brought his newborn to work and she ended up being a fairly big distraction to his colleagues and even to himself. While he never expressed during the interview that he wanted more understanding, he did realize that this was an awkward work-home balance and one he would never do again. From the interviews, it appears that there is a general concern for wanting and needing

colleagues to be more understanding. Respondents did, however, also comment on how nice and supportive co-workers have been when it comes to trying to balance family and work life.

Through analyzing the interviews, it has become apparent that support from colleagues varies based on such attributes as gender, age, rank, and type of job. For gender, there might be more support for women multitasking the job of mother taking care of her children and working. However, there is a quiet majority that believes the mother should be at home with her children instead of having a part time/full time job. Many men in the workplace feel that the support from colleagues is hindered due to societal pressures dictating that he should be at work while the mother takes care of children. The gentleman cited earlier in this section, however, was not the main provider for the family. He stated in his interview that his wife made much more money and that they prioritized her occupation so he would occasionally have to step out or bring the kids to work in emergencies. This is where rank and type of job comes into play. He was a head coach at DU and because of his rank, he felt he was able to bring his daughter to work without asking his boss for approval. Being a coach, his workplace is accordingly more casual and it was appropriate to leave early or, once in a blue moon, to bring his daughter into work. He still did not feel comfortable doing so, but he had the option in case of emergencies.

Even though some people felt a lack of support, others interviewed felt that their colleagues were in similar situations and were, therefore, very understanding. Many faculty members at DU have had kids or still have kids so they can understand it may be necessary to prioritize family over work sometimes. If a kid gets sick or a

scheduling problem comes up, people need to find a way to go take care of their family. There are times when there really is not that much of a choice and work obligations have to be sacrificed. Many colleagues have seemed to be respectful of these type of scheduling changes, especially if they understand firsthand what it's like to be in that position. This mostly includes one-time circumstances, though, because colleagues tend to be less supportive when having kids affects work performance on a regular basis.

When employees do not have the support from their colleagues, they may have awkward and stressful moments because they cannot just say that they are unavailable at a certain time because of their kids. They feel that they cannot just ask their colleagues to meet earlier or later because they have to pick up their children. However, when they do have the support from their colleagues, everything is different--they feel motivated and a lot more comfortable with their parenting needs. Usually when colleagues provide them with support, it is because they are parents too and they understand the struggles that comes with being a parent. They feel comfortable sharing more about their children and their life and they also feel good taking their kid to work whenever they have no other option because they do not feel judged. Also, it is easier for them on a personal and professional level because they do not feel the stigma of being a parent with colleague support. Colleague support may constitute sympathy or understanding, but it could also include them helping at work or changing their schedules around. It could even include childcare or transportation help in some situations.

The following quote demonstrates some of the support themes that were mentioned in interviews:

> "My colleagues have been tremendous on a personal level. So I feel like my department at language and literature everyone is really friendly, I get jokes from colleagues about when are they gonna babysit. Which of course is strictly rhetorical. [both laugh] But um so in terms of person-to-person interaction people are really friendly. I brought my baby to my annual review and people were fine with that and I don't think anyone viewed me as less professional because of that."

Another respondent expressed similar feelings when they explained; "I think I'm really lucky in this department because most history teachers have children as well and they're just supportive in general so I don't feel condemned or an outcast or that I'm not pulling my weight but I can imagine that if you didn't have colleagues in a similar situation then it would be a stigma."

These quotes speak to the colleagues that have been "tremendous" and have been supportive of work and family balance. There is a rising culture that is very accepting and embracing of this sort of balance. Throughout the course of our research, may interviewees quotes talked about how supportive their workplace has been when it comes to juggling kids and a two parent working family. In other ways, there are inequalities that promote stigmas and therefore, less support, as demonstrated in one respondent's view when she expressed:

> "I was telling him how I get up at four in the morning to do research because if I stay up late at night, my kids stay up late. And he told me 'you can't do research like that. You can't do physics like that.' Right, and so I think that's difficult. That sort of idea that men can have as much time as they want to do research but women have to balance that with their kids and stuff."

This quote reinforces the idea that work culture has not entirely changed regarding work-home balance. There are still many people, especially women, that have an issue with colleagues and their workplace not being very supportive when they have to balance kids and a job. The woman in the quote is undertaking research but her co-worker is suggesting that she cannot do her work in "that" way. This is one example of a scenario where the people we interviewed suggested that they need more understanding and support from their colleagues.

There has been a plethora of positive quotes from people raving about the support they receive at the workplace, but there is still a gap in the support that is desired from colleagues and the culture the workplace. This discrepancy between the desired and actual support given to employees by their colleagues was a major commonality among respondents.

Convenience

In context with our interviews, convenience is what resources and strategies make work/student/parent life easier for the DU community. Convenience is a subcategory of support, with factors that include: daycare programs, transportation, family help, nannies, and friends, among others. Interviewees often cited sources of

childcare as a major aspect contributing to convenience in their lives. Overall, the term convenience in the context of work/life balance means the strategies and resources that parents use to manage and avoid stress when it comes to taking care of their children.

