

Longwood University Faculty Senate  
**PROPOSAL/POLICY COVER SHEET**  
**Parental Leave**

This cover sheet is intended to provide information to members of the Faculty Senate about a new proposal/policy or about revisions to an existing proposal/policy. This cover sheet is being piloted during spring and fall 2011.

**If you are proposing a new policy, then attach the text of the policy to this form. If you are proposing a change to an existing policy, then attach the text of the current policy with any deleted language marked by a strikethrough and with new language marked by an underline. If you are deleting a policy, then attach the text of the policy to be deleted.**

**COMMITTEE(S)** that authored or sponsored this proposal: Ad Hoc Committee on Faculty Parental Leave

Committee Members: Lee Bidwell\* (Chair), Mark Lenker\*, Felita Lewis, Mark Lukas, Melanie Marks, Cathy Roy\*\*, Glenda Taylor (retired June 2011)

\*Faculty Senator during 2010-2011

\*\*Faculty Senate Executive Committee 2010-2011

**TOPIC:** Parental Leave

**BACKGROUND** (Provide a brief statement describing the origins of this proposal, the nature of the problem it addresses, and the work completed to devise the proposal):

1. *Origins of the Proposal:*

- The Ad Hoc Committee on Faculty Parental Leave was formed in the spring of 2011.
- The Committee originally was charged with “drafting a parental leave policy outlining a process for arranging time away from work for...parents.” As a part of that charge, the committee was asked to provide a “rationale for or against revising the current ‘Maternity Leave’ policy in favor of a Parental Leave policy.” After much research and discussion, ultimately the committee concluded that the issue of Maternity Leave and Parental Leave needed to be separated and is recommending a revision of the current Maternity Leave policy and adoption of the proposed Parental Leave policy.

2. *Nature of the Problem the Proposal Addresses:*

- In its original charge, the committee was tasked with recommending a policy that “would be able to provide guidance regarding the consistent and fair treatment of *all faculty members newly* (original emphasis) *adding a child to their family, either*

*through birth or adoption....”* Currently, the University has a limited maternity leave policy (a form of sick leave) that only applies to female faculty giving birth, which clearly does not cover “all faculty members...adding a child to their family.” Other than unpaid FMLA leave, male faculty who become parents through birth or adoption or state placement of a child and female faculty who become parents through adoption or state placement of a child, do not have any option to receive leave to bond with the new child and adjust to the demands of being new parents.

### 3. *Work Completed to Devise the Proposal*

- The committee met 8 times between February 2011 and November 28.
- In addition to using e-mail, the committee set up a Blackboard course and a google.docs group to efficiently share information.
- The committee researched (1) maternity and parental leave policies in other countries, (2) maternity and parental leave policies at other Virginia colleges/universities, (3) maternity and parental leave policies at other colleges/universities outside the Commonwealth, and (4) best practices in university maternity and parental leave policies.
- Solicited feedback on the draft policy from the Deans and Department Chairs. (in progress)

**SUMMARY OF NEW POLICY OR PROPOSED CHANGES OR DELETIONS TO AN EXISTING POLICY** (Provide a brief list or statement describing the content of the policy or the proposed changes or deletions):

- Paralleling the proposed Maternity Leave policy, the proposed policy explicitly defines who is eligible. Adjunct faculty are not eligible; first-year faculty are not eligible; and T/R faculty on 12 month contracts are not eligible because their leave is governed by the Administrative Policies and Procedures Manual.
- The proposed policy applies to men who become new fathers through birth, adoption or state placement of a child and to women who become mothers through adoption or state placement of a child. Women who become mothers through childbirth are not eligible for Parental Leave, as they are eligible for Maternity leave.
- The proposed policy only applies to parents adopting or becoming foster parents of a pre-kindergarten age child.
- The proposed policy allows eligible faculty members to request the ability to deliver part of their teaching load through non-traditional means, thus allowing them some time during the semester when they do not have to be on campus teaching.
- The proposed policy allows flexibility in course content delivery for up to 36 contact hours in a semester, with a maximum of 12 hours of flexible content delivery per

course. Given that the majority of faculty at Longwood have a 12 credit per semester teaching load, 36 content hours is essentially 3 weeks of a semester.

- The proposed policy allows only one eligible faculty member in a couple to receive Parental Leave.
- The proposed policy allows eligible faculty to take the “leave” intermittently over the course of a semester.
- The proposed policy requires faculty requesting Parental Leave to provide a written plan to the Department Chair for covering content for all classes that will be taught in an alternate delivery format.
- The leave must be requested 90 days prior to the date leave is to begin. The plan for covering course content must be provided to the Chair at least 30 days prior to the first day of leave.
- The policy clearly specifies that faculty members may stop the tenure clock, in accordance with already established FPPM policies.

