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# Considering Family and Significant Others in the Faculty Recruitment Process: A Study of Social Work Recruiting Practices

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## Considering Family and Significant Others in the Faculty Recruitment Process: A Study of Social Work Recruiting Practices

Michael E. Sherr  
Johnny M. Jones

**Abstract:** *One of the most important facets of quality social work education is the recruitment and retention of faculty. This mixed methods study uses findings from an on-line survey of 106 recent (within three years) faculty hires and their (n=24) spouse/partner/significant others (S/P/SO) to determine the degree to which family-integrative recruitment strategies were being used in recruiting social work faculty and the impact with which the presence or absence of these strategies have on retention. A majority of respondents reported that S/P/SO were excluded from the recruitment process. Though the few respondents who felt included were pleased with their current position and planned to pursue tenure to stay with the school, a significant number of faculty whose S/P/SO were not involved were already contemplating their next position. The authors suggest family integrative strategies that help S/P/SO connect with the community may give social work programs the competitive edge they need to attract and retain the best and brightest social work faculty.*

**Keywords:** *Family, recruitment, education, social work, spouse, partner*

### INTRODUCTION

The quality of any social work program is dependent on the quality of its faculty. Through research, teaching, and service, faculties are responsible for producing and disseminating social work's knowledge base (Frazer, 1993; Green & Bentley, 1994; Netting & Nichols-Casebolt, 1997). Faculties determine how students are socialized into a program, how curricula is structured, how social problems are understood, and how practice interventions are designed and implemented. Faculties, along with their administration, are also responsible for recruiting and retaining new faculty to maintain and enhance their program (Frazer, 1994; Lindsey & Kirk, 1992; Simon & Thyer, 1994).

In an era of tremendous demand and limited supply of qualified social work faculty (Thyer & Wilson, 2001), this study explores how recruitment efforts, which include faculty spouses, partners, and significant others (S/P/SO), may help pro-

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grams gain a competitive advantage in recruiting faculty best suited for their program.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### **Social Work Job Landscape/Literature**

With more than 450 BSW programs, almost 160 MSW programs, and 72 social work doctoral programs, there is great competition for qualified social work faculty (Council on Social Work Education, 2003; Thyer & Arnold, 2003). Yet, despite the demand for qualified people, the number of degrees awarded at social work doctoral programs has remained relatively stable over the last decade. In fact, it is estimated that there are three to four faculty vacancies annually in social work education for every doctoral graduate (Thyer & Wilson, 2001). However, while an abundance of recent literature addresses issues, including increasing Ph.D. enrollment, training social work teachers and researchers, promoting diversity, and financing doctoral education in social work (e.g., Ross-Sheriff & Huber, 2001; Tirrito & Ginsberg, 2001; see also Schiele & Wilson, 2001), there is a void in the literature regarding how social work programs are to manage, while waiting for increasing numbers of qualified graduates. Social work programs have vacancies to fill immediately. They simply cannot wait for the future. The immediate need will escalate further, as more and more senior faculty members continue to retire.

Historically, the emphasis in the social work literature has been to focus on the tasks and qualifications of potential faculty. For instance, Harrison, Sowers-Hoag, and Postley (1989) conducted a national study examining the hiring decisions in graduate and undergraduate schools of social work. The article captures the most frequently cited factors search committees look for in new faculty. As one would expect, the respondents indicated that, having a doctoral degree in hand at the time of the on-campus interview, was most important. Other things, such as prior teaching experience, an identified research area, and publication in refereed journals, are all important factors in the hiring decision as well.

Other articles focus on the tenure and promotion of social work educators. Articles by Gibbs and Locke (1989) and Euster and Weinbach (1983) review the important factors influencing successful tenure and promotion for junior faculty. As one would expect, research in refereed journals, solid teaching evaluations, and service to the university were most important, with variations in degree being determined by the type of institution. In addition, Dedmon (1989) explored the effects of junior faculty attempting to engage in practice during their time before tenure and promotion. Despite possible costs in terms of tenure and promotion, Dedmon concluded that being an effective researcher and teacher in social work may include some commitment to continue to engage in some type of professional practice.