One of the most important sources of support when it comes to childcare is the support that parents receive from family members. For example, a respondent said, "I never had any of my kids in childcare or daycare. I don't know how that even works. It's also very expensive, so my family has always helped: my brothers, I have two brothers, my mom, my aunt, my husband, everybody who's available, even VIP students". Another respondent mentioned, "It's mostly me and my partner, my husband, and then we have a family friend. She's 20, I used to babysit and she now moved out here to go to college and so she lives with us and she takes care of our kids, probably ten hours a week. Echoing the sentiment of the previous two quotes, a third interview noted, "I have my husband who is very much my primary helper and I also have my parents and friends. Whenever we can't reach our parents I'm happy with the support system we have through our friends". Moreover, people mentioned how they also rely on their neighbors to help them watch their kids, as in the following quote:

> "My husband's sister Sandy is living in town. She is nice and we are very close to our next-door neighbor, Diane Her little son is just a little older than John. Her daughter Kelly and our son Michael are in the same age. So, we have neighbor of children at the same age. If you need to run one of them to the doctor because they cut themselves, you

could call the neighbor. I don't see how people would do it if they were new to the city and they don't have that support network."

Another strategy that parents use is technology. As one respondent stated, "I have like a family calendar that helps me coordinate kids' schedules and then mine work schedule, meetings, just different things that I need prioritize throughout the day, and like every day and even months away." The family calendar aided the respondent in organization and coordination, thereby making his or her life more orderly, as well as bolstering convenience.

Respondents also mentioned how the support of colleagues and having a flexible job schedule is convenient because it allows them to avoid stress. "I think I'm really lucky in this department because most history teachers have children as well and they're just supportive in general, so I don't feel condemned or an outcast or that I'm not pulling my weight but I can imagine that if you didn't have colleagues in a similar situation, then it would be a stigma," said one respondent. In the same way, one student mentioned how his professors are very supportive, noting, "I email my professors when something happens, right away. If I miss class they are usually pretty understanding since it is something that is completely out of my control." Having a flexible job schedule can also facilitate child responsibilities. "In terms of my job allowing me that flexibility in terms of my responsibilities to my child it's really good and especially compared to a lot of other occupations."

These quotes describe the strategies and resources that parents use when it comes to childrearing. Many respondents talked about the help that they receive

from friends and family. They expressed gratitude and mentioned that it helps them save money, since nannies and daycare centers can be costly. Moreover, it is the support of people around parents that facilitates how parents balance family and work. Without a support network, taking care of children can be difficult and, at times, overwhelming. Based on the interviews, it seems like family is the most valuable resource that parents have. It is convenient that parents have someone available who can take care of the children when difficulties arise trying to balance their work schedule and family. Respondents reported that technology and family calendars aided in making their lives more convenient. In the same way, members of the DU community also mentioned flexibility of their jobs and professors for those students who are parents. From the interviews, it seems that it is helpful to have professors or jobs that are understanding of schedule changes and other obligations. This is convenient because it allows parents to have some room for child related events that take precedent over school or work. Working with a professor or a boss who understands the volatile demand of childcare can be a huge help. In conclusion, convenience is the support of people around parents, strategies and resources that parents use to help them balance family and work.

Daycare

The University of Denver is filled with parents with unique experiences--whether they are professors or students, married or single, or with one child or many. Regardless of their different situations, a shared struggle among their stories was the difficulty in finding childcare. As it becomes increasingly common for both

parents to work, the demand for childcare has grown but the options for childcare has not. Parents who were interviewed noted a reliance on family members and friends to care for their children while they are away at work. Yet for some, relatives are not an option and they have to look to other avenues. From the interviews, the class became aware that childcare is not as widely available as it may seem and this has caused stressed for the parents. Excerpts from the class' interviews illustrate four causes of strain for parents regarding childcare: the costs of childcare, fear from lack of diversity, Fisher's lottery system, and the role that the University of Denver has taken in providing childcare.

The life of a working parent can be exceedingly stressful, and the difficulty of finding quality childcare is another form of stress that DU parents experienced. Being able to afford childcare is one of the major sources of stress for many parents as childcare becomes more expensive. Limited options coupled with high costs can leave many parents anxious about getting access to quality childcare. As one DU parent expressed, "It costs too much money and I am already having issues as it is. Because my mom, my sister and my dad all live together and sometimes my grandma comes and lives with us, so we are just trying to make sure all of the bills are paid and that we buy food and all of that stuff." This example illustrates the great amount of pressure childcare expenses places on families. The ability to afford care for your child while also worrying about other necessities is a clear form of stress for parents.

A less obvious stressor, however, is expressed by another DU parent who worries about the environment and inclusivity of the childcare center in which their

children are enrolled. ″Besides, with the recent things like Trump winning, I'm afraid to send my son to daycare because we are Latino." For many parents, their ethnic background can be a stressor, especially given the current political climate in the country. This sort of stress often goes unacknowledged but diversity and inclusivity is a major source of concern for minorities.

Furthermore, several of the faculty, staff, and students at the University of Denver have also expressed concern with the inability to find childcare on campus. They argue that the Fisher Early Learning Center is the only childcare option available on campus but it is very difficult to get into because of their lottery system. "I think one of the biggest challenges that I'm having right now is that when I apply for the daycare (because they only have limited space available) there is a wait list they have to run a lottery process so it is very likely that you won't get in." This example shared by a DU parent supports the idea that childcare is a major strain for working parents because of its exclusivity. The lottery process does not give parents an assured spot in a childcare center and the limited space in each classroom makes the situation even more stressful because there is a large chance that their child might not get into the childcare center. The lottery system creates uncertainty and anxiety among the DU parent community because it forces them to have to look to outside options for childcare.

