Guidelines for Maternity Leave for Full-time Faculty Members

The Faculty Handbook permits maternity leave for faculty members to cover “recovery from pregnancy, miscarriage, abortion, childbirth, and from any resulting disabilities.” Those eligible for paid maternity leave are female faculty members who are tenured or probationary, or those faculty who have been in a renewable contract status for at least one year at the time the leave begins. These guidelines are predicated on the expectation that colleges will work with faculty members to provide eight weeks of paid leave provided the baby is born during the academic year or close to the beginning of the academic year. This policy only applies to full-time regular faculty members. It does not apply to part-time faculty, graduate assistants or post-docs.

The following guidelines are intended to guide deans in implementing the paid maternity leave policy for faculty members. Individual agreements that serve the interests of both the faculty member and the division may be negotiated.

1. This policy is only for faculty members who do not earn sick or annual leave. Faculty members who accrue sick and annual leave are expected to use accrued time as paid time off but may be eligible additional paid time off under the provision in the Faculty Handbook if they do not have a full eight weeks of leave at the time the leave begins.

2. Leave is granted to cover the time necessary for the medical recovery period as defined by the individual’s health provider and to provide time for initial bonding with the child. Under usual circumstances this time is eight weeks. Unpaid leave under FML Act still applies, meaning faculty members can take additional unpaid time up to 12 weeks as needed, as long as the FML is granted.

3. Leave is granted during the actual time period necessary. It is not stored or added if birth occurs during the summer term, or winter or spring breaks. For example, if a baby is born June 1, a faculty member on a regular academic year appointment would not be eligible for paid leave. If the baby is born on August 1, the faculty member would be eligible for approximately six weeks of paid leave, because regular academic year appointments start on Aug. 16.

4. Leave runs concurrently with FML. If eight weeks is insufficient, the faculty member who has been approved for FML can request an additional four weeks as unpaid leave.

5. During the semester in which paid maternity leave is used, the faculty member may be relieved of classroom and classroom-related obligations. Department chairs and deans will work with faculty members to determine reasonable administrative, research, and service expectations during the portion of the semester in which the faculty member is not on leave. Except in extraordinary circumstances, and as approved by the provost, no faculty member will be relieved of teaching responsibilities for both the fall and spring semesters. No faculty member will have teaching, administrative, research, or service expectations increased in subsequent terms as a result of choosing to take maternity leave.

Procedures for Requesting Leave

1. As soon as possible, the faculty member should notify her department chair/dean of the due date and request assistance in planning a work load that accommodates the maternity leave.

2. The department chair, in consultation with the faculty member, should propose a work load that accommodates the leave. The plan should make clear the expectations for the portion of the semester that the faculty member will not be on leave. Depending on when the baby is due, the faculty member may be able to teach courses typically taught during the semester. The assistance needed by the faculty member may be with grading at the end of the semester. The faculty member may benefit more from being relieved of research responsibilities or service responsibilities. To ensure that a faculty member has eight weeks of paid maternity leave, a faculty member may be asked to pick up different responsibilities during the portion of the semester that she is available to work full time. For example, she may be asked to assist with responsibilities relating to program assessment plans or an upcoming accreditation visit.

3. This plan will be sent to the dean for review and commentary and then forwarded to the provost for final approval. All faculty leaves must be approved by the provost under the provisions in the Faculty Handbook.
4. Simultaneously, the faculty member should be following the FML approval process through their benefits partner in Human Resources. Faculty members who are not FML eligible still must go through this process to provide the needed documentation needed for the provost to approve the requested leave. The FML process must be initiated at least 30 days prior to the anticipated date that the faculty member will begin her leave. No leave can be approved by the provost until the faculty member has been approved for leave through the FML process.

5. Faculty members and their supervisors must document leave time, and colleges/schools should initiate a conversion to unpaid status if the faculty member does not return to work at the end of the approved paid leave period.