**RATIONALE FOR THE POLICY OR PROPOSED CHANGES** (Provide a brief statement as to why the new policy, the changes, or the deletion is needed):

- Departments across campus often struggle to hire and retain faculty due to the relatively low salaries offered coupled with a heavy course load. The proposed policy could aid in hiring and retention of both male and female faculty. In their research, Philipson and Bostic found that unlike previous generations of men, “being an engaged father was heavily emphasized by junior faculty who continually demonstrate their commitment to their children” (Philipson, I. and Bostic, T. 2010. *Helping Faculty Find World-Life Balance: The Path Toward Family-Friendly Institutions*. Jossey-Bass, p. 56). Williams writes: “Academic institutions are far behind businesses in the implementation of family-responsive policies. Colleges need to recognize that it is often in their economic self-interest to retain existing faculty members, particularly in the sciences, where laboratory start-up costs can run into the hundreds of thousands of dollars” (“Are Your Parental-Leave Policies Legal?” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Feb. 7, 2005).
- The proposed policy provides long term benefits to faculty members’ overall satisfaction and reduces distractions from family stress. As reported in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, “studies in Sweden have confirmed that when fathers take parental leave, they establish closer relationships with their children that persist long after they have returned to work” (Williams, J. “Are Your Parental-Leave Policies Legal?” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Feb. 7, 2005).
- The ideal parental leave policy, in keeping with “best practices” recommendations, would allow for the same benefits as the proposed maternity leave policy—one semester of active service/modified duties, allowing the new parent an entire semester away from campus. While the proposed policy is not ideal, it does strike a balance between “best

practices” and what is practical and feasible given the current financial and structural constraints at Longwood.

- The proposed policy should not require additional resources to implement, as faculty granted parental leave still are expected to teach their regular load and attend to their other academic responsibilities.
- Williams argues that “the final element of a best-practices policy is to deal with elder and partner care at the same time as child care” (“Are Your Parental- Leave Policies Legal?” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Feb. 7, 2005). Leave for partner and elder care were not under the purview of the committee. However, the committee believes that the proposed policy eventually could be extended to allow for elder and partner care.

Date submitted to Senate Executive Committee for Consideration: \_\_\_\_\_

Action(s) Taken:

Date first read at Faculty Senate: \_\_\_\_\_

Action(s) Taken:

Date final action taken by Faculty Senate: \_\_\_\_\_

Final action(s) Taken:

## Parental Leave Policy

### *Faculty Policies and Procedures Manual* *Section III: Academic Personnel Policies*

#### **Z. Parental Leave**

##### **1. Eligibility—**

The following full-time faculty members shall be eligible for paid parental leave as specified in this policy:

- i. Tenured faculty;
- ii. Tenure track faculty, who have greater than one (1) full-time year of service at the University;
- iii. Lecturers, senior lecturers, clinical educators and senior clinical educators who have greater than one (1) full-time year of service at the university.

##### **2. Definition of Leave—**

Recognizing that fathers and women who become mothers through adoption or state placement of a pre-kindergarten age child need some time to adjust to the significant family change, eligible faculty members may request flexibility in course delivery up to 36 contact hours in a semester (a maximum of 12 hours per course). Should both parents be eligible faculty members, the leave allowed is a total of 36 contact hours for only one parent. The leave may be taken intermittently throughout the semester in which the birth, adoption, or placement occurs; the leave does not need to be taken in consecutive days or weeks.

Faculty members may not receive both parental leave and maternity leave. Parental leave is designed for fathers, as well as women who become mothers by adopting or taking in foster children. Maternity leave is intended for birthing mothers.

##### **3. Process for Requesting Leave—**

With the exception of unusual and unexpected circumstances, faculty members requesting paid parental leave must simultaneously notify their Department Chair and the Department of Human Resources in writing of their request at least 90 days prior to the beginning of the semester in which the leave will be taken. The faculty member must provide the Department Chair with a detailed plan for covering the course content that will be missed at least 30 days prior to the anticipated first day of parental leave. Examples of alternative, flexible course delivery methods include, but are not limited to, delivering lectures via distance technology, inviting guest lecturers to class, and offering a course on a more condensed schedule. The Department Chair will notify the Dean of the request and share the class coverage plan with the Dean. The Dean will notify the Vice President for Academic Affairs of approved paid parental leave requests planned for the semester.

#### **4. Interaction with Tenure—**

In accordance with the “Policy on Stopping the Tenure Clock,” the faculty member requesting parental leave may stop the tenure clock at the onset of the approved leave.