The final common stressor noted throughout parents' testimonies when discussing childcare was the lack of responsibility taken by the university. "And they [the University of Denver] do need a much better childcare system. There's no childcare here, Fisher I tried for maybe four years to get into Fisher and at the time it

was a lottery system and we just never, our name was never picked. So we just didn't go to Fisher." In this quote, the DU parent furthers the argument of the difficulty of accessing childcare by expressing how they have attempted to get their child into Fisher but could not because of the layout of the system. This excerpt illustrates the time and effort it takes to try and get access to good childcare, even when this may not result in any success. This parent goes even further, arguing that a better system needs to be put into place by the university. Again, this illustrates DU parents' perceptions regarding their employer's responsibility to provide better childcare opportunities for their workers and, in this case, students as well. Another DU parent reinforces this sentiment by stating, "We (Fisher) are the only childcare facility on campus. And, we are a lottery system to get into, and we are an early learning center, we are not daycare, so we have different standards and licensing and things like that, um, but as far as I know, there is not childcare provided for DU employees who do not get their children into Fisher." This testimony is interesting because it comes from someone that works for the only childcare available from the university and he/she highlights the role that the employer has in providing childcare. This interview demonstrates that many parents at DU are challenged by the fact that convenient childcare is difficult to get access to and points to the perceived lack of action on DU's behalf as being a major cause of this.

From excerpts like the those listed above, the class was able to identify the lack of childcare and availability of options as a common source of stress among parents. The concern and stress that these parents express clearly illustrates an environment where quality childcare outside of the family is something of a luxury

that few parents can find and afford. This struggle highlights uncertainty surrounding the role an employer should take in facilitating childcare for their employees. As can be seen by the examples, parents seem to think that the University of Denver does not offer enough options for parents and that the system needs to be tailored to fit the needs of the students, faculty, and staff as a whole.

DU Daycare System

With the recent increases in working parents, daycare is a necessity for many families. It is not uncommon for companies and large institutions to offer childcare options for their employees; however, daycare options at the University of Denver are narrow. Our group came to the understanding that the DU daycare system can be defined as the institutions near the university that faculty and staff rely on to take care of their children while they are working. The DU daycare system is very limited and consists of only the Fisher Early Learning Center, which is relatively small, expensive and difficult to get into. With this being the only option for DU community members who wish to enroll their children in a childcare facility, the interviews revealed that the DU daycare system has a general negative connotation to it. The negative connotation was derived from numerous frustrations voiced during the interviews with some of the DU community.

As previously explained, one of the major frustrations felt by DU community members is the lack of daycare options provided by the university. The only true daycare option is the Fisher Early Learning Center. One community member who works at the center said, "We (Fisher) are the only childcare facility on campus.

And, we (Fisher) are a lottery system to get into… as far as I know, there is not childcare provided for DU employees who do not get their children into Fisher." In addition to being the only option offered by the university, the facility also runs on a lottery system. The lottery system at Fisher consists of a long list of families wanting to take advantage of the only childcare system that the university offers. Considering that the wait list is very long and Fisher is small to begin with, the time consuming wait to get into Fisher contributes to the negative connotation of the DU daycare system as a whole. In addition to Fisher, there are other limited options for childcare. One example is P.A.S.S. camp, which is a seasonal children's day camp offered exclusively in the summer during which kids engage in supervised activities. One of the community members utilized this option, explaining, "So one of my daughters went to P.A.S.S. camp during the summer--kind of where you do sports and things for the summer--and that was nice having something for her to do, something close by here so I wasn't rushing so much before or after to pick her up. So I think that's helpful." Clearly, this daycare option was greatly appreciated and helpful to this particular interviewee. This type of program is only offered during the summer season, but additional childcare options similar to this would be appreciated and utilized by the community if offered at other times during the year. However, the fact that this type of childcare is only offered for a few select months throughout the year causes frustrations throughout the community.

Another one of the major frustrations felt by the DU community is Fisher itself, given the long wait list and high cost associated with it. One community member explains, "I know that they could not give me a place for (baby's name) just because

I want it. But, if they could have a waiting list for DU employees then we could plan for that, otherwise waiting for this lottery every year that's uh that's pretty bad especially. One of the main reasons is not just convenience for (baby's name) to be at Fisher, but that's the best daycare we can afford. It's like top notch and really affordable for us." This particular example is interesting, because it demonstrates that cost is not an issue, as her family can easily afford the high costs of Fisher, yet, she is still frustrated with the waiting list. This frustration is illustrated throughout a majority of interviews. As demonstrated here, the likelihood of getting into Fisher in a timely manner is relatively small. This seems to be a universal issue, as another community member comments,

> "Um, we hire a private nanny who comes to our house. Yeah, we couldn't get in the childcare here at DU. They have a lottery system which was really frustrating because that would be the perfect scenario for us to have her here. So that would be um. You know when I was first hired here I was told that DU offers childcare, so I was assuming ok there would be no problem. We got into the lottery last year and we were 22nd out of 22nd. So we had no chance to even use that as an alternative, so we are going to try again, but let's see it is difficult because we have to figure out other ways. She is gonna start childcare in April, but hopefully, well hopefully, that it will be in June here at Fisher otherwise we need to figure out something that is closer to home."

