

**Report on and Recommendations for
a Parental Leave Policy for SIUC**

**University Women's Professional Advancement
Southern Illinois University-Carbondale**

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In keeping with its mission to promote the welfare of the careers of women at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale (SIUC), the office for University Women's Professional Advancement has undertaken a study of the policies for parental leave for faculty. The current policy and/or its implementation have been a source of considerable criticism from faculty, particularly women members. An improved policy may facilitate the recruitment and retention of women faculty at SIUC. The study has employed three methods for gaining information: interviews with faculty women who have given birth to children while employed at SIUC, focus groups for women faculty who anticipate taking parental leave in the future, and a survey of other educational institutions, both institutions who have exemplary policies and peer institutions of SIUC.

Types of Leaves at SIUC

The Family Medical Leave (FMLA) is unpaid leave of absence, mandated by the federal government (1993), of up to 12 weeks, granted by request of any employee of the university or designated by Human Resources for eligible absences of the employee. Medical concern within the immediate family, defined as spouse, child, or parent, or anyone living in the same house in a familial relationship, is one of the eligible areas. Childbirth and childcare after birth are included in the provisions of this act. During FMLA leave, the faculty member is to be relieved of all of their

teaching, administrative, and research responsibilities, unless they make other agreements with the department. All employees, including faculty, contact the Human Resources Department to make arrangements for taking the leave. During this time, the university is responsible for continuing the normal benefits of the contract. If the employee has contracted for additional insurance or other benefits not covered in his or her employment contract, then the employee will be billed for those expenses at the end of the leave.

Sick Leave for Faculty are paid sick days that may be used for personal illness, medical appointments, medical concerns of the family, pregnancy, childbirth, and infant care. The department chair reports absences due to illness to Human Resources monthly. During sick leave, the faculty member is relieved of their normal teaching, advising, administrative and research duties. These sick days cannot be redeemed for monetary reimbursement and salary and benefits continue to be paid by the university. Faculty receive forty-three (43) days and 7.2 accruable days of sick leave per fiscal year.

Interviews

A staff member conducted interviews with sixteen faculty women, tenured and untenured, representing nine departments in the university during the spring semester, 2003. The following is a summary of the information gained in the interviews.

Tenure and Requests for Leave: Nine of the women gave birth to children before they had received tenure, two gave birth while lecturers, and seven had children after they had received tenure. Six women did not request leave for at least one of their pregnancies and birth. These women listed a variety of reasons for not requesting leave:

- lack of knowledge of the policy regarding parental leave.
- birth of child coincided with end of semester.
- lack of eligibility for FMLA because she was in her first year of employment.
- desire to save sick leave; was able to work out alternative arrangements.
- was able to use sabbatical time.

Those who took leaves also reported a variety of circumstances. Some took the full three months (12 weeks) allowed by the FMLA; some used 6 weeks and then stopped their leave, fulfilling teaching or other obligations by coming to campus one or two days a week and working at home the remainder of the time. One ended her leave and returned to work within the month of having the child; two began their leaves before the birth of the child due to complications with pregnancy, one extended her time until the end of the semester, one took leave four months after child was born so that the leave time would move into summer, and one took her leave intermittently. These women used their sick leave with the full 12-

week FMLA leave, i.e., they received their regular pay during the portion of the FMLA that coincided with sick leave. Several other women reported using sick leave only, returning to work after two or three weeks.

Women's narrated experiences made obvious the variations in their understandings of the particular requirements of the parental leave policy. All of the women who requested leave remembered telling their department chairs of their pregnancies by the third month of the pregnancy. Four reported a request by the department chair for some continuation of work during the leave, so that the faculty members had to insist on the rights provided them by the FMLA. One woman waited until the last months of pregnancy to inform her department chair because she was not requesting leave or any special arrangement.

Describe the agreement regarding parental leave that was developed between you and your chair/dean (including teaching, committee work, advising, and supervision of research).

