Memorandum

To: Lori Gentles, Vice President and Director of Human Resources,  
San Francisco State University

From: Mary Menees, MPA Candidate

Re: Job Sharing Policy

The mission of San Francisco State University “is to create and maintain an environment for learning that promotes respect for and appreciation of scholarship, freedom, human diversity, and the cultural mosaic of the City of San Francisco and the Bay Area; to promote excellence in instruction and intellectual accomplishment; and to provide broadly accessible higher education for residents of the region and state, as well as the nation and world” (SFSU, Mission Statement, 2010).

SFSU’s Human Resource Department supports the mission of the university by attracting, developing and sustaining “a multicultural workforce of talented faculty and staff to support the campus mission of academic scholarship, creative innovation, equity, social justice and civic involvement” (Gentles, 2010). I am aware that SFSU does not have a job sharing policy. I think university staff and faculty could benefit greatly from an opportunity to job share. A good job share policy could help to sustain and diversify SFSU’s workforce while embracing the values of equity and social justice.

Definition

For faculty, according to researcher Brenda Freeman, “A job share is an upgraded part-time contract in which two faculty members are jointly responsible for the workload of one position, and both individuals have rank, advancement opportunities, and benefits consistent with those
of a full-time faculty member” (Freeman & Call, 2009, p. 65). A similar working definition is appropriate for staff as well, where by two individuals share one full-time position, and both receive medical, dental and vision benefits, as well as prorated pay, vacation and sick leave, and have similar rank and advancement opportunities.

The University of Wisconsin at Platteville has a working job share policy and that simply and broadly defines job sharing as “an arrangement in which two people divide the duties of one job between them to provide full-time coverage of the position” (University of Wisconsin, Job Share Policy, 2010).

**Benefits and Limitations**

Researchers Freeman and Call find that, “Job sharing is one of a number of flexible work paradigms that could provide relief from work overload for faculty members and staff with disabilities, young children, health problems, or elder care demands or for those seeking semiretirement” (Freeman & Call, 2009, p. 65). Another researcher’s study of job sharing in academia supported the conclusion that enhancing the flexibility provided to employees through flexible work schedules can promote the integration of work, family, and personal life (Harris, 1997, p. 30).

Still other researchers have found that is not only beneficial to the individual, it benefits the employer and society at large by demonstrated “greater production, an increased capacity to retain valued employees, a larger pool of prospective employees, and enhanced professional skills from job-share employees who use their non work time for professional development” (Zabel, Friend, & Meringolo, 1992).
However appealing job sharing is to many individuals, the motivation for job sharing originated from equal employment opportunity considerations. “At particular times in their working lives, women may find it more convenient to work less than full time” as they chose to care for young children or aging parents (Harris, 2009, p.29). This aspect in particular, I thought would be of interest to you as the director of human resources at SFSU, because social equity and justice are core values of San Francisco State University.

Riccucci and Naff concluded that alternative work arrangements, including job sharing, are positive developments, “But to be fully inclusive, an organization has to go one step beyond providing these arrangements by not penalizing those who take advantage of them” (Ricucci & Naff, 2008, p. 459 ). This leads us to some of the disadvantages of job sharing.

Job sharing’s disadvantages include the potential for unequal treatment in promotion and tenure. In addition, negative perceptions may exist such as “the job-share team [should] be twice as productive, the potential for employees to be viewed as uncommitted professionals, [and] marginalization” (Harris, 2009, p. 30). Finally, there may be some hidden additional administrative costs and different approaches and standards of quality by the two job sharers (Harris, 2009).

Careful selection of employees to participate in job sharing and open management support could help reduce some of the aforementioned disadvantages.
Proposed Policy

In my research I came across a job share policy adopted by the University of Wisconsin at Platteville (University of Wisconsin, Job Sharing Policy, 2010) upon which I have developed a draft job share policy for San Francisco State University. I am proposing for your consideration the following job share policy:

San Francisco State University endorses the concept and implementation of job sharing on this campus, to provide employment opportunities for individuals who cannot accept, a full-time position or those who wish to enhance work/life balance.

Definition
Job sharing is an arrangement in which two people divide the duties of one job between them to provide full-time coverage of the position.

Applicability
The concept of job sharing technically is applicable to all classification series in the CSU bargaining units. In practical terms, however, some positions are more suited to job sharing than others. Specific positions will be evaluated individually by the supervisor in consultation with the Human Resources Department and the incumbent, to determine whether an acceptable level of service can be provided, and the position’s tasks and responsibilities be accomplished fully under job sharing. Job sharing agreements must be approved in writing by the director of Human Resources.

Staffing
Job sharing positions will be staffed according to the bargaining agreement staffing rules. If the position is in a represented bargaining unit, applicable provisions of the labor contract (transfer, seniority, etc.) will be observed.

Scheduling
Work hours will be scheduled by the supervisor in consultation with the affected employees. Ordinarily, a schedule will provide each job sharing employee with 40 hours of work during a biweekly payroll period. In establishing the work schedule, consideration should be given to maintaining an acceptable level of service, providing for adequate communication and coordination of workflow, ensuring an equitable division of the workload, and also to meeting the needs of the employees.

Implementation
In implementing a job share program at SFSU, both management and employees must recognize that “the accomplishment of the mission, goals, and tasks of the University cannot be
compromised, nor can the level of service to faculty, staff, and students be reduced as a result of job sharing” (University of Wisconsin, Job Sharing Policy, 2010).

The success of any job share really depends on the careful selection of which positions are best suited for the policy and the equally careful selection of the two individuals that will share the job. Good faith of all parties involved, based on excellent communication and mutual understanding of expectations and goals, must be a priority.

I recommend starting a pilot program with a six of the 6,000 positions at SFSU at least two of which should be faculty positions and two should be regular, union-represented staff. I would start with the careful design of written expectations, requiring overlap time (one to two hours every week), and regular meetings with management to make honest assessments of the program’s successes. In addition, I recommend that you create a small taskforce to research the best practices in successful job sharing programs at other universities. In one to two year, you would have a very good idea as to how this might best work at San Francisco State University.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, I recommend that SFSU further its commitment to diversity and social justice, by beginning at pilot job share program. A low to no cost job share program will broaden and diversify the job applicant pool, and help to retain and sustain our excellent employees, and further excellence in academic research. I look forward to meeting with you so I may present the research findings I have mentioned in this memorandum and find out from you what other information and analysis you may require before exploring the creation of a job sharing program at SFSU.
References