This quote explains the in-depth challenges of the lottery system and how it leaves community members in difficult situations. It specifically refers to the lottery system again, which seems to be a recurring theme in most of the interviews. Interviewees note the expense of the system, but from the tone of these interviews, it seems that the lottery system is the largest area of concern and frustration in the community.

In addition to the inconvenience of the Fisher lottery system, there are other troublesome factors that cause frustrations as well. One interviewee says, "While they did provide family leave, she explained that she had applied to send her children to the Fisher Early Learning Center without success. She ended up waiting 2 years and said it was probably for the best as the schedule was not designed for teachers and too expensive." This particular faculty member had a colleague who was on the wait list for years, and was still not able to enroll her children in Fisher. In addition to the lottery frustrations, this example brings up Fisher's difficult selection process that leaves many DU community members without daycare opportunities for their children. The quote also demonstrates that even though Fisher is the only option for daycare in close proximity to DU, it does not always fit the faculty member's schedule. Furthermore, this quote provides an example of financial frustrations, as Fisher is so expensive. Another respondent explains, "No, no. Um, there is the Fisher Early Learning Center over here on Evans and High. But it has a long wait list and a lot of the different, you know, faculty and staff. Everyone, a lot of people put their children over there, but there is no financial compensation or anything like that." This is another quote highlighting frustration with the lottery system at Fisher, in which the interviewee also mentions the lack of financial

compensation for daycare at DU. Overall, Fisher seems to be a source of stress and irritation for many community members, thereby contributing to the negative connotation of the DU daycare system as a whole.

With all of the frustrations that the DU daycare system is reported to cause, it is surprising that the university has not yet initiated a change. Many community members likely have ideas of how the system can be improved, with one interviewee in particular sharing, "So in terms of other support that DU could offer, kind of like sick childcare help. I don't even know how that would work but I'm sure it happens. And the evening things, of course are harder and there's not childcare of any kind for those receptions or visiting scholars or things that happen in the evening or on the weekends." In addition to daytime childcare needs, working parents also need assistance in childcare for unexpected emergencies or events that occur during nontraditional work hours, such as in the evenings. DU does not offer any programs for this purpose. Much of the community would find it helpful for the university to provide some kind of last minute babysitting or childcare services for unplanned circumstances, such as a sick child or evening event, especially for DU sponsored nighttime events. However, the university does not currently provide any options similar to this, thus contributing to the negative connotation of the DU daycare system.

In conclusion, the DU daycare system, defined as the institutions near the university that faculty and staff rely on to take care of their children while they are working, is generally dismissed by most members of the DU community. Due to frustrations regarding the limited number of daycare options offered by the

university and the difficulties associated with those that are, our research found that the DU daycare system is viewed negatively by most DU community members with children.

Frustration with Lack of Daycare Options

For parents who are employed outside of the home, finding childcare is often one of the biggest challenges, particularly for children between the ages of 0 and 1. A parent at DU stated that "Childcare is a huge, huge issue for every parent on campus ... there's just not enough childcare options." There are often waiting lists for daycare options; parents that sign up on waiting lists as soon as they know that they are pregnant may not even get off the waiting list after their child is born. Those who don't have family members nearby that help take care of their children are often forced to either bring their children with them to work, pay an enormous amount for daycare or nannies, and/or even quit their jobs. For parents of young children on the DU campus, getting into the Fisher Early Learning Center can be nearly impossible because enrollment is based on a lottery system. Not only that, but Fisher may be more expensive than other local daycares, while not covering certain age groups. By also serving members outside of the DU faculty and staff, it reduces the availability of spots for the members it most designed to serve, which is the DU community.

One of the main frustrations that parents appeared to discuss was the lack of available spaces at Fisher Early Learning Center and the lottery-based enrollment system. For example, one parent said, "Yeah, we couldn't get in the childcare here

at DU. They have a lottery system which was really frustrating because that would be the perfect scenario for us to have her here." Another parent expressed concern with the enrollment system when they said, "I think one of the biggest challenges that I'm having right now is that when I apply for the daycare there is a wait list they have to run a lottery process so it is very likely that you won't get in." In an effort to provide equal opportunity for enrollment to parents, the lottery system can be extremely extensive as one parent described that they remained on the waitlist for Fisher for four years. One professor stated that Fisher is so difficult to get into because it also serves people that are not DU employees or students, saying, "Fisher doesn't really serve DU employees because they also serve the community. So, either we need to have another like childcare facility that just serves DU employees or have Fisher only serve DU employees." She suggests that one way to solve the issue of enrollment space would be to isolate Fisher as a service offered exclusively to DU employees. While benefiting one group of parents in the DU community, it completely disregards students with children who may benefit from having childcare close to the campus. This professor certainly does not mean to exclude students from Fisher, particularly as she herself was once a student at DU with a young child. As such, she understands the difficulties of being a full-time student while also being a mother.

