

Useful Links:

URI Work-Life Resources: www.uri.edu/worklife

URI Human Resources: www.uri.edu/human_resources

RI Family Medical Leave Act:

http://www.nccp.org/state_detail_RI_policy_29.html

URI President's Commission on the Status of Women:

<http://www.uri.edu/uriwomen/>

URI-AAUP Website and Faculty Contract:

<http://www.ele.uri.edu/aaup/>

For more information on "bias avoidance" see:

Drago, R., Colbeck, C., Stauffer, D., Pirretti, A., Burkhum, K., Fazioli, J., Guzman, G., & Habasevich, T. *The Avoidance of Bias Against Care-giving Among Faculty*. Academe, Oct-Nov 2005.

The URI Work-Life Committee includes a group of volunteer staff, faculty, and students who formed in 2004 due to the joint efforts of the URI NSF ADVANCE Institutional Transformation Program and the URI President's Commission on the Status of Women. Now a standing committee under the Vice President of Administration, the mission of the committee is to educate the URI community about issues having to do with work-life integration and workplace flexibility, review and improve URI's work-family policies and practices, and conduct work-life research. Please visit our website for more information.



The nautilus, growing outward from its center in perfect mathematical proportions, was chosen as the symbol of the efforts of the URI Work-Life Committee to promote professional growth while maintaining equilibrium, harmony and balance in the lives of members of the URI community.

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THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND

Family Leave for AAUP Faculty at URI: Guidelines, Philosophical Framework, and AAUP Contract Provisions

2011



WORK-LIFE RESOURCES
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND
www.uri.edu/worklife

This handbook includes information regarding provisions for Family Leave for URI faculty who are members of the AAUP union (American Association of University Professors). Included are the University policy, and guidelines for its implementation for faculty, their supervisors, and faculty colleagues.



Today, the intersection of work, family, and life responsibilities provides challenges for many workers. Family demands, including children and aging parents, are impacting the work lives of an increasingly diverse workforce. Research shows that workplaces thrive and remain competitive when they respect and are responsive to the complex life and family needs of their workers.

URI is committed to providing a workplace that respects the needs of its employees. It is therefore with great pleasure that we present the URI faculty community with the AAUP Family Leave provisions. These provisions, which include paid leave for both mothers and fathers, tenure stops, and flexible working arrangements when possible, is in stride with best practices adopted by leading universities across the nation. It is expected that implementation of these provisions be done in good faith and without prejudice.

This important step forward for URI is the culmination of a successful collaboration among the URI Work-Life Committee, the President's Commission on the Status of Women, the NSF ADVANCE Program, the American Association of University Professors, and the URI Administration. We hope to continue this partnership as we work to provide more initiatives that enable URI to be an excellent place to work.

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Normally the unpaid leave does not exceed a total of six months, but an additional six months can be granted for reasons of personal illness, disability, or other purposes deemed proper and approved by the President. A faculty member on leave without pay shall be eligible for up to one (1) year of state paid health benefits. Unpaid leave may be extended beyond one year in unusual circumstances. Employees must pay for health benefits for leaves beyond one year.

Part-Time Active Service with Reduced Workload

As specified by the AAUP contract (Article 21.6.3), full-time faculty making use of Parental or Family Leave may request a Reduced Workload with a commensurate reduction in salary. Such reduced workload will not normally extend beyond one year. For the first year, if the workload is at least half-time, health benefits shall be continued at the employer's expense. No health benefits shall be granted if the workload is less than one-half or more than one year. Requests for Reduced Workloads may be granted for more than one partner at a time, if both partners are covered by the AAUP contract, either concurrently or sequentially.

Tenure Probationary Period for Tenure-Track Faculty

Upon request of the faculty member, parental leave may result in a temporary "stop" on the tenure clock. As specified in the AAUP contract (Article 19.2), it is understood that when a faculty member is on any leave as outlined in the contract under Article 21 ("Leaves") or has not worked for a complete and/or consecutive academic year then that year will not count as full-time service and the tenure clock may be extended.

A further suggested best practice, not included in contract provisions:

Full-Time Active Service With Modified Duties

A period of full-time Active Service with Modified Duties may be requested to meet a myriad of family challenges (similar to that provided for faculty returning from a disability, AAUP Article 21.3.1). The terms and conditions of the modified duties shall be discussed between the employee and the Department Chair in consultation with the College Dean. It may be helpful to include department colleagues in these discussions, as appropriate.

Examples of modified duties: any combination of curricular initiatives, special research projects, or outreach activities.

PARENTAL & FAMILY LEAVE PROVISIONS

as outlined in the 2007-2010 URI AAUP Contract

General Definitions

Parental leave means leave by reason of the birth of a child of a faculty member or the placement of a child 16 years or less, with a faculty member in connection with the adoption of such child by the faculty member. **Family leave** is for a family member, defined as a parent, spouse, domestic partner, child, mother-in-law, father-in-law, or other dependent family member. Family leave is granted by reason of serious illness of a family member (refer to Article 21.6 for definitions of "serious illness.") **Domestic partner** means "an individual who is at least 18 years of age, has shared a common residence with the employee for a period of at least one year and intends to reside indefinitely with the employee; the partner and the employee are not married to anyone, they share a mutually exclusive, enduring relationship, and the partner and the employee consider themselves life partners, share joint responsibility for their common welfare and are financially interdependent.



Paid Parental Leave

As specified by the AAUP contract (Article 21.6.1), women and men faculty members with one year or more of service shall be granted six (6) weeks of paid parental leave at the birth of a child or the placement of an adopted child sixteen (16) years or less. Faculty members should provide at least one month's notice prior to the start of the leave to their Department Chair, whenever possible. When additional time is needed beyond the 6 weeks because of medical reasons, that time may be charged to vacation or sick leave, with proper medical documentation. Faculty may also utilize paid accumulative sick leave for purposes related to family illness (AAUP Article 21.3).

Unpaid Parental & Family Leave with No Interruption in Benefits

The Rhode Island Parental and Family Medical Leave Act allows for 13 weeks of unpaid leave. Beyond this, the employee is eligible for additional unpaid parental and/or family leave upon written request (AAUP Article 21.6.2).

PHILOSOPHICAL FRAMEWORK

We envision family friendly policies as a means to bring about social change, not as a reflection of outdated cultural expectations. Several guiding principles inform these provisions.

- Our policies recognize that the economy depends on families to perform essential unpaid work: to bear and raise the next generation of workers, and to support and nurture present and past workers. Thus, work and family are inextricably interconnected, and one cannot function without the other.
- Our policies create family leave strategies that are designed to help families make non-gendered choices about family care. Thus, they do not reinforce the cultural idea that women are (or should