

Jan 1st, 12:00 AM

Exploring an Organizational Science View on Faculty Gender and Work-Life Inclusion: Conceptualization, Perspectives, and Interventions

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Recommended Citation

Kossek, E. E. (2019). Exploring an organizational science view on faculty gender and work-life inclusion: conceptualization, perspectives, and interventions. Abstract of a paper presented at the NSF Workshop: Fostering Gender and Work-Life Inclusion for Faculty in Understudied Contexts: An Organizational Science Lens. (#1837920). Organizers: E. Kossek & K. Lee, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN. Retrieved from <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/worklifeinclusion/2018/gwlibsufc/3/>

I argue that there is a need for increased attention to faculty gender and work life inclusion from an organizational science lens, and identify relevant perspectives, and interventions. I define work-life inclusion as a form of diversity inclusion that intersects with social identities involving gender, caregiving ambition, and multi-culturalism. I provide examples of organizational pressures in implementing and supporting faculty work-life inclusion practices. I provide several theoretical explanations regarding why work-life inclusion initiatives are critical to advancing faculty gender equality to close the workforce-workplace mismatch gap. These include: 1) multiple role synthesis tensions involving the “dual-centricity” of social and professional Identities; 2) gender discrimination from adverse impact of career policies, and “work as a masculinity contest” cultural schemas; and 3) the faculty work-life job demands–resources perspective. Unfortunately, most work-life interventions target the individual employee level, are implemented based on the individuals’ “choice” to suggest “I-deals” and take-up customized arrangements that are not strongly integrated into professional career success norms. I suggest three target areas for organizational interventions involving leader and peer socialization, and job and career redesign. These include: 1) increasing support to facilitate work-life inclusion and performance; 2) job redesign to increase control over boundaries, schedules, workload, or location; and 3) career flexibility policy changes to reduce system rigidities creating role overload at key times in the adult and career development life cycles.