

Provost &
Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

Statement on Family-Friendly Scheduling

Washington University in St. Louis is committed to providing a family-friendly environment for everyone in our community. One issue that directly impacts faculty is the scheduling of activities before or after normal business hours, in particular those events that may enhance a faculty member's scholarship. In order to create a more supportive and friendly environment for faculty with families, departments and programs are encouraged to implement the following best practices with respect to scheduling of events, departmental meetings and other activities that are core to a faculty member's work at the university.

Principles

Family-friendly scheduling does not mean that all events outside of regular business hours should be prohibited. Rather, it means that those engaged in programming should be conscious of the exclusions created by events outside of normal business hours and should take proactive steps to accommodate faculty unable to stay on campus into the evening. The university acknowledges that the scheduling of events can be a gender equity issue. Additionally, the university should be sensitive to particular challenges faced by single parents or single caregivers on the faculty.

Best Practices

- Ensure that departmental governance and other essential activities take place during the workday.
- To the extent possible avoid scheduling outside of normal business hours (before 8:00 or after 5:30), on weekends or on holidays on the premise that "everyone is free."
- Be mindful of people's commitments and provide adequate notice for required meetings and other events that are beneficial for professional development.
- Distinguish between programming meant to serve the broader community and programming meant to bolster the research capacity of the faculty. Programming in the latter category should happen during the workday, as much as possible.
- Vary the times of workshops, seminars, and lectures so that the same people are not perpetually excluded.
- Accommodate faculty with family responsibilities by creating opportunities for professional workday interactions. In particular, make sure that junior faculty with family responsibilities do not miss the professional development or networking opportunities essential for tenure.

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