Danforth Campus Policy on Parental Leave for Tenured and Tenure-Track Faculty

Effective date: July 1, 1999
Revised: November 19, 2014

I. Availability of Parental Leave

When a full-time faculty member who is tenured or tenure-track, or that faculty member’s spouse or domestic partner, becomes the parent of a child, either by childbirth or by placement of a child for adoption, the faculty member shall, upon written request to his or her Department Chair or Dean, be entitled to a parental leave of one semester as described in section 3. The request should be made as soon as reasonably possible after the need for a leave becomes known, in order to minimize the administrative burden of ensuring adequate course coverage.

If a faculty member and his or her spouse or domestic partner would otherwise both be eligible for parental leave under this Policy, either one, but not both, may take the leave provided in section 3. However, under such circumstances the faculty member who is not eligible for leave under this policy may, upon notice to the Dean, elect that his or her own tenure probationary clock be paused during his or her spouse’s or domestic partner’s leave, consistent with Section IV.B.2 of the Washington University Policy on Academic Freedom, Responsibility, and Tenure and section 5 of this policy.

II. Agreement

Any agreement for a parental leave under this Policy shall be in writing. The agreement shall include a certification by the faculty member that the purpose of the leave will be to serve as the primary caregiver for that child during the period of leave or to recapture time spent as the primary caregiver during the preceding summer. The agreement should also describe the relationship between the parental leave provided under the Policy and the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) as set forth in section 7.

III. Salary, Benefits and Responsibilities During Leave

A faculty member who takes parental leave under this Policy shall receive the same salary and benefits that he or she would have received that semester if not on leave, and shall be relieved of his or her normal duties and responsibilities during the period of leave as follows:

a. Teaching: The faculty member shall be relieved of the obligation to teach during the semester in which the leave is taken. If the semester during which a leave is taken is one in which the faculty member would otherwise have taught more than half of his or her normal annual teaching load, the faculty member may be required to teach one additional course in another semester to be agreed upon by the faculty member and his or her Department Chair or Dean.

b. Research and Scholarship: The faculty member shall be relieved of research and scholarship expectations for one semester.

c. Governance: The faculty member shall be relieved of all faculty governance responsibilities, including committee work, for one semester.
IV. When Taken

At the option of the faculty member, the parental leave provided by this Policy may be taken during the semester in which the child is born or placed for adoption, or during any subsequent semester that begins no later than six months after the birth or adoption. For purposes of this section, each semester shall run from the first day of classes to the last day of classes.

V. Effect on Probationary Period

a. If the faculty member is non-tenured but tenure-track, the time that he or she spends on parental leave under this Policy shall not count toward the probationary period. For purposes of Section IV.B.2 of the Washington University Policy on Academic Freedom, Responsibility, and Tenure, each time a faculty member invokes this Policy, he or she shall be regarded as being on part-time leave of absence for one semester.

b. To avoid the administrative difficulties that deviations from the usual yearly tenure review schedule would create however, the total time period for which the faculty member shall be regarded as having been on part-time leave of absence shall be rounded up to the nearest whole number of years. The rounding up procedure shall be employed only to the extent necessary to avoid a deviation from the yearly schedule of tenure consideration. Thus, if a faculty member receives parental leave under this Policy as well as part-time leave granted for independent reasons, the various leave periods would be added together before the rounding described in this section is performed.

c. The timing of any intermediate or major reviews during the probationary period shall be adjusted in a manner consistent with the extension of the probationary period as provided in this section.

VI. Medical Incapacitation

Any parental leave taken under this Policy shall be in addition to any leave granted because of medical incapacitation.

VII. FMLA

The benefits afforded faculty under this Policy are intended to be consistent and not in conflict with rights afforded under the FMLA. Any leave taken under this Policy, to the extent that it also qualifies for FMLA leave, is intended to count as FMLA leave, and the written agreement should clearly state that intention. If a faculty member elects to take parental leave pursuant to the FMLA, his or her Department Chair or Dean may require the faculty member to substitute the paid leave provided in the Policy during the period the faculty member has designated as FMLA leave, and this requirement should be confirmed in writing.

VIII. Additional Leave

The parental leave provided under this Policy is intended to describe the minimum level of benefits available for faculty members to whom it applies. Nothing in this Policy shall be construed to prevent a Department Chair or Dean from extending leave or other benefits more generous than provided in this Policy in order to accommodate the family needs of an individual faculty member.