Cost of childcare tends to be one of the most difficult challenges to overcome when raising young children. Parents at DU expressed that "it costs too much money and I am already having issues as it is" and that "paying people to take care of children is really, really expensive and hard to arrange…," with both quotes

discussing the difficulty of covering the cost of childcare. For those parents who are lucky enough to secure a spot in the Fisher Early Learning Center, the cost of the program can be difficult to cover. For an infant at Fisher, the DU rate is over $1,400 for five days a week. The average cost of childcare in Denver is around $1,000 a month, making Fisher a much more expensive option for members of the DU community. One parent complains that "there is no financial compensation or anything like that." While some parents manage to cover childcare by sharing responsibilities between spouses, it is not always possible and parents are often forced to spend a huge amount of money in order to send their children to daycare or hire a babysitter. For example, one father states that his wife tends to cover most of the childcare, but he mentions that "when she has to work we have a day care. Also, babysitters occasionally... we try not to do that though because of the price." This same father also expresses hope that the burden of childcare will be eased a bit when their daughter enters preschool next year.

Many members of the DU community focused their frustration with the lack of institutional support from DU. Parents expressed that "there's nothing that is institutional support" and that "they [DU] do need a much better childcare system. There's no childcare here…" Another parent detailed their frustration with the retraction of services that DU used to offer. The parent said:

"This is the major complaint I have with DU, they took away a great benefit a few years ago, and um, some of us talked about protesting but we never were organized, we're too busy (laughs) to do it. We never had the time to protest. But they took away the benefit of dependent care, and so there was this system where

you could call a hotline, say if my kid starts getting sick one night and I know he can't go to school the next day and I have a lecture the next day, and my husband is out of town, and I can't get anyone to rely on. You could call this number and they would arrange to have a caregiver who is in this network of a lot of screened people to show up at your house. It was so helpful."

It is possible that this service was removed in an attempt to reduce the overall budget of the university, which accordingly reduced the options for childcare for DU employees. While some parents felt that DU lacks wide institutional support, some parents have found members of their departments to be helpful while dealing with the problem of childcare. One parent said, "yeah, if it wasn't for my superior, I think that I would be struggling a lot. DU doesn't offer any resources for us parents and I think it should start." It appears that many of the individuals interviewed for this project feel that DU needs to start providing more services specifically for those struggling with childcare for young children.

Other parents were able to come up with alternative options to paid childcare or institutional daycare systems, such as using a trustworthy network of friends, neighbors, and family members. This father stated, "my wife takes care of most of the childcare..." However, even spousal support is not always available. This same father stated that when his wife does have to work, they are forced to use a daycare center or babysitter, although they prefer not to do that because of the cost. While the most common and easiest option is for the spouse to step in, that may not always be possible due to conflicting work schedules or in households with single parents. In those cases, a larger outside network is required. Generally, the next preferred

option is to have family members participate in childcare. This parent described how their large family has been so fundamental to caring for their children that they've never had to use any sort of organized childcare facility: "I never had any of my kids in childcare or daycare... [M]y family has always helped: my brothers, I have two brothers, my mom, my aunt, my husband..."

Parents utilized a list of people that they know and trust to take care of their children. A parent explained that "I just I have like five people's schedules to be able to pull the information from where they are, to help me coordinate taking care of my kids." Although the parent didn't specify whether or not these people are paid, this shows that the parent must keep a list of specific people available to call when they need help caring for their children, which can possibly place a strain on the relationships between the adults. This may or may not be true in this particular case, but it's possible. One special case that came up during the interviews was that of one parent who has a live-in nanny of sorts. While the spouse most often helps in covering childcare, the nanny is often there to offer help when needed. The parent explained, "[w]e have a family friend. She's 20 --I used to babysit her --and she moved out here to go to college and so she lives with us and she takes care of our kids probably ten hours a week." This shows how the parent was able to come up with a mutually beneficial relationship between themselves and caregiver. The caregiver is given a place to stay, assumedly rent-free, in exchange for providing childcare. This arrangement allows both parties to reduce their expenses.

Parents may also face issues covering childcare when a child falls ill. For example, one parent, who is a student here at DU, discusses how they may have to

miss class if their child falls ill because "[t]he daycare won't let the baby stay there if he's sick so I have to take him home and watch him." They go on to say that she can only attend class if she is "lucky" enough to find someone to watch him.

Based on the trends of these quotes, the largest barriers to childcare for DU students and employees is the lack of available spaces at the Fisher Early Learning Center and the uncertainty of enrollment due to the lottery-based system. Cost seems to be the other main factor causing frustration with childcare options. Average cost of childcare hovers $1000 a month per child. Because of the high expense, parent may be forced to rely on neighbors, friends, or family members to supplement their childcare. Possible solutions to some of these problems would be either an institutional group or department specifically designed to offer resources and assistances with daycare options for DU staff, faculty, and students. University of Denver should work in conjunction with Fisher to offer larger discounts on childcare for DU employees and students. Fisher should focus on offering members of DU faculty or students priority enrollment, while also expanding their services to accommodate more children into the program. Finally, a member of the DU community captures the frustration that many parents feel at some point while trying to arrange childcare by stating, "so then, what do you do especially with younger children, if they can't go to childcare and you have to [work]?"

Frustrations Over Getting into Fisher

Frustrations over getting into Fisher regards any frustrations respondents expressed over enrolling their children in Fisher Early Learning Center. Fisher is

the early learning center for children that is located on campus. It is a private institution that has a long wait list and uses a lottery system to select its students. Respondents often expressed frustration with this lottery system and the many applicants for whom enrollment is denied each year. Being denied places a burden on faculty and staff, as they are forced to look elsewhere for childcare with DU not offering any other childcare options. It is also expensive, with monthly tuition ranging between over $1,400 to $1,100 for a 5 day per week program, even with a DU employee discount. This high cost was found to be a burden by respondents and was another frustration with the center, but most complaints were centered around being denied enrollment by the lottery system.

