

Job Sharing in Academia: Reconnaissance Map of the Terrane

C. H. Shradý

Volume 21, Number 3, September 1994

URI: https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/geocan21_3icg06

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

The Geological Association of Canada

ISSN

0315-0941 (print)

1911-4850 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this article

Shradý, C. H. (1994). Job Sharing in Academia: Reconnaissance Map of the Terrane. *Geoscience Canada*, 21(3), 134–136.

WORKFORCE DIVERSITY

Business and labour leaders in the mining industry recognized that achieving employment equity is difficult due to downsizing. The two opportunities available to the industry to increase representation of target groups are when operations expand and when new operations open. Neither is occurring today. There is a risk that the mining workforce will become less diverse over the next five years. The culture of the mining industry generally has not been conducive to improving the representation of women in the workforce. Changing the employment patterns requires top-level support in individual operations for employment equity initiatives.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The sector council and industry associations should share information about employment equity strategies and initiatives. For example, a survey of women members of industry/professional associations may provide insight into what work is like for them, what needs to change, and how to make changes.
2. The sector council should encour-

age joint employer-employee groups at the establishment level to examine how their human resource systems and collective agreements affect the recruitment, selection and career development of women, and design systems to reflect a commitment to employment equity.

3. At the individual operation level, employers should try to give new female employees the opportunity to work with other women to ease the discomfort that some women experience when they work in a male-dominated environment.

Addressing these challenges requires the participation, involvement and commitment of all industry stakeholders, including industry/professional associations, governments, companies, educators, employees and unions. Every stakeholder has a role to play. The on-going development of technical and professional staff through professional associations is a key strength of the mining and exploration sector. Professional associations offer seminars and workshops across the country. The active involvement of associations in promoting equity and in supporting wo-

men is critical.

To get these issues on the agenda of governments, associations, employers, employees, unions and other stakeholders, the Committee recommended the formation of a joint human resource sector council. Business and labour leaders are now actively involved in the formation of such a council. Women in geoscience will find this sector council to be an important forum for influencing change. However, local action, in your communities, your colleges and universities, and your workplaces, is also vitally important.

REFERENCES

- Human Resources Development Canada, 1989, Employment Equity Act, Annual Report.
- Human Resources Development Canada, 1991, Employment Equity Act, Annual Report.
- Statistics Canada, 1992, Universities enrolment and degrees, Catalogue n. 81-204.

Accepted, as revised, 1 March 1995.



Job Sharing in Academia: Reconnaissance Map of the Terrane

C.H. Shrady
*Department of Geology
 St. Lawrence University
 Canton, New York 13617 United States*

INTRODUCTION

As a group, women geoscientists are under-employed and over-represented in non-tenure track academic positions in the United States (Benditt, 1992) and,

as was illustrated at the Geological Association of Canada—Mineralogical Association of Canada 1993 Special Session "Women in Geoscience: The Next Decade," the situation is similar in Canada. Clearly, among the challenges facing women geoscientists considering an academic career (particularly if they have partners who are also geoscientists) are successful employment, and balancing child-rearing with career. Job sharing is a promising solution. While still a relatively new approach in the geosciences, shared faculty positions in a variety of disciplines are becoming more common. This paper aims to draw a reconnaissance map of the terrane as a practical guide to individuals and institutions considering job sharing. Most of the North American universities where shared faculty positions in the geosciences exist or have been negotiated are used as examples. These nine surveyed institutions are of two types: small, private, liberal arts institutions with undergraduate populations between 1 500 and 3 000 students (Albion College, Michigan; Colgate University,

New York; Franklin and Marshall College, Pennsylvania; Hamilton College, New York; and St. Lawrence University, New York) and larger, research institutions, both public and private, with undergraduate populations ranging between 5 500 and 170,000 (Vanderbilt University, Tennessee; Michigan Technological University; Cornell University, New York; and University of Massachusetts, Amherst).

It is undoubtedly helpful to those negotiating shared faculty appointments to be able to demonstrate precedence (that is, to be able to show that job sharing is successfully established at comparable institutions) and to be aware of the issues involved. Key issues related to job sharing in academia are: precise definition of the position, conditions of tenure/promotion/raises, benefits, in-house university support (grants, start-up funds, travel funds, office space, etc.), voting rights and the "release clause" (see below). Table 1 illustrates the variety of ways in which these issues have been resolved at the surveyed institutions.

Table 1 Key issues in job sharing in academia and their resolution

| Institution ¹ | Definition of Position | Tenure/Promotion | Benefits | Start Up Funds | University Grants | Travel Funds | Voting Rights | Office Space | Release Clause ³ |
|--------------------------|------------------------|---|---|--|--|-------------------|--|---------------|--|
| A | 2 half time | Research - combined Teaching - separate | Full medical Half other | Each as if full time | Both may apply as if full time | Each full funding | 1 vote each dept. and univ. | Each separate | Negotiate for full time |
| B | 3/5 each | Separate ² Renegotiate on single denial of tenure | Full medical Half other except tuition for children | Shared | Both may apply as if full time | Each full funding | 1 vote each dept. and univ. | Each separate | Negotiate for full time or remain 3/5ths |
| C | 1 full time shared | Separate Renegotiate on single denial of tenure | Full medical Family coverage | Shared | Both may apply as if full time | Each full funding | 1 vote each univ., 1/2 vote each dept. | Each separate | Negotiate for full time |
| D | 2 half time | Separate Renegotiate on single denial of tenure | Full medical Half other | Each as if full time | Both may apply as if full time | Each full funding | 1 vote each dept. | Each separate | Negotiate for full time, death or divorce only |
| E | 1 full time shared | Separate Renegotiate on single denial of tenure | Full medical Half other | Each as if full time | Both may apply as if full time | Each full funding | 1 vote each dept. and univ. | Each separate | Negotiate for full time |
| F | 2 half time | Separate | Full medical Half other | Each as if full time | Both may apply as if full time | Each full funding | ----- | Each separate | Negotiate for full time |
| G | 1 full time shared | Separate Renegotiate on single denial of tenure | Full medical Half other | ----- | ----- | Each full funding | 1 vote each dept., 1/2 vote each univ. | Each separate | Negotiate for full time |
| H | 2 half time | Separate | Full medical Half other | Shared | Shared | Not applicable | 1 vote each dept. and univ. | Each separate | Dept. Chair decides |
| I | 1 & 1/2 | Becomes two full time positions after 2 years | 1 partner voluntarily 1/2 time for first 2 years Benefits reflect this | Both may apply since are technically full time | Both may apply since are technically full time | ----- | 1 vote each dept. and univ. | Each separate | Not applicable |