While most of the women reported having a good experience in working out the specifics of the leave time with their chairs, there were four who felt their chairs to be unsupportive or uninformed. Four women reported that their chairs immediately offered to make the necessary arrangements and to collaborate with them on the best ways to manage their responsibilities while they were gone. Four who requested FMLA leave reported that their chairs made clear requests for continuation of some

work during the leave; the women faculty had to insist on the rights provided them by the FMLA. Three women who requested FMLA leave reported the chairs of their departments asking them to shift their work around so that they could “make up” the work that they lost during the leave. The chairs of these faculty suggested various scenarios: teaching a heavier load in the semester before or after the leave, taking on additional preparation work or remaining in positions of program responsibility while on leave. Two women reported that their chairs lacked familiarity with the parental leave policy and its implications for departmental work. Three women worked with Human Resources directly in making their arrangements; two others reported that they received no help or direction from Human Resources when they called (the timing of their inquiries were close to the establishment of SIUC’s policy in 1995). Two or three women reported that they did not apply for FMLA, but arranged a different teaching load or took a short amount of sick leave.

The variety of agreements worked out between chairs and faculty attest to the range of circumstances of pregnancies and departmental needs. Several women continued to supervise their own research and dissertation/thesis research; others continued to advise students -- some advised their graduate students and referred undergraduates to other faculty; one continued to plan for a major conference that her department was sponsoring and another directed the department’s

graduate program. Arrangements for teaching classes included: training a graduate assistant and sharing the class responsibilities with him or her; canceling the faculty's classes for the semester; team teaching with another faculty member; teaching an extra class in the semester before the leave was scheduled; and using the internet for part of the course. The women reported various ways in which they handled committee work: not participating on committees during the semester of the leave, bringing the infant to committee meetings, taking care of committee work before the due date, and other faculty taking over responsibilities.

As the women talked about the experience of working out the details of their leave with their chairs, several noted that they did not seem to be describing the same policy. The interviewees had discrepant understandings of the following:

- differences between the faculty contract and the Faculty Handbook leave policies.
- the eligibility of fathers to take parental leave.
- the use of sick leave with and without applying for FMLA.
- the continuation and payment of benefits while on leave.
- circumstances under which the tenure clock may be suspended.

"How were your faculty responsibilities covered during your leave?"

All of the women answered this question whether they took leave or not. Those who took leave reported that other faculty members took over

some of the advising and committee responsibilities. Two shared a course with another professor, another had a professor teach her course, and several reported that trained graduate assistants taught their courses. One woman reported that she delivered very close to the end of the semester, so other faculty briefly covered for her so that she did not need to take leave. When her chair brought her the finals to grade and caught sight of her frazzled look, he immediately offered to grade them himself! In one case, a term instructor was hired to teach one of her courses while she was on leave. One woman asked other faculty members to cover her responsibilities on committees while she was on leave, while others who did not take leave shifted their committee responsibilities around to the times that they would be present.

“Do you believe that other members of the department resented your absence?”

Most of the women answered no to this question, but made the following observations:

- less enthusiasm for the second child than the first
- perception of resentment by members of the tenure committee
- a colleague made pointed comments about the woman taking leave time, comparing her own immediate return to work after pregnancy and delivery.

- two were concerned about possible negative consequences because they had recently joined the faculty.
- the staff and graduate assistants may have been resentful of faculty flexibility.

One of the faculty women also reported that the faculty made some snide comments in her presence, but she felt no overt contention with her colleagues or chair. Another did not ask for leave because she did not want to press any of the issues that might polarize opinion around her and possibly jeopardize her future. Another was very sensitive to the possible threat that requesting a stop in the tenure clock might have on her professional life. However, she also understood the policy to state that a request to stop the tenure clock would be granted only in emergencies. Only one of the sixteen women interviewed asked that the tenure clock be stopped. Several were preparing their dossier for tenure during their pregnancies and several more had their babies earlier in the tenure track process.