Respondents often expressed frustration with the lottery system that Fisher uses to select students. This excerpt from one respondent highlights the issue: "And they do need a much better childcare system. There's no childcare here, Fisher I tried for maybe four years to get into Fisher and at the time it was a lottery system and we just never, our name was never picked. So we just didn't go to Fisher." As this excerpt shows, Fisher is the only childcare option through the University, and the lottery system leaves many individuals without a spot there for their children.

One respondent noted that the lottery system was one of the largest challenges when it came to securing daycare. "I think one of the biggest challenges that I'm having right now is that when I apply for the daycare (because they only have limited space available) there is a wait list they have to run a lottery process so it is very likely that you won't get in." This respondent noted the challenge of getting into Fisher as a frustration, especially since success in the lottery is low. As the

lottery system created uncertainty, it could result in individuals placing a false sense of hope in it and not spending enough time looking into alternative options.

Another respondent explained their frustration with the uncertainty of the lottery system. Parents were unsure of whether they had received spots within Fisher and sometimes would be contacted after they had found other childcare options.

> "I know that they could not give me a place for (baby's name) just because I want it. But, if they could have a waiting list for DU employees then we could plan for that, otherwise waiting for this lottery every year that's uh that's pretty bad especially one of. The main reason is not just convenience for (baby's name) to be at Fisher, but that's the best daycare we can afford. It's like top notch and really affordable for us."

This quote also expressed the respondent's frustration with the fact that Fisher is not exclusively available to DU employees, making it even harder to get into. Additionally, the quality of Fisher makes it desirable, compounding the demand for enrollment spots. The uncertainty of the whole process makes it very hard to plan for changes and unforeseen events. Even parents who can afford to use this resource are finding it hard to secure spots when they need them.

While not technically an official day care center, Fisher is one of the only close options for parents on campus to provide care for their children. Many who were unable to get a spot in Fisher did not have any other options available through the university and this causes frustration. This is showed in the following excerpt:

> "Um I would just say, just because I've heard this from plenty of our parents that are here, um, and because my husband knows many parents that are also faculty members, we (Fisher) are the only childcare facility on campus. And, we are a lottery system to get into, so DU does not and we are an early learning center, we are not daycare, so we have different standards and licensing and things like that, um, but as far as I know, there is not childcare provided for DU employees who do not get their children into Fisher."

Some partners of those interviewed have taken up full time childcare because it is more convenient and less costly to send their children to Fisher or other options. This can be frustrating for families that depend on two income sources or parents who want to also be in the work force. The frustration was expressed during the interview through the following quote: "So yeah about 90% of the childcare has fallen on her recently just because she's been staying at home and also trying to find a new daycare facility for our daughter."

In some other cases, individuals had to turn to other expensive alternative options for childcare, as expressed in the following quote:

> "Um, we hire a private nanny who comes to our house. Yeah, we couldn't get in the childcare here at DU. They have a lottery system which was really frustrating because that would be the perfect scenario for us to have her here. So that would be um. You know when I was first hired here I was told that DU offers childcare, so I was assuming ok

> there would be no problem. We got into the lottery last year and we were 22nd out of 22nd. So we had no chance to even use that as an alternative, so we are going to try again, but let's see it is difficult because we have to figure out other ways. She is gonna start childcare in April, but hopefully, well hopefully, that it will be in June here at fisher otherwise we need to figure out something that is closer to home."

As this quote shows, prospective employees are not necessarily informed of the challenge in getting into Fisher, which can also cause frustration and lead respondents to have to take on the additional financial burden of other childcare options.

However, the financial burden of childcare is not eliminated if an individual is allowed to enroll at Fisher. As this respondent noted, there is no financial compensation to help with the cost of tuition. "No, no. Um, there is the Fisher Early Learning Center over here on Evans and High. But it has a long waitlist and a lot of the different, you know, faculty and staff. Everyone, a lot of people put their children over there, but there is no financial compensation or anything like that." It should be noted though that DU faculty and staff do receive a small discount on Fisher's tuition, but it is not perceived to be a significant amount.

These excerpts show than many respondents have experienced frustration with Fisher's wait list and lottery system, something that has forced many respondents to look elsewhere for childcare. These quotes relate to the overall

theme because they all express the frustrations of individuals with the childcare, or lack thereof at Fisher Early Learning Center. In the case of the respondents who could not get into Fisher, this frustration manifested in the form of constantly applying, waiting, and being denied. Then, after being denied, having to look at alternative options that can be less convenient, of inferior quality, or significantly pricier. For instance, the respondent who hired a nanny after being denied admission through the lottery system claimed that he/she would definitely prefer to have their child at Fisher, and only have a nanny because his/her child got denied.

An additional frustration that respondents expressed that relates to the theme was with the cost of Fisher, and the fact that there is no financial compensation. One excerpt that was previously discussed highlighted the frustrations with the fact there is no financial compensation related to enrolling children at Fisher if you are not denied in the lottery. There is a small financial discount offered to university staff and faculty, but it is not significant enough to make Fisher cheap.

