

Final Report

Research Enhancement Program Grant

Awarded: January 2004

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Project Title: Organizational Messages about Work and Life

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Abstract of Results

Organizations wield great power over the structure of contemporary life. This research investigates the construction of work/life issues on websites of companies on Fortune's 2004 list of "100 Best Companies to Work for." Using cluster analysis, the authors identify the organizations' ideology of work/life issues: 1) "balance" is the goal, and it is to be achieved primarily through individual rather than organizational efforts; 2) work and life are to be treated as separate domains; 3) "life" usually means "family;" 4) work/life programs are "benefits" rather than "rights;" and 5) work/life programs exist for the economic benefit of the organization. The implications of this ideology and directions for future research are explored.

Article in Review:

Hoffman, M.F. & Cowan, R.L. The meaning of work/life: An analysis of corporate discourse on work/life issues. Submitted to the editor of *Management Communication Quarterly*, May 11, 2005.

Anticipated Conference Submission:

We also plan to submit this essay to the National Communication Association annual conference. Submission deadline is January 2006.

The literature review and findings of this project help provide a base for further research on this topic to be undertaken this summer by both authors. The summer 2005 project involves collecting and analyzing qualitative data to understand employee interpretations of the discourse of work/life.

There is no current or pending support resulting from this award.