"In your opinion, are SIU-C's policies parental leave policies reasonable and fair? If not, why?"

The response to this question was mixed, with six of the women acknowledging that the policies were reasonable and fair. One was even "shocked" by the generosity of being able to use sick leave in order to receive pay for a portion of the FMLA. One commented that having her

child in childcare was good for the child and allowed the mother to continue in stimulating work, and another joined her in expressing the opinion that they wanted to return to work soon after their children were born.

Five complained that the policies were not clear, citing: 1) the confusion between the faculty contract and the SIUC policy in the amount of time allowed with/without salary, 2) confusion originating with the differences in designated holidays/vacations between the academic calendar and the State calendar; 3) the steps in gaining suspension of the tenure clock, and 4) payment of benefits during the leave. Two women raised concerns that taking 12 weeks when the semester is 16 weeks long makes continuity in teaching difficult. Two others raised the issue of men or domestic partners not being able to take same amount of leave. Two women voiced the opinion that implementation of the policy varied with the department. Each department had its own culture and accommodated more or less to the personal lives of their faculty members.

Three women felt that the policies were not fair, citing a lack of clarity within the department about how duties should be covered during leaves of absence, equal implementation of FMLA or sick leave from department to department, being pressured to “make up” for the leave time through additional work, and being forced to take sick leave as part of the

parental leave. Several women shared the opinion that accurate information was inaccessible, that their chairs were misinformed, and that they had received varying explanations from the Human Resources Department. Several women also noted the difference between U.S. and European cultures in the importance accorded to childbirth and childcare in society in general. They referred to policies in academe and in business in Germany or Spain where a parent was given a year after the birth of a child for childcare. Two women also spoke to the need for a mediating authority in addressing disputes about parental leaves.

"In your opinion, what could SIUC do to minimize the conflict between departmental needs and fairness to personnel?"

- ensure equity among departments
- continue to refine the policies about how leaves and stopping-tenure-clock are handled
- make explicit who is responsible for covering the duties of faculty member on leave
- use regular faculty to cover responsibilities of person on leave, but relieve other duties of those faculty
- reimburse faculty members who take on extra departmental duties while faculty member is on leave.
- have a dialogue, task force, or some way to keep solutions as local as possible for departments and university

- encourage departments to work out the specifics of leaves as they apply to their particular department and are still in accordance with overall policy.
- allow longer leaves, but make it possible for "trade-offs", like some sabbatical time for childcare leave or teaching courses through the WEB.
- have a "pot" of funds to hire term instructors
- consider the birth or adoption of an infant a qualifying reason to extend the tenure clock by one year for those who request it.
- raise consciousness about professional life and children: educate departments about the inclusion of childbirth and childcare as part of faculty life.

"In your opinion, what could SIU-C do to minimize the conflict between the professional and personal needs of individual faculty members?"

The interviewees stressed four areas: 1) consistent, published policies that would be readily accessible to faculty members and chairs of departments; 2) allow an extension of the tenure clock for those who request it; 3) adequate quality daycare that is congruent with faculty/staff schedules; and 4) continuation of flexibility for individual faculty members in setting up their leave times and adjusting their schedules. In discussing these areas, they reiterated the needs of individual departments balanced against the need for a basic universal policy, more education

and explanation of the policy that is currently in operation, and increased clarity about the requirements for acceptable interruptions in the tenure process. Several interviewees noted that women and men should not be penalized in their bid for tenure nor in their application for advancement for the time that was spent in childcare, or in elder care, raising a concern about taking an extended leave in the event of a chronic illness with child or family member.

These women emphasized that childcare was not a momentary event but a process which spanned several years, during which time the parents might not be as productive in research and extra duties as at other times. Again they made suggestions for a central fund that would cover the expense of additional staff during times of leave. They also asked for greater awareness of the impact of family life on professional life for both parents. While they wanted increased respect for raising children, they did not want this to be an excuse to “ghetto-ize” women. One woman observed that having a baby was perceived as a liability for her professional life rather than a normal part of adult life.

