

March 15, 2011

An Open Letter to the HMS Community:

The Joint Committee on the Status of Women at Harvard Medical School and Harvard School of Dental Medicine, in collaboration with the Office of the Provost of Harvard University and the Office for Faculty Affairs at Harvard Medical School, held the first *JCSW Childcare Summit: Future Directions*, on January 25, 2011 and was attended by 180 members of the community. Participating institutions included Harvard Medical School, Harvard University, the Harvard Graduate School of Education, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and the HMS-affiliated clinical institutions. This broad representation and commitment to action will further the work of addressing family/child care issues as central issues that affect the successful work and career lives of faculty, staff, students, and trainees at HMS, HSDM, and its affiliates.

The summit was opened by Dr. Jeffery S. Flier, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine of Harvard University, followed by Professor Cathy Trower, Senior Research Associate and Research Director of The Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education of the Harvard Graduate School of Education, who delivered the plenary address on the relationship between child and family care needs and the success of academic faculty members. The Summit was anchored by four working break out groups, each charged with discussing and suggesting focused directions for addressing the challenges of childcare needs and successful work and career advancement at HMS and its affiliated institutions. As promised on January 25<sup>th</sup>, we are forwarding to the HMS community the outcomes and recommendations of the four working break out groups, for community review, reflection, and comment. Please see our website for more detailed information about the summit, the recommendations, and plans for the future at <http://www.hms.harvard.edu/jcsw/>:

**BREAK OUT GROUPS:**

**Connections: Goals: *Identifying models of quality child care that meet needs***

- Gather all affiliated institutions to share information about available resources

- Develop an online childcare network to share information amongst parents
- Consider the creation of a family childcare network
- Consider using local resources (trainees and networking) to support a family network

**Collaborations: Goals: *Building childcare information networks across communities***

- Create a consortium of Harvard-wide (including affiliated institutions) childcare champions
- Catalogue and share the available educational resources
- Utilize internal “opt-in” child care resources (“childcare mentors”)

**Culture: Goals: *Creating flexible work culture to support child care needs***

- Engage leaders at many levels in the conversation about flexible work culture
- Deploy technology in order to improve flexibility and a diversity of options
- Impact relevant guidelines for funding using HMS as a platform for change
- Reinforce that it doesn’t necessarily cost money to change culture

**Commitments: Goals: *Addressing institutional support for childcare***

- Centralize in a virtual arena the resources that are available at the different institutions
- Transparently catalog what others are doing related to childcare
- Find representatives from all affiliates to support and guide a central oversight group
- Consider creating a task force to continue overseeing this work
- Appoint a high level administrative LMA-wide person or group in charge of family care issues
- Recognize childcare as a workforce development and diversity issue, important for recruitment and retention of top talent in all jobs
- Consider flexible work hours and green campus initiative as changing work culture
- Collect date and exit interviews to determine how this issue may relate to people leaving institutions
- Make childcare affordability flexible

We are energized by the combined efforts of everyone who contributed to this work, and will be moving forward in three important ways:

- Supporting the creation of a consortium of childcare champions from the medical and dental institutions
- Collaborating with the HMS leadership to discuss and consider efforts to address childcare issues

- Creating a JCSW subcommittee that will continue to monitor and guide this ongoing work

We are committed to sustaining these efforts through maintaining the visible support from leaders and constituents in our community. We openly invite you to contribute to this ongoing effort by becoming a member of the JCSW. If you are interested in becoming a member, please visit the JCSW website, <http://www.hms.harvard.edu/jcsw/>, under *Membership Information* and follow the link to the membership enrollment form.

Please visit the JCSW website for more information and to offer your ideas for this ongoing work.

With our thanks,

The Joint Committee on the Status of Women at HMS/HSDM  
The JCSW Programming Subcommittee,  
On behalf of the JCSW Childcare Summit: Future Directions.