

UGA University Council
Proposal from the Human Resources Committee
March, 2014

Motion: Form a University-Level Committee to explore UGA Parental Leave policies

The current UGA maternity leave policy reads as follows, in full:

“Sick leave can be taken for any incapacity related to pregnancy and for the mother’s recovery after birth, generally, 6-8 weeks as recommended by her physician. Sick leave (with and without pay) policies apply for absences related to pregnancy and post-partum recovery.”

The Human Resources Committee has discussed UGA’s maternity leave policy for many years, and has received many requests from faculty to explore whether and how our existing Maternity Leave policy might be expanded to reflect best practices in higher education. (For example, it only mentions women, and it doesn’t mention adoption). While FMLA (12 weeks of unpaid leave) is federal law, many of UGA’s peer and aspirational institutions have more expansive, family-friendly policies which provide a higher level of guaranteed paid leave and greater protection for untenured faculty. For example, the University of Kentucky and UC Davis both provide one semester of teaching relief for tenured and tenure-track faculty who give birth or adopt a child; Michigan State provides 6 weeks of paid leave for all benefits-eligible employees. These are just a couple of examples. We recognize that any changes to existing policies must be carefully discussed with consideration given to all the various types of employment and job responsibilities at the University, while also reflecting best practices for recruitment and retention of employees. We also believe that developing a new policy is beyond the capacity of our committee.

Our committee requests that President Morehead appoint a university-level committee, including representatives from administration, faculty, staff, Human Resources, and the Human Resources Committee of University Council, to examine our “Maternity Leave” policy and develop a new Parental Leave Policy that will reflect best practices in higher education. Specifically, we request that consideration be given to practices which would provide protection for new employees, and in particular untenured female faculty, who may be in departments where support for pregnancy and childbirth is not evident. Possible policies which we would like to have considered include (but are not limited to) a) a certain number of guaranteed weeks of paid leave for all employees who give birth or adopt a child, b) guaranteed ability to stop the tenure clock if requested, and c) one semester of teaching relief for instructional faculty (sometimes termed “active service with modified duties”).

Supplemental Links:

UGA's policy: <http://policies.uga.edu/FA/nodes/view/1221/Maternity-Leave>

University of Kentucky: stopping tenure clock: <https://www.as.uky.edu/delay-probationary-period>

Lecturers: <https://www.as.uky.edu/maternity-leave-lecturers>

Florida: Paid parental leave: <http://www.hr.ufl.edu/leave/fmla.asp>

Michigan state: <http://www.hr.msu.edu/documents/facacadhandbooks/facultyhandbook/parentalLeave.htm>:

6 weeks paid leave for all employees, and then they can use sick leave on top of that

University of Maryland: http://www.faculty.umd.edu/faculty/leave_ppl.html: 8 weeks paid leave

UC Davis: one quarter of leave: <https://academicaffairs.ucdavis.edu/programs/work-life/faq.html>

University of Minnesota: <http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/benefits/leaves/parental/index.html>