Focus Groups

We conducted two focus group meetings with women faculty who had not requested parental leave but anticipated doing so in the future. When asked to describe their familiarity with SIUC's parental leave policy, they acknowledged the reference to the parental leave and FMLA

policies during the orientation, but remembered it being a very small part of a four-hour presentation on all benefits. One woman found out about the parental leave policy from another faculty woman. When they interviewed for their positions, there was no mention of parental leave policies, and they felt uncomfortable bringing up the topic for fear they would be perceived as not ready to work. In hindsight, several thought that their department chairs would have been willing to discuss the policy with them. One woman commented that meeting with current faculty women who were similar to her would have been a helpful addition to the interview process. Several stressed the importance of making information about parental leave readily accessible to prospective faculty as a means of attracting them.

In discussing the use of sick leave taken in conjunction with the FMLA, the women queried the seeming contradiction in the policies and faculty contract concerning the amount of workdays available for sick leave or FMLA; the rights of both parents concerning parental leave policies; the adequacy of the FMLA for extenuating circumstances such as twins; and the necessity of taking FMLA at all. They expressed desire for more clarity about the implementation of the policies, both at the departmental and the university levels.

When asked whether they would request parental leave if pregnant or adopting, some of the women raised concerns about the current

understaffing of their departments, wondering how their workload would be covered. They were also concerned about how their leave would be perceived by colleagues in the department since they were the only ones of childbearing age. They did not foresee taking the full allotment of time unless the nature or health of the child required more attention or their own health necessitated longer recovery. One thought that she would try to plan the pregnancy to have the baby in early summer. They appreciated the variety of ways in which the leave could be taken. They suggested the possibility of taking 3 or 4 weeks off and then returning to work on a part-time basis, if possible.

The untenured faculty women thought that they would not ask for release from the tenure clock, unless the baby's well being demanded unusually intense care. One expressed the opinion that tenure was based on a history of accumulated work, so taking time to care for an infant need not negatively impact her career. Two women thought that they would plan 3 – 6 years ahead to build up research efforts and publications in preparation for childbearing and caring. These women also suggested that prospective faculty would be attracted by a university policy stating that birth or adoption resulted in the automatic extension of the tenure clock by one year. They noted that a large draw for SIUC is that it is a family-friendly institution. Since attraction and retention of new faculty

members is an issue for the university, building on policies and procedures that nurture the family of the faculty member is critical.

The discussion also addressed the potential problem of pregnant women being perceived as more vulnerable and less able to perform professionally. One woman noted that she had been removed from research projects at another institution when she became pregnant. Several questioned the responsiveness of older male members to pregnancy and early childcare, including breastfeeding, within their departments. They also raised the issue of pregnancy being perceived as an illness rather than normal life event. The women expressed the importance of acceptance and ease within their departments toward pregnancy, young children, and breast-feeding. They questioned the feasibility of caring for children at home, which would require a stricter, more limited schedule and foster divided loyalties.

Their suggestions for improving the administration of parental leave policies include:

- educating department chairs about the administration of the policies.
- mapping out the implementation of the policies within each department.
- making information about the policies readily accessible to prospective and new faculty.

- including a link to parental leave policies on the Web page for the University.
- including in the interview schedule for prospective faculty time with faculty women who have similar concerns.
- having seminars periodically, targeting the newer faculty, about parental leave policies.
- promoting the image of women, who are pregnant or new mothers as being competent, capable academicians.

