

## SFTI Networking Meeting, October 21, 2010

The Fall Education meeting of the SFTI focused on the creation of a travel network for STEM faculty in the Five Colleges. Discussion focused on enumerating the specific obstacles faculty with dependent care responsibilities face in keeping up their professional travel and on generating potential solutions. In order to create a blueprint for the SFTI Network, the following topics were considered:

- What are the members' current needs and wish lists?
- What are our collective resources?
- What opportunities for coordination exist? What can the SFTI assistant do?
- What aspects of travel lend themselves to networking?

At the end of the meeting, SFTI Director, Maria Santore, presented the outline of the SFTI goals and procedures. [can we include it here for download?]

**Discussion Leaders** were chosen to represent different ranks and experience.

Laurie Brown, Professor, Dept. of Geosciences. older children

Kimberly Tremblay, Assist. Professor, Dept. of Vet and Animal Sciences, 2 children, faculty spouse in same department and same field.

### Collective wisdom:

Which is worse, we asked, the logistics or the money? Collective answer: Unlimited money would alleviate logistics, but given current realities, it's the logistics.

Observations: The second child makes travel more than twice as hard; issues are different at different ages; Conferences are long, especially when there are children involved. Would like to see more use of virtual conferencing, to reduce need for travel

Comparison between

<b>Bringing child(ren) along</b>	<b>Leaving children at home</b>
Educational value of travel (especially older children)	Child keeps the familiarity and comfort of home and routines
Puts more pressure on professional societies to provide for children	Food issues are minimized
Local programs, like Kindercare, are interesting and familiar for the children	Less expensive when there is more than one child
More constraints on scheduling when children's needs are taken into account	Can often find someone (like a relative or grad student) to stay at one's house
Childcare for evening activities is often hard to arrange at conferences.	Makes the time of separation longer.

### Suggestions of tasks for the SFTI assistant:

- Research alternatives in cities people will be visiting;
- Place the ad in Sitter City and screen the responses;
- Do preliminary research for travel alternatives;
- Collect information about people's experience in remote cities;
- Run an SFTI Bulletin Board and make connections between travelers (for airport transportation, nanny sharing, sharing special travel equipment, etc.)

**On the value of the SFTI:** "I really reduced my travel after I had children. Just knowing that there's help and support encourages me to get out to conferences more than I have since the children came."