¹ Institutions A-E are small, private, liberal arts, F-I are larger, research, public and private. The specific institution is not connected to the details of information in order to protect the confidentiality of individual contracts.

² Each member of the shared position must be deemed tenurable with regard to teaching, scholarship and university service.

³ Should one member of a shared position leave, the remaining member may:

THE ISSUES

Definition of the Position

Precisely how the shared appointment is defined, whether as two part-time positions, one shared full-time position, more than one full-time position (e.g., one-and-one-half), or some variation, has a significant impact on virtually all of the other aspects of any contract.

Tenure/Promotion/Raises

It is important to establish in writing, well in advance, the criteria used to award tenure, promotion and raises. At contract, it can be decided whether each party is to be judged independently with regard to publications, teaching and "service," or whether accomplishments may be pooled so that, as a whole, the position has produced an acceptable publication and teaching record. It must be made clear that the *amount* of teaching, publication and service expected from each individual in a shared appointment should be less than what is expected from an individual in a non-shared appointment. Other important questions to resolve are: can one member receive tenure and the other not; if so, what then becomes of the position as defined in the contract and can the tenured member negotiate to become full-time?

Benefits

Benefits such as life and medical insurance, pension and tuition exemption for children seem, from anecdotal evidence, to be among the stickiest points of negotiation (surprisingly, more so than tenure). The distinction between two half-time positions and one shared full-time position becomes more than mere semantics since how the position is defined determines how benefits are managed: part-time employees may not receive benefits at all, or only in limited amount.

University Funding

This includes in-house university grants in support of research, start-up funds for new faculty (mainly for lab equipment), and support for attendance at conferences and workshops. The relevant point here is whether a designated amount must be shared or whether each member of the shared position may apply for full funding as if occupying a single full-time position.

Office Space

Because office space is usually at a premium, an important consideration is whether it must be shared. It is noteworthy that all nine example institutions recognize the importance of separate offices for members of shared appointments.

Voting Rights

The individual status accorded those sharing a faculty appointment can be reflected by the voting rights granted the position. If a single vote, either in departmental or university-wide meetings, must be split, the individual in this respect has less influence than desirable. On the other hand, granting one full vote to both members of a shared position gives that position somewhat more power than other full-time positions.

Release Clause

This is an important contractual component that establishes what happens to the shared position if one member leaves it. Is the position dissolved? Can the remaining member negotiate to become full time? Does timing matter, *i.e.*, will this be handled differently before and after tenure? Does the reason for leaving (illness, death, divorce, another full-time appointment) affect whether the remaining partner can negotiate to become full time? Will negotiations be with the department or university administration?

DISCUSSION

From the point of view of the institution, the primary drawback to job sharing is the potential increased cost of benefits and university funding to a single position. However, this is counterbalanced by the vastly increased productivity of a single position shared by two individuals, particularly with regard to teaching and student contact, but also very likely in the areas of research and committee work. Academics do not punch time clocks and have not chosen academic careers for easy hours and high salaries. Those in shared positions tend to work well in excess of half-time. Also, from the affirmative action stand-point, job sharing is another strategy for attracting and retaining women faculty, especially those who may choose to raise children.

From the point of view of those shar-

ing a single position, drawbacks include a single income and the "two for the price of one syndrome." The latter is sometimes difficult to avoid precisely because, for most academics, the primary motivation in career choice is not the salary, but satisfaction derived from the work itself, and work tends to expand to fill the time available! Those contemplating a shared appointment ought seriously consider the possibility of one-and-one-quarter or one-and-one-half time as more realistic reflections of actual work load and productivity associated with shared positions.

Satisfying employment, not having the stress of a commuting relationship (which has become more and more common among professional couples), and having the time flexibility which can, among other things, greatly facilitate child-rearing are some of the advantages to job sharing. These, in my opinion as one member of a shared faculty appointment, far outweigh the drawbacks and contribute to making an academic career in the geosciences a more attractive option for both men and women.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to recognize the efforts of the organizers of the Edmonton GAC-MAC 1993 Special Session on "Women in Geosciences: The Next Decade" (B. Sheriff, H. Mann and J. Percival) where this information was first presented, as well as G. Pe-Piper's contribution in organizing publication. I acknowledge St. Lawrence University's progressive spirit in setting a precedence in shared appointments and I am grateful to J. Bursnell for sharing one with me.

REFERENCES

- Benditt, J., 1992, *Women in Science: Science*, v. 255, p. 1365-1386.

Accepted, as revised, 1 March 1995.