Human Resources

The administration of all benefits, including the FMLA, resides with the Human Resources Department (HR) of SIUC. In speaking with representatives from this department, they stressed that both the department [chair] and the individual faculty member are required to notify HR of the coming birth or adoption of the child. The normal procedure is that the faculty member would speak with the chair as early as possible about the birth/adoption, and then contact HR to initiate the process of establishing the FMLA. There is some confusion regarding sick leave taken concurrently with FMLA. SIUC's Board of Trustees passed a policy in 1995 allowing sick leave to be used by faculty for a portion (or for the full time period in the case of a medical necessity) of the FMLA. However, Human Resources has interpreted this policy somewhat differently: HR automatically applies all accrued sick leave to a portion of

the FMLA unless otherwise requested. Since the FMLA is unpaid for 12 weeks whereas sick leave is paid, some individuals prefer taking sick leave during FMLA in order to receive their normal salary as long as the sick leave lasts. Others, however, may prefer 12 weeks unpaid leave in order to preserve sick leave for unexpected emergencies associated with caring for an infant or other family member.

Both fathers and mothers may take FMLA for birth or adoption, however, only one FMLA is allowed per couple, regardless of the number of children born. They may use it intermittently or on a part-time basis during the year following the first day of their child's life or guardianship of child. Faculty and staff are eligible for FMLA after the first year of employment. The year ends on the anniversary of the beginning of their contract, whether nine month or full year. The full FMLA is 60 workdays following the university calendar, but faculty members can take less time if they choose.

To be eligible for FMLA, the pregnant woman must have verification by a medical doctor. For a father or adoptive parent, the physician of the child must complete a form. The faculty member works with HR on the specifics of the leave and lets HR know when he or she plans to return to work. They must again obtain a written release from the medical doctor in order to return to work. Term employees, including

those filling faculty roles, are eligible for FMLA for the duration of their contracts, but only after a year of employment.

For adoption and foster care, the HR representatives reported that they work on a case-by-case basis because the timing is unpredictable. They prefer that the adoptive/foster parents notify the department and HR as soon as they enter the process and then notify them again when they have received the child . The FMLA can begin as soon as these parents become eligible for insurance for the child, signifying that they are the legal guardians.

Regarding the dispersion of information to the faculty and department chairs about parental leave policies, the HR personnel referred to the Website for Human Resources, pointing out the necessary information. They also reported handing out information about all leaves at the new employee orientation. The department chairs may receive their information second hand and not investigate further or make their own interpretation of the policy based on the needs of their departments.

Covering the duties of faculty while they are on any kind of formal leave is the responsibility of the department. The faculty member must give 30 days notice before taking a foreseeable absence. The fringe benefits for the faculty are continued during leave. The state continues to pay its portion of insurance and the individual pays whatever optional coverage he or she has chosen. If there is a need for extended leave, the

faculty member may apply for disability leave when FMLA is exhausted. If the faculty has any accrued sick leave beyond what was taken for FMLA, he or she may take that time before applying for disability.

Summary of SIUC Parental Leave Policy (based on the FMLA):

At SIUC the FMLA leave has these requirements:

- approval by medical doctor is required for the woman who is pregnant or by the health care provider for the care of other family members (other family members are considered to be spouse, child, and parents).
- FMLA may be combined with accumulated sick leave; salary continues during the time they overlap.
- leave is counted through the University Schedule, i.e., if a faculty were on a 12-week leave in spring semester, the week of spring break would be included as part of the leave
- FMLA leave may be taken at one time, may be taken for less than 12 weeks, or may be used on an intermittent or part-time basis—the latter requires approval by Human Resources.
- faculty cannot be denied the leave provided they have met eligibility requirements.
- FMLA may be used for placement of a child for foster or adoption.
- FMLA is available once every twelve months.

- either parent is eligible with a maximum of 12 weeks per 12 month period per parent unit.
- FMLA cannot be taken during sabbatical
- an individual can apply at any time for FMLA after the first year or comparable time of service.