Issues Common to Female Faculty at DU

Faculty members oversee classes, plan lectures, write assignments and grade exams. But this schedule only considers their academic lives. Faculty members that are also parents have additional responsibilities tied to raising and caring for their children. Some responsibilities include overall maintenance of the home, caring for sick children, and transporting children to and from their respective daily activities such as school and daycare. Female faculty members experience issues that are unique to mothers in academia, varying from struggling with the flexibility of their

childcare, to arranging childcare, to feeling guilt over the effects of their schedules on their children's development, and dividing childcare between spouses.

The hours of faculty members can be highly variable, particularly between quarters when class schedules change. While this highly variable schedule can create instability within a family due to trying to balance the responsibilities of the job as well as responsibilities to the family, many female faculty members saw the flexibility of their schedule to be a useful tool in maintaining a work-life balance. Many female faculty members of the Division of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences at the University of Denver expressed that they felt "lucky" because the flexibility allowed them to work on the weekends or late at night to make up for hours missed due to childcare responsibilities. While many saw this flexibility to work late as a blessing, some expressed concerns that working "late into the night…can take a toll" on the overall health and wellbeing of an individual. Members of the Division of Natural Sciences and Mathematics also praised the flexibility in their schedule. One professor states that "[t]here's a lot of support to put my teaching schedule to be more convenient, especially last term which was great." The flexibility in her schedule allowed her to more effectively cover childcare, by giving her the time she needed to drop her children off in the mornings and to be available to pick them up in the afternoons.

Professors also stated that while occasionally their childcare responsibilities interfered with their ability to attend mandatory departmental meetings, they never felt that their coworkers were inconvenienced. Coworkers were often times supportive and understanding; yet, this is not always the case. One problem that was

expressed by female faculty members, particularly in the Division of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, was a real lack of flexibility. One professor stated that due to the nature of her husband's job, she was the only person available to pick up her children from their childcare facility. The daily pickups often forced her to miss mandatory departmental meetings. Not only do these meeting discuss topics important to her department regarding safety and new discoveries, they provide a chance at social interaction and community building within the department. She has attempted on many occasions to speak with her direct supervisor about varying the schedule of meetings so that she may attend them occasionally with little success. The lack of flexibility of the department has caused her to feel excluded from the community in her department.

Another issue that many female faculty members expressed was the difficulty of dividing childcare responsibilities between spouses. Many professors stated that childcare responsibilities were nearly divided equally between their spouses and themselves. One faculty member states that her husband "watches [their daughter] during the daytime when she isn't in school, and I am with her in the evenings." Equality in the division of childcare responsibilities may help to ease the burden on mothers, as women have traditionally been the primary caregivers. Even as more and more women enter the workforce, they are many times expected to come home and work what many refer to as "second shift" in the home through activities like childcare, cooking dinner, and cleaning. Splitting childcare responsibilities has been shown to encourage fathers to spend more quality time with their children as well.

While many women expressed that the division of labor was relatively equal between spouses, some mothers stated that they remained the primary caregivers in their household due to the demanding schedules of their spouses. For example, one faculty member explains how her role as the secondary income earner often caused all responsibilities relating to childcare fell on her shoulders: "I was not the primary income earner in my household… I couldn't count on my husband to be home to do a fair share of childcare at all. I'm still responsible for probably 90% of the child arrangements or at least arranging who's taking care of them."

These problems are exacerbated for those women who work full-time and whose husbands do as well. One woman whose husband is a surgeon with 30-hour shifts every four nights explains how she has used single-parent resources in order to manage her husband's busy schedule while working full-time and juggling her role as primary caregiver. Women whose spouses are graduate students also experience the same struggles.

Another major issue that female faculty members faced was managing the cost of childcare services, be that through nannies, babysitters, and childcare or daycare facilities. The average cost of childcare hovers near $1000 a month per child in Denver, and can be greater for children between the ages of zero and one-years old. This a costly monthly expense that many times is necessary for women who work even part-time outside of the home, particularly for those with multiple children. For some working couples, their combined income is not great enough to be able to afford the childcare they so desperately need in order to continue working. One faculty member states that she and her husband were unable to afford

outside care. Another explains: "Professors used to be much better paid from the normal salaries that used to be out there in the world so I think the idea of not being able to afford childcare has not really caught up with academia certainly the administration has not—we can't possibly pay for childcare on our salary."

The cost of childcare has forced many to rely on extensive networks of family and friends in order to cover gaps in their schedule. Those who do not have family in the area are under even greater duress to arrange care for their children. It has been shown that many women that enter the workforce, once they have children, choose to leave it in order to avoid the expense of monthly childcare. The lack of a strong local network can also play a role in women's decision to leave the workforce.

Coupled with frustrations with the price of childcare were often frustrations over the childcare options provided by the University of Denver, especially concerning the Fisher Early Learning Center. The location of Fisher makes it an ideal choice for DU employees, yet many expressed frustrations with the lack of available spaces. Enrollment to Fisher Early Learning Center is based on a lottery system. While this system makes an attempt at equal opportunity for enrollment, many that are on the list are never selected. The number of available spots for children of DU employees is actively decreased due to the fact that Fisher serves the Denver public as well. The general impression gathered from interviewers about the Fisher Early Learning Center can be easily summarized: "[I]t is very likely that you won't get in."

