

Temple weighs return of day care

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Full Text:

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Oct. 22--Temple University is considering a way to bring child-care services for employees back to its campus, president Ann Weaver Hart said yesterday. The university closed a day care at 1500 N. Broad St. in 1995 after an earlier fire on the property raised liability concerns, Hart said. "It is in fact on the table," Hart said at a forum sponsored by the Faculty Senate's Committee on the Status of Women. "A lot of things have to be discussed." The forum, at the student center, highlighted the prevalence of women in leadership roles at Temple. They include the president and the provost, Lisa Staiano-Coico, who is second in command -- something Hart described as an unusual combination for a large research institution. The panel, titled "The Balancing Act: Combining Responsibilities for Work and Family," also included six other female Temple administrators. Addressing a question from the audience, Hart said it might make more sense for a third party to offer the child-care services. She also said she was interested in starting a "drop-off" day care for Temple students with young children during exam week. The University of Utah, where she used to work, offered that service, she said. Also, in a move to help with child care, Temple included a new parental-leave policy in its contract with faculty, she noted. Tenured and tenure-track faculty may take leave of teaching for a semester to care for a newborn or adopted child under 5. Faculty must continue research and other campus duties, however. Nontenured faculty can request flexibility in teaching assignments. Hart and the other panelists discussed how they advanced in their careers while balancing work with family. Diane Maleson, senior vice provost for faculty, said she was "compulsively organized." Staiano-Coico said she meditates daily. Rhonda Brown, associate vice president for the Office of Multicultural Affairs, said she creates boundaries. "For me, I say, at X time, we turn this off and we turn this life on," Brown said. At times, the conversation was particularly poignant. JoAnne A. Epps, dean of the law school, said she was blazing a path that few black women had taken before her. She had little confidence. Epps, a Yale-trained lawyer, joined the Temple faculty in 1985 and became dean on July 1, 2008. Before joining the university, she had an illustrious career as a trial lawyer and prosecutor in Los Angeles and then as a prosecutor with the U.S. Attorney's Office in Philadelphia. "Even for all the things that have happened in my life, I think it's really only recently, and I mean really only recently, maybe this job, that I thought, maybe I can do this," she said. Most of the panelists said their role models were men and they described how early on in their careers even other women questioned them. Hart said that when she was a doctoral student raising four children in Salt Lake City, a neighbor called her house and questioned whether her children were being fed and her husband cared for. Staiano-Coico described how she found two 12-year-olds peering in her car years ago because their mothers had told them she left her young son strapped in the car when she went to work. Hart said she still hears concerns about women's ability to advance on campus even though many top leaders at Temple are women. "Anecdotally," she said, "we've been told by women at mid-levels that they're still feeling that glass ceiling." Contact staff writer Susan Snyder at 215-854-4693 or ssnyder@phillynews.com.

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