Recommendations from Published Articles

In the article, "Do Babies Matter", Mary Ann Mason, dean of the graduate division of Berkeley, provided a descriptive comparison of male and female faculty and staff at her university. Finding the number of men in top ranking positions as faculty and administrators to be disproportionate to the number of those graduating with advanced degrees, she proposes two theories to account for this. One is the "glass ceiling" effect and the other is the competition between work and family. She proposes that the workplace is shaped by a nineteenth century male career model, which requires lengthy workdays, possible travel, and little time at home. Many women have chosen to leave careers or put them on hold in order to take care of responsibilities at home.

The members of the Knight Higher Education Collaborative from the University of Pennsylvania agree with Mason. In their report of faculty gender ratios, they also acknowledge the gap in men and women faculty in East Coast schools, even though student populations show a more even

distribution of male and female students. From these articles come the following recommendations particular to the issue of parental leave:

- Develop alternative models of career paths in academe.
- Continue to share stories about combining work and family as a way to gain knowledge of this area of faculty life.
- Develop policies that support faculty seeking a balance of career and family.
- Create faculty support groups for family issues.
- Create a part-time track with re-entry rights.
- Mentor grad students and post-docs on family/career conflicts through workshops.
- Stop the tenure clock for faculty and create other leave policies for grad students and post-docs.
- Discount gaps in the resume that would indicate periods when the faculty might be caring for children or others.

The needs of the university were highlighted in an article in *The Faculty* that presented the problem that Ithaca College faced when three women faculty in the same department were pregnant at the same time. While the college found an amicable solution and worked well with their faculty, their plight underlines the need for universities and their schools to have plans for the leaves of their faculty around childbirth and childcare. Ithaca College had funds to hire additional staff. Other universities have

set aside funds to hire staff, as well as having a central figure to manage parental leave policy issues. The Collaborative recognized that new policies need continued evaluation and revision because they, too, can become discriminatory (like the “mommy” track).

Mason noted that women occupied most non-tenure-track positions at Berkeley. She suggested that policies that prevent discrimination for bearing and raising children, including guaranteed leave time with ability to return to job, be adopted on their behalf. She suggested that some positions be offered on a part time basis during child-rearing years and coverage of benefits while on leave.

Comparisons with Other Universities

Several universities have been cited in reports and research articles for their innovations in policies designed to address issues that young faculty, particularly women, have with childbirth and childcare. These issues revolve around the time allowed for childbirth and childcare beyond what is specified in the FMLA, workload reduction, allowance for childcare while untenured, number of leaves that one can have while untenured, and childcare while at work. The universities examined were the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Princeton University, University of Michigan, and Stanford University. In addition, we examined the parental leave policies of several peer institutions. These included Auburn University, Illinois State University, and Kansas State University. Summaries of

these parental leave policies are presented in Table 1. SIU-C's Parental Leave Policy is included for comparison.

Table 1

	FMLA	Work load reduction (paid)	Tenure Clock	Other
MIT	Yes	One semester classroom teaching and administrative relief within a year after birth (gender-blind)	One year extension for each child (woman)	Tenured faculty may take up to 5 years of reduced work load with reduced pay to care for children
Princeton	Yes	One semester classroom teaching and administrative relief or half salary for 2 terms of half relief (gender blind – for primary care giver)	One year extension for each child upon request (gender blind)	Maternity leave: paid leave from 3 weeks before to 6-10 weeks after; falls under "temporary disability;" requires medical certification
University of Michigan	Yes (must use sick leave first)	One semester classroom teaching relief during the semester that sick leave is taken in conjunction with birth	One year extension (upon request)	Up to one year leave Without pay available to all faculty for a variety of reasons Including childcare.
Stanford	Yes	One quarter "reduced teaching load" for birth or adoption (gender-blind, for primary care-giver)	One year extension automatic if take one year unpaid leave.	Maternity leave: up to four months paid leave as temporary disability; requires medical certification. Unpaid leave for up to a year for either parent for child care

Table 1 (Con't)

	FMLA	Work load reduction (paid)	Tenure Clock	Other
Auburn University	Must use all accrued sick leave during FMLA		One year extension upon request if take FMLA	
Illinois State University	Must use all accrued sick leave during FMLA			
Kansas State University	Must use all accrued sick leave during FMLA			Up to one year leave without pay for all faculty for a variety of reasons including child care.
SIU-C	Must use all accrued sick leave during FMLA		May be stopped for extraordinary circumstances upon request for one year.	