Some mothers have elected to not use outside daycare services, not only because of their high cost, but also because of the guilt they feel having their children raised by strangers. One faculty member explains that her parents are often instrumental in watching her children while she is teaching "so [she doesn't] feel as guilty when [she's] at work." Guilt over who is watching the children can extend just beyond relying on strangers to play a vital role in a child's development to the effect that parents' schedules have on the lives of their children. One mother spoke about the guilt she feels over her schedule because she is not only forced to place her son in a daycare environment that he doesn't enjoy, but also because her schedule requires that he spends a great deal of time there:

> "I have to get him to the school by 7 and he just has to sit there for two hours. It's not a very good program, and he doesn't really like it but he's such a good kid, and he really doesn't complain, but it rips my heart out because it's hard on him and I don't think he's getting enough sleep and we just don't have another option."

Guilt over the amount of time available to spend with their children may be another factor that contributes to the increasing number of women that are leaving the workforce after the birth of their child.

Finally, a common theme between all interviews with female faculty members is the support they receive from the University of Denver. Many complained that DU offers very little in the way of institutional support for women who are raising children while employed. One mother believes that "there is a lot more that could

be done to accommodate the parents. Having more access to quality childcare, so in other words, if Fisher was a lot bigger and serviced a lot more faculty and staff that would be really useful.'' One faculty member that has been employed here for more than a decade spoke about one particular service that DU has discontinued:

> ''This is the major complaint I have with DU, they took away a great benefit a few years ago... they took away the benefit of dependent care, and so there was this system where you could call a hotline, say if my kid starts getting sick one night and I know he can't go to school the next day and I have a lecture the next day, and my husband is out of town, and I can't get anyone to rely on. You could call this number and they would arrange to have a caregiver who is in this network of a lot of screened people to show up at your house. It was so helpful. "

By removing these services, parents may be forced to cancel class if they cannot find anyone to watch their children.

Many faculty members discussed the lack of institutional support when it comes to arranging childcare on snow days. One woman described one of DU's policies regarding snow days: if your children's school is closed for a snow-day, all non-essential employees may remain at home. This professor didn't consider herself to be a non-essential employee and cancelled her class. The University disagreed with her decision and she received disciplinary action. Others say that DU is very supportive and that the introduction of a new snow day policy has been particularly helpful. One mother said that on days when DU remains open ''but your child's

school system is closed, you can stay home without it being considered a sick or vacation day, which is great."

Another issue that women all over the country face is the issue of maternity leave. From the interviews performed with female faculty members of varying status at the University of Denver, it became clear that this is an issue that needs to be addressed. It appears that maternity leave is not a service offered to all DU employees; it appears that only tenured members of the faculty receive maternity leave. For those women that are tenured, DU's maternity leave policy is one of the best: "You get basically a quarter off, paid, when you have a child. And that is not typical." Despite maternity leave being an option for tenured women, it is not a fail-safe measure to prevent the possible loss of their positions. One woman recalled that she was often forced to come in during her maternity leave and that she feared that others in her department would "try to get rid of me. Which they did try..."

While the University of Denver may offer maternity leave to tenured professors, this places graduate students and faculty members on short term contracts at a severe disadvantage. One woman from the Division of Natural Sciences and Mathematics discussed how her lack of maternity leave placed her health and her job at serious risk:

> "I got sepsis. So, I was in the ICU for over a week and then I was on a PICC line for six weeks. So, yea, I was like doing IV antibiotics every morning before coming to work. That's another part of the whole parental leave thing. If I had had any type of leave associated with that I

> could have like recovered a little sooner. And it's not just a physical recovery too because I had post-partum depression."

This faculty member has been attending classes and working for the University of Denver for nearly a decade and she received no maternity leave whatsoever. Sepsis is an incredibly dangerous bacterial infection that can result in death in up to 50% of cases. Not only was this woman battling a difficult physical condition, but also with post-partum depression, which can affect nearly 20% of new mothers.

When it comes to summarizing how female faculty members feel about the institutional support they receive from the University of Denver, it can be easily summarized with the quote: "[T]here's a lot of stuff that DU can do to make families feel more welcome."

Conclusion

In conclusion, our class research shows that while most individuals with children who are connected to the University of Denver are satisfied, there are also several areas that can be improved to better enhance people's quality of life. An overall theme that came up often during interviews was the idea of general support. Many faculty members stated that they felt a strong sense of community between colleagues in their own department when it came to understanding the difficulties that come with having children, but almost everyone—faculty and students combined—agreed that there was a lack of institutional support when it came to child/daycare. This deficiency, in turn, affects the convenience and status of one's job. It is essential that faculty and students with children feel supported here at the

University of Denver, because without that, people remain uncertain and frustrated about what they will do if an unexpected situation arises, like if a child were to be sick or injured.

There is an agreement amongst most members of the University of Denver community that the university could do a better job in assisting parents in finding childcare options, because the Fisher Early Learning Center is not enough. There is more demand for childcare than availability in nearby daycare centers, and this causes problems for many students and faculty. However, even with some of these issues, many individuals felt that the University of Denver is a more supportive environment than most other schools that people have attended or worked for. A few faculty members discussed how they are able to make connections with other colleagues and students in order to find someone to watch their child if daycare is not an option. This is one of the many positive aspects of support that faculty and students feel here at DU. So, while the University of Denver does have areas it could improve on relating to offering support for childcare, it does a good job overall at making students and faculty feel welcome and secure in their jobs every day.