More recently, Wilson, Valentine, and Pereira (2002) conducted a telephone survey assessing the effectiveness of the mentoring relationship between newly hired faculty and senior faculty. Their findings suggest that mentoring was quite helpful in increasing publications, helping new faculty get acclimated to the culture of the department, and transition from student to educator. Likewise,

Beckerman (2002) described a faculty orientation group at Yeshiva University with incoming faculty. The article details how helpful the group was in developing a clear sense of expectations, providing consultation in regard to difficult situations encountered in the classroom, and increasing the potential for collaboration on projects.

Although each of these studies (and many others) represents laudable efforts in helping schools of social work recruit and retain quality faculty, a common consideration missing from this literature is any mention of the faculty's family. For example, in a specific article on finding and retaining new social work employees, there was no mention of family, spouse, or partner (Gummer, 2002). Moreover, Pamela Wilson (lead author of the article written by Wilson et al., 2002) states that she and the other authors did not even think to consider the family (personal communication, June 14, 2002). When families with higher levels of education consider changes related to work, however, they are likely to engage in direct dialogue and negotiations before making decisions (Zvonkovic, Schmiede, & Hall, 1994). Moreover, faculty from cultures that tend to value collective social relationships (Asian-Americans, Hispanic/Latino, American Indian) are likely to emphasize family inclusion when it comes to making career decisions (Lee, 1991; Leong, 1991; Sue & Sue, 1990; Yagi & Oh, 1995). For that reason, family considerations become a cultural competence issue that could impact the efforts of social work programs to recruit a diverse faculty.

### **Lessons from Business Literature**

"Let's face it, today's workplace is busier than ever" (Rogers, 2002, p. 2). Great numbers of layoffs have left those who remain in their jobs working more hours. A situation similar to that of social work faculty, with demanding workloads and increasing budgeting restraints, the consequences are increasing amounts of stress, burnout, and higher turnover. In business, the bottom line is presumed to be the production of a quality product that will win favor in the marketplace and ultimately create a profit. To keep production costs low, employers need productive employees to survive. To support the productivity of employees, many employers are attempting to create a working environment that recognizes and supports a balance between work and family. Rogers adds, "A workplace that fosters balance results in less turnover, absenteeism, and burnout" (p. 2).

Utilizing a family-integrated retention and recruitment strategy is one way of encouraging a balanced and productive work environment. A family-integrated strategy consists of policies and practices that provide different services, financial supports, and time for employees to fulfill their family responsibilities (Champion-Hughes, 2001). Specific family-friendly practices include flexible work schedules, on-site/near-site child care, dependent-care reimbursement accounts, homework assistance programs, extended leave care, elderly care, telecommuting, time-off benefits for children's school activities, employee assistance programs, family considerations for travel and relocation, and resource and referral services.

This array of benefits is more than an expression of altruism on the part of employers. Instead, family-integrative strategies are calculated investments with an expectation of great returns for the company. The return is having a business

with employees who are loyal to the company. Champion-Hughes (2001) describes this sense of loyalty as organizational citizenship. She explains:

Organizational citizenship refers to the willingness of employees to engage in behaviors that help the organization achieve its goals. Such behaviors include helping co-workers with job-related activities, accepting orders willingly, tolerating impositions without fussing, and making sacrifices for the good of the company. Generally, when employees are loyal to their employers, that loyalty is reciprocated (p. 301).

One noteworthy area in business that is similar to social work education is the amount of potential travel. Whether a faculty member moves across country to assume a new position or travels to present at a national conference, the business literature suggests that it is vitally important to think of the employee's spouse or partner during times of transition and travel. One of the main reasons employees leave a new job area is the stress from family members who feel isolated and unadjusted. Likewise, faculty will be less willing to travel to conferences when they perceive that their family is not fully connected in their new community (Gresing-Pophal, 2001). This is a serious issue for human resources personnel, because it is costly to recruit employees only to have them leave due to factors not related to their job. In fact, family resistance ranks as the top reason for leaving a new position after relocating and being reluctant to travel at all. Gresing-Pophal adds:

Any policy that does not address issues related to the spouse and family misses the mark. If the family is not settled, then nine times out of ten the employee is not going to be settled. For Human Resource professionals, taking the stress out of relocations means a transferee can quickly be settled into the new position and the new home and be more productive on the job (p. 118).

When beginning a new position in a foreign country, the relocation issues for the family are even more complex. Shaffer and Harrison (2001) developed a family integrative model for conceptualizing how employers can assist families to successfully adjust to living in a foreign environment. The model consists of three key dimensions that are important to consider for spouse or partner readjustment. The three dimensions are: 1) How well the spouse or partner builds relationships with host-country nationals; 2) How well the spouse or partner adjusts to local customs and the culture in general; and 3) The extent to which the spouse or partner has a sense of becoming part of or feeling at home in the foreign country. A key factor in achieving successful adjustment in all three dimensions depends on whether the spouse can reestablish his or her identity in the new culture. Another key factor depends on whether the spouse has realistic expectations of what to expect in terms of workload and work hours of the employee. "Companies should give realistic job previews to spouses both prior to and during relocation. This will help spouses accurately identify the challenges they will face as well as the personal assets they can bring to bear" (Shaffer & Harrison, 2001, p. 251).

### **Research Questions**

Several key research questions emerge for this initial study that explore recruitment efforts to include faculty S/P/SO in gaining a competitive advantage in

recruiting social work faculty. First, do S/P/SO play a pivotal role in the recruitment process? Second, do S/P/SO perceive that they play a role in the recruitment process? Third, do faculty members perceive that their S/P/SO has some control in the recruitment process?

## METHOD

### Respondents and Data Collection Procedures

Respondents for this study consisted of a purposive sample of social work faculty working less than three years in their current position. An e-mail was posted on the list-serve for The National Association of Deans and Directors of Schools of Social Work (NADD) and The Association of Baccalaureate Social Work Program Directors (BPD) asking deans and directors to forward the e-mail to faculty members working less than three years. The e-mail included an informed consent form as an attached document as well as the website address for either the faculty or the partner survey. Faculty receiving the e-mail were asked to do the following: 1) Read the informed consent form and anonymously complete the online faculty survey and 2) Have S/P/SO read the informed consent form and anonymously complete the online partner survey.

### SURVEY INSTRUMENT

The online faculty survey and partner survey, which were designed specifically for this study, consisted of three parts. Part one asked respondents if they were with their S/P/SO at the time of hire and, if so, which, if any techniques, were used by their current university employer to include their S/P/SO in the recruitment process. Respondents were asked to choose from the following recruitment techniques used by their current university employer: 1) Providing connection to a realtor; 2) Inviting S/P/SO to the campus interview; 3) Paying for S/P/SO to come to the interview; 3) Providing job search assistance for S/P/SO; 4) Inviting S/P/SO to social functions during the interview (e.g., dinner, lunch); and 5) Providing opportunities for interaction with other faculty S/P/SO. Part one also consisted of three semantic differential questions that asked respondents to assess on a scale between 0-5 the influence the S/P/SO had on the hiring process, how supportive the S/P/SO was in the decision to accept the current position, and their overall satisfaction with their current position. Part two of the survey consisted of demographic items, such as gender, ethnicity, the number of years working in higher education, highest degree, and the type of university. S/P/SO were also asked if they, too, worked for the same university and, if so, in what role—faculty, staff, administration, or other. The last part of the survey consisted of one open-ended question that asked respondents to tell us the story of their recruitment experience with regards to their S/P/SO.

The online faculty survey and partner survey were field tested with social work faculty from the authors' institutions (names of the authors' institutions) to assess face validity. In response to the initial field test, the phrase "spouse, partner, or significant other" was added to each item to enhance the face validity of the survey. Further efforts to establish more dependable measures of reliability and validity were beyond the scope of this initial study.

## RESULTS

### Faculty Respondent's Characteristics

Dichotomization of sample characteristics will better facilitate the description of the sample. The two sub-samples include respondents who identified themselves as faculty and those that identified themselves as S/P/SO. One hundred six (n=106) respondents identified themselves as faculty by completing the faculty questionnaire online. Although an exact response rate could not be determined, Todd Lennon, Coordinator of Member Services for the Council on Social Work Education, estimated these respondents represented one third of faculty accepting positions within the last three years (Personal Communication, February 28, 2005). These respondents tended to be females (66%, n=70). They also claimed relationships with S/P/SO (79.2%, n=84) and that they were with their other S/P/SO at the time they were hired into their current position (72.6%, n=77). The majority of respondents identified themselves as white/Caucasian (69.8%, n=74). Other ethnic and racial identifications included African American (9.6%, n=11), American Indian (5.7%, n=6), Hispanic/Latina/o (2.8%, n=3), Asian American (2.8%, n=3), Pacific Islander (1.9%, n=2), African (1.9%, n=2), British of Africa (n=1), Jewish (n=1) and three subjects provided no data with regards to this question.