All of the universities that have been cited as having commendable policies (first four in the Table) offer some form of work load reduction with no reduction in pay during the semester or quarter that a child is born or adopted. The type of workload reduction varies: "reduced teaching load," relief from classroom teaching, relief from classroom teaching and administrative duties. Some policies are gender-blind (the policy applies

to the primary care-taker), others apply only to women. In contrast, none of SIU-C's peer institutions offer such workload relief. The "other" column in the table provides information unique to a particular university.

All of the universities that have been cited as having commendable policies include the possibility of an extension of the tenure clock. At some universities, the tenure clock is automatically stopped for one year for each child (maximum of two one-year extensions); other universities grant the extension upon request; still others offer the extension to the primary care-giver, regardless of gender. In contrast, policies at peer institutions do not mention the tenure clock in their policy. In SIU-C's policy, the tenure clock may be stopped for extraordinary circumstances upon request for one year. (These policies are available on the Web).

Policy Recommendations for SIU-C

The following components are recommended to be included in the Parental Leave Policy for SIU-C:

- Assuming new responsibility for an infant through birth or adoption is a qualifying reason for FMLA. The faculty member requesting this leave is given the option of taking concurrent sick leave. The 12 weeks of FMLA may be continuous, intermittent, or part-time.
- After birth or adoption, the primary care giver will be given one course reduction for one semester at full pay; if the individual elects

to take FMLA, the workload reduction and the FMLA must occur in the same semester.

- The tenure clock will be stopped for one year upon request for individuals who are the primary care givers after birth or adoption.
- The sabbatical clock will be stopped for one year for those individuals who receive a year extension on the tenure clock.
- The individual applying for Parental Leave must inform the Department at least 4 months before the expected birth or as soon as application is made for adoption.
- The teaching obligations of the individual being relieved will not be covered by colleagues assuming an “over-load”. Imposing such a burden would create a “hostile environment”.
- A university-level administrator will assume the responsibility of implementing the policy in a manner that is equitable within and among departments . Centralizing the decision-making will (hopefully) address the common complaint of unfairness. This administrator will have limited funding for hiring term instructors when needed.

Additional recommendations

(1) Clarity: The Parental Leave Policy should be examined for clarity.

Terms, such as FMLA, sick leave should be accurately defined.

Eligibility for various options should be explicit. The policy as

presented in the Faculty Handbook should agree with that of the Faculty Association contract.

- (2) Availability and dissemination of information: Human Resources includes the Parental Leave Policy as part of the Faculty Handbook on their web site. Although the policy is clearly stated, contacts for further information could be added. All faculty, as well as heads of departments and schools, need to be informed and educated about the policy. Human Resources could offer one-time meetings for the dissemination of information.
- (3) Family-friendly environment: Since the web page might be the initial contact of potential faculty with the university, the image that SIUC projects is relevant in attracting qualified professors and staff. There could be links to parental leave policy, child-care possibilities, resources on campus for families, and any special events pertinent to families. Some of the web images could be of women as competent professionals when pregnant or of women and men as professionals and parents. During the interview for new faculty, women candidates should be given the opportunity to meet with other women faculty. Explaining the parental leave policy could be made a standard component of the interview process.

- (4) Establish a review committee or designate an office at the University to review the parental leave policies after a five year period and, if need be, adjust the policies.

Conclusions

The interviews and focus groups revealed misinformation and ignorance about the parental leave policies among faculty women at SIUC. The current policies provide many benefits comparable to peer institutions. Nevertheless, the policies of the universities that serve as exemplars provide models through which to guide the development of an environment favorable to women's advancement as scholars and professional at SIUC.

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