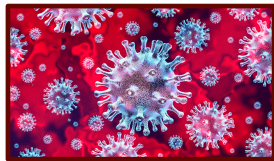
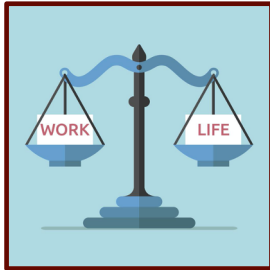


# INSECURITY AND INEQUALITY IN ACADEMIA: THE DIFFERENTIAL IMPACTS OF COVID-19 ON WORK CONDITIONS AND WORK-LIFE BALANCE AMONG THE TEXAS A&M ACADEMIC COMMUNITY



## INTRODUCTION

- Work-Life Balance (WLB) seems to be difficult to achieve in academia, but is also highly coveted and seen as an important factor for retention (Lindfelt et al 2018).
- The ability to obtain WLB appears to vary by gender, caregiving status, and cultural inequities (Hurtado et al., 2012; Philipsen, 2008; Philipsen & Bostic, 2010; Hermann et al 2014).
- This project examines the impacts of COVID-19 on individual scholars at Texas A&M University, while recognizing that the pandemic will have differential impacts that are likely to widen existing gaps along the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, caregiver status, discipline, and appointment status.



## RESEARCH QUESTION

*How has the relationship between work- life balance and work productivity changed for scholars due to recent transformations to the organizational context of work?*

## PROJECT PURPOSE

This project examines the impacts of COVID-19 on individual scholars' WLB at Texas A&M University, and if the effect of the pandemic has differential impacts on people that are likely to widen existing gaps along the basis of gender, race, ethnicity, caregiver status, discipline, and appointment status.

## METHOD AND ANALYSIS

- This qualitative research project includes 101 participants representing 5 different categories of scholars:
  - 26 PhD Students
  - 14 Post-Doctoral Fellows
  - 19 APT Faculty
  - 20 Tenure-Track Faculty
  - 21 Tenured Faculty
- The sample was intentionally selected to be diverse by:
  - Race/Ethnicity (56.4% White; 43.6% BIPOC)
  - Gender (64.3% Female; 45.6% Male)
  - Type of discipline (63.3% STEM; 46.7% non-STEM)
  - Caregiver status: (42.6% with dependents; 57.4% without dependents)



Interviews have been conducted and transcribed by a team of 7 graduate students. Three additional graduate students have been coordinating the interviews and coding. Interviews have been coded by a team of 7 undergraduate students.

- Each participant will complete two semi-structured interviews via Zoom (one was completed in fall 2020, and one will take place in spring 2021). Each interview is approximately one hour long.
- Qualitative analysis is being conducted with the use of the qualitative software Dedoose, where themes common in the data will be coded. WLB was coded utilizing the following criteria:
  - Features of home-work situation;
  - Types of personal disruption; and
  - Change to work-life balance.



## PRELIMINARY RESULTS

- Across scholars at Texas A&M University, WLB appears to have worsened due to the pandemic. Gender, caregiver status, and category of scholar are key to understanding individual experiences.

*"But now when I was working from home..... even if I start early, because I take frequent breaks, I have to continue work, my work. It's..... it feels like you're working whole day but you're not really working the whole day...."*  
-South Asian Male

*".....so during that time, I spend most of my time for my writing. So that was more about work.....work was kind of way more than my personal life. I could spend a little bit time with my family, but I could not go and meet my friends and other relatives. So that was affected. So, my mobility and the meeting with the friends decreased."*

-Asian Man, Agriculture and Life Sciences



*"I don't have work life balance. I've worked really hard. I'm a workaholic."*  
-South Asian Woman, Health Sciences

*"I don't get enough sleep anymore. There aren't enough hours in the day! I have a toddler and having childcare that we can trust has been really.... Really tough."* - White Woman, Engineering