While recruitment of the sample focused on those faculty persons in their current position for the past three years, there was considerable range in the number of years in higher education. The range was between 0 and 39 years with a mean of 6.25 years and a standard deviation of 6.53 years. The majority of respondents indicated that they worked in public universities and/or colleges (68.9%, n=73) over private ones (28.3%, n=30). These programs were approximately 48.1% (n=51) Doctoral/Research Universities, 34% (n=36) Bachelor's Programs, and 16% (n=17) Master's Programs. A total of 46.2% (n=49) of the faculty respondents indicated that they hold a Ph.D. in social work or social welfare, 1.9% (n=2) indicated that they held D.S.W. degrees, 21.7% (n=23) indicated that they held Ph.D.s in other fields and 1.9% (n=2) indicated that they hold other doctorates (e.g., Ed.D.). A relatively large proportion of the sample (24.5%, n=26) indicated that the latest degree was an M.S.W. or M.S.S.W.

### Spouse/Partner/Significant Other Characteristics

There were a total of 25 submissions of the S/P/SO online survey. However, one of the submissions contained no data and was omitted for a sub-sample size of 24. The submission may have been an accidental early submission before the survey had been completed. Eighty-three and one third percent (n=20) identified themselves as white/Caucasian. One person identified her/himself as African American, one person as Asian American, and two identified themselves as Pacific Islander. The majority of the respondents (70.8%, n=17) reported that they were with their faculty partner at the time of the most recent hire. Nine (37.5%) of the respondents indicated that they were employed in higher education and five of those nine reported that they worked at the same institution as their faculty partner. Five of the respondents in higher education reported also being faculty, one reported being staff, one reported being an administrator, and two reported their positions in higher education as "other."

### **Descriptive Statistics on the Faculty Recruitment Process**

When asked about techniques that involved S/P/SO in the recruitment process, the majority of both faculty and S/P/SO respondents indicated exclusion rather than inclusion in the process. Only 17 (16%) of the faculty respondents and 4 (16.7%) of the S/P/SO respondents indicated that they were connected to a realtor by their prospective employer. Only nine (8.5%) faculty indicated that their S/P/SO were invited to the on-campus interview and only one (4.2%) S/P/SO indicated he or she was invited. The same number of faculty and S/P/SO respondents indicated that their S/P/SO expenses were paid to attend the interview. Twelve (11.3%) faculty respondents indicated that their S/P/SO was offered job search assistance by the prospective employer. Only one S/P/SO indicated that they had received this same assistance. Twenty-two (20.8%) faculty and 6 (25%) S/P/SO indicated that they (i.e., S/P/SO) were invited to attend social functions. Thirteen (12.3%) faculty noted that their S/P/SO were offered opportunities to interact with other spouses, partners, and significant others of the hiring faculty. Only four (16%) S/P/SO indicated that they were afforded the same opportunity.

Both faculty and S/P/SO were asked to rate the influence of the S/P/SO on the faculty member during the recruitment process using a 6-point Likert-type scale from 0 (Least Influence) to 5 (Most Influence). Seventy-five faculty responded to this question. A total of 21 of the 75 respondents (28%) scored the influence of their S/P/SO as 2 or below, indicating that they felt that the S/P/SO had little influence on their decisions. In contrast, only two (8%) S/P/SOs scored their influence over their faculty partner as 2 or below. An overwhelming majority of S/P/SOs (87.5%,  $n=21$ ) indicated that they supported their faculty partner in accepting their current position. Where it is assumed that production is equated with job satisfaction, 28 of 78 (35.9%) faculty reported lower levels of job satisfaction on a Likert-type scale. Similarly, 8 of 21 (38.1%) S/P/SO reported lower levels of satisfaction with their faculty partner's current position.

An exploratory regression analysis on the independent variables (i.e., whether or not the faculty person was connected to a realtor; whether the S/P/SO's expenses were paid to attend the interview; whether job search assistance was provided for the S/P/SO; whether opportunities were provided for social interaction between the S/P/SO and the faculty/staff of the interviewing program; the faculty person's perception of the influence of their S/P/SO on the decision of whether or not to take their current position; whether or not the S/P/SO was supportive of the faculty person's acceptance of the current position; the number of years the faculty person has been employed in higher education; the education level of the faculty person; and, whether or not the employing program is a public or private program) of the faculty survey on the dependent variable (satisfaction with current faculty position) yields some interesting results. The authors chose to report regression analyses despite the small sample size for several reasons. First, the small sample size yielded significant results, suggesting that there is indeed a true effect size within the population. In this model, approximately 32% of the variance ( $R^2_{Adj} = 31.5$ ,  $p=.006$ ) in job satisfaction was attributable to the independent variables listed above. Only three of the predictor variable's individual model coefficients were statistically significant however, indicating possi-



ble strong predictors of job satisfaction. These statistically significant predictors included whether or not the S/P/SO's expenses were paid to attend the interview process ( $t=-2.852$ ,  $p=.006$ ); whether or not the S/P/SO was provided opportunity for social interaction with recruiting faculty, spouse, partners, etc. ( $t=2.891$ ,  $p=.005$ ); and the number of years in higher education ( $t=-2.574$ ,  $p=.012$ ). Second, the results of the regression analyses provide support for the qualitative results obtained. Although the use of inferential statistics is suspect at best given the limitations of this study, these results are consistent with qualitative results of the open-ended questions of both faculty and S/P/SO surveys discussed in the following section.

### **Open-Ended Responses**

*Extent of S/P/SO Involvement.* Respondents shared a range of experiences regarding recruitment to their current institution. The majority of respondents (70%) reported that their S/P/SO was not included or considered in the recruitment process. One faculty member stated, "Neither my spouse nor my children were involved in the recruitment process in any way." Another faculty member indicated, "No assistance or attention was given to my spouse or his needs in moving here." A supportive S/P/SO lamented about being left out of the process:

Not once in any of the recruitment process has anyone asked her about her family, the richness of the experiences she brings outside of the dollar signs she can bring to the university from her grants, or cared how her job might impact her family life.

Some respondents discussed their S/P/SO having a "behind the scenes" role in the recruitment process. In some instances, the S/P/SO worked with faculty to establish parameters for accepting a position. A male faculty member stated:

My wife was a major factor in my job decision—while I was the one considering school fit with my interests, school reputation, and potential for professional and scholarly growth, she was the one helping to determine geographic limits, family expectations, and social climate of the setting.

At the same time, other respondents described S/P/SO communicating full support for the faculty member to have the autonomy to choose the best position possible. One faculty member commented, "My partner was very interested in my professional success and she encouraged me to take the best or highest ranked offer I received."

A smaller number of respondents described S/P/SO as being fully included and considered in the recruitment process. Several characteristics emerged as common experiences of S/P/SO who felt included during the recruitment process. For example, for S/P/SO with their own careers, all of them mentioned formal and informal support with job relocation. As one faculty member stated, "My colleagues in the social work department genuinely understood how important my husband's professional and social considerations were to my decision, and did everything they could to accommodate his needs." Another common experience was being invited to participate in the interview and learn more about the area surrounding the school. One faculty member reported, "My wife was fully sup-

portive of our move, because our dean was very inclusive of her, paid for her to visit the town, and made her feel part of the process." An additional faculty member shared how his wife's inclusion influenced his choice between two different offers.

My wife was invited to come to the town, but not to the interview. She was shown around town by an administrative assistant and joined the faculty for lunch. She felt much more a part of this process than another one where she was not invited to attend anything. I was offered that position, but did not accept it.

***Specific Same-sex Findings.*** Faculty in same-sex relationships expressed three additional areas of importance to them and their S/P/SO. First, respondents expected the university to provide partner benefits. "I will not consider any institution that does not offer domestic partner benefits for healthcare and life insurance," was a typical response. Second, respondents indicated that it was crucial for them to feel that faculty search committees considered their relationship legitimate and important. Finally, just as with all S/P/SO, members of faculty search committees should portray genuine warmth and acceptance. One respondent described experiencing complete acceptance and inclusion:

The invitation and general welcome extended to my partner was especially significant to me, given that our relationship is a same-sex partnership. I came out during the interview, and no one blinked an eye. It wasn't that they were of the naïve mindset that sexual orientation doesn't matter. Rather, they were genuinely inclusive and valued the diversity I could bring to campus. My relationship was immediately treated as legitimate and important. Faculty, administration, staff were immediately warm and comfortable toward my partner and embraced us into the campus community at the welcoming dinner at the start of the academic year. Afterwards, I was struck by the fact that so many folks on campus remembered my partner's name and asked about her often.

***Consequences and Benefits.*** Consequences and benefits of S/P/SO involvement emerged as another finding. Faculty whose S/P/SO were not included in the recruitment process, having only been in their current position for less than three years, were already contemplating their next position. As they plan for their next position, these same faculty members are making S/P/SO involvement and consideration an important part of choosing where they will teach next. As one respondent indicated:

I do not feel valued as a faculty member at this institution, nor do I feel as though the university was invested in helping my spouse find employment. I plan to leave this university in the near future and will not accept another faculty appointment until I know that my spouse has also procured employment in his field.

Another respondent shared:

In my recruitment experience, my partner was excluded and I was the one offered any information about the university, program, area, etc. Because I

am the sole provider for my family, my partner fully accepted my decision to choose this present school. However, because I am extremely dissatisfied with this faculty, I will be seeking a different teaching position and my partner will/must be more involved in the decision-making process. I believe that recruitment needs to include family members.

When S/P/SO felt involved and considered, respondents were more supportive, happy, and hoping to remain in their current positions for a long time. A S/P/SO shared why it was important for him to be part of the recruitment process.

I was glad to be along for the recruitment process. I could tell that the area would be good for the family and that the position would be great for my wife. Knowing this allowed me to be fully supportive of my wife working there.

A faculty member simply stated, "I am happy here and likely to stay (assuming I can get tenure) because I am happy and my family is happy.

## DISCUSSION

In the midst of the current labor market, this exploratory research has sought to understand how expanding recruitment efforts to include faculty S/P/SO could help social work programs recruit and retain faculty best suited for their programs. Several limitations are important to consider in interpreting the findings of this study. Although several steps were taken to recruit a purposive sample of social work faculty working less than three years in their current position, the lack of randomization prevents generalization of findings. Further, the low response rate of partner surveys prevents comparing the responses and experiences of faculty with S/P/SO. The online surveys, though field-tested, were not standardized. It is possible that responses were more indicative of instrument error than respondents' actual recruitment experiences. In the same way, the survey items were limited to respondents' general perceptions of satisfaction and influence with other factors not considered (i.e., teaching load, research support, salary, geographic location). Finally, findings primarily describe the responses from faculty and S/P/SO; it may be equally or more important to understand the impact of entire family systems, including the presence, number, and age of children, as well as the influence of other extended family members.

Despite these limitations, several important findings emerged from this study. Perhaps most notable was that a majority of both faculty and S/P/SO respondents indicated that S/P/SO were not included in the recruitment process. A majority of S/P/SO were offered no support in finding a place to live, no job search assistance, no invitation to come to the interview, and no opportunity to interact with other faculty S/P/SO at social functions. Just as important, however, was the expressed commitment of respondents when S/P/SO felt included. For the small number of respondents whose S/P/SO felt included in the recruitment process, each mentioned how pleased they were with the current position and how they were intent on pursuing tenure and staying with the school. In contrast, a significant number of respondents whose S/P/SO were not involved were already contemplating their next position. Considered together, these findings suggest that, while including

S/P/SO in the recruiting process does not guarantee faculty “goodness-of-fit” in terms of scholarship productivity, teaching proficiency and service with a social work program, it may improve the likelihood of faculty wanting to remain with their current school. Furthermore, if faculty, whose S/P/SO were excluded from the recruitment process are spending time and energy contemplating their next position, it is reasonable to believe that they are spending less time and energy fulfilling their responsibilities in their current faculty position. When faculty members in this study do look for another position, they anticipate looking for schools that include their S/P/SO in the recruitment process, giving schools that consider the S/P/SO a competitive advantage.

### **IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION**

The findings that emerged from this study provide initial support for including S/P/SO in the recruitment process of social work faculty. Consistent with the literature (Champion-Hughes, 2001; Gensing-Pophal, 2001; Rogers, 2002; Shaffer & Harrison, 2001), the current findings suggest that it is good business to include S/P/SO in recruiting and retaining social work faculty. After investing time and financial resources for advertising, faculty search meetings, expenses for interviewing candidates, moving expenses, new equipment and office space, readjustment of teaching schedules, and orientation, social work programs need faculty who can contribute to their programs as soon as possible. Stated differently, social work programs cannot afford to have faculty contemplate leaving in less than three years of being hired. In the same way, the quality, morale, and stability of social work programs depends on hiring faculty who, on one hand, add diversity of experiences and dynamic thought (Holley & Young, 2005) and, on the other hand, are invested in becoming productive scholars willing to make a long-term commitment to the program and the community.

Academia does not operate with the exact same parameters as the business world. Although including S/P/SO seems to be a pragmatic idea, social work educators will have to tailor their strategies to fit into the culture of their program. The authors, however, recommend beginning with two simple strategies that build upon the assets of the social work profession. First, faculty search committees can at least begin to make contact with the S/P/SO of the newly hired faculty person. Utilizing reflective listening skills, clarification skills, and empathetic responses, members of the faculty search committee can establish rapport and trust early in the hiring process. Furthermore, Gensing-Pophal (2001) suggests determining one or two critical elements for the S/P/SO that would make the transition easier. Perhaps the faculty on the search committee could help family members meet new friends, help with housing, and locate adequate childcare. Through establishing rapport and trust, S/P/SO will be more likely to share the issues that are most important for the transition to go smoothly.

Another strategy, which builds upon social work literature, is to consider implementing a mentorship program for the S/P/SO of new faculty. Mentoring is already effective in acclimating new faculty into social work programs (Wilson et al., 2002). Deans and other administrators within the programs can identify S/P/SO of senior faculty who would be willing to provide some mentoring to the

family members of new faculty. Once a new faculty member accepts an offer to begin working at a university, the faculty search committee can partner the new faculty's S/P/SO with one of the volunteer mentors. The mentor can provide support during the transition of moving into a new area. The mentor can also discuss, from his or her perspective, realistic expectations of the new faculty's work responsibilities, including what to expect in terms of travel, work hours, and time for leisure. Such a program may also be beneficial to the S/P/SO of senior faculty, as they are included in a very important aspect of the universities' operations—the recruitment and retention of quality faculty.

Finally, several areas of research are needed to address the limitations of this study and build on its findings. First, replicating this study with a larger, random sample would allow for greater comparisons between the experiences of faculty whose S/P/SO were included in the recruitment process and faculty whose S/P/SO were not included. Furthermore, the importance of including S/P/SO in the recruitment process should be examined in conjunction with other significant factors. Although exploratory regression analysis revealed initial support for the significance of including S/P/SO in the recruitment process, additional analysis with other variables (e.g., research support, workload expectations, salary, family responsibilities, number of children, and geographic location) would offer more conclusive evidence (Euster & Weinbach, 1983; Gibbs & Locke, 1989; Harrison, Sowers-Hoag, & Postley, 1989; Holley & Young, 2005). Second, much could be learned by a follow-up study using in-depth interviews with faculty and S/P/SO. How would faculty and S/P/SO characterize a successful recruitment experience? After accepting a position, how would S/P/SO describe their transition experiences and how do their experiences affect faculty productivity? For those who left a previous faculty position, what influence did S/P/SO have on their decision to leave? Third, a survey of deans on their rationale for inclusion/exclusion of S/P/SO would yield useful findings. The survey could assess the rationale of deans at the beginning of recruitment and after selecting a faculty person. Finally, additional discussion and study is needed to further understand the impact of recruiting entire family systems in academia. In business, the impact appears to be less turnover and greater morale and productivity of employees (Rogers, 2002; Champion-Hughes, 2001), which is consistent with operating a successful social work program.

In the midst of the current labor market, expanding recruitment efforts to include faculty S/P/SO may help programs recruit faculty best suited for their program. Helping S/P/SO to feel included in the hiring process may send the message to faculty that the school wants the whole family system to feel a part of the university. Such efforts, as supported in the business literature, could reduce turnover, increase recruitment and retention, and encourage faculty to be more loyal and productive for the university. Finally, one respondent offers another important reason to include S/P/SO in the recruitment process, "It would seem that, since we often teach of systems and their impact on client functioning, social work search committees would include systems thinking in their search processes."

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