



Panel: Strategies for Success and Sanity for Academic Parents

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Panel: Strategies for Success and Sanity for Academic Parents

Intended audience:

Engineering educators who are parents or are considering becoming parents.

Summary of ideas to be explored and discussed:

Raising children is one of the most challenging and opportunity-filled experiences most people will take on in their lives. Raising children as a member of the Academy brings an additional layer of complexity. This panel will present challenges and opportunities encountered by the panelists while raising children and trying to succeed in the Academy. The panelists will also provide concrete, achievable strategies that have worked for them to overcome those hurdles and how they have leveraged opportunities available to them. The session will allow time for Q&A during which audience members can share their own challenges and success strategies with the broader group.

Some possible topics include:

- Emotional demands of parenting
- Timing the birth or adoption of children
- Traveling for work with children
- Succeeding on the tenure track with children
- Achieving promotion with children
- Balancing the demands of children and a challenging job

Outline of the session format:

The first third of the session will be dedicated to panelists sharing their top challenges and best strategies for success and sanity as academic parents. The remaining two-thirds of the session will allow audience members to pose their personal challenges to the panel and the rest of the audience to receive relevant feedback. To encourage and guide audience participation, we will ask members of the audience to first think about challenges and opportunities they've encountered at various parental stages including prior to having children, while parenting small children, and while parenting older children. We will then have members of the audience discuss their experiences in small groups. Finally, we will encourage sharing with the audience at large.

Vision for panelists:

We plan to include five panelists with diverse experiences including people who:

- Have small children while on the tenure-track

- Have older children while on the tenure-track
- Have achieved tenure with children
- Have adopted children
- Had children during graduate school
- Had children post-tenure
- Have chosen not to pursue a tenure-track position
- Are international citizens
- Have held an administrative position that allows them to provide insight on promotion, tenure, and recontracting

Panelists may fit more than one of the above characteristics and actual makeup of panelists be dependent on availability during the scheduled session time.

Expected outcomes for the session:

We expect that people who attend this panel session will leave with concrete strategies that they can use to make their lives as engineering educators and parents easier. We also expect that attendees will leave with a sense of camaraderie that is often lacking while parenting today. Finally, we believe that this panel could serve as a starting point for new engineering educators to create a supportive network of individuals facing similar life circumstances that they may turn to in the future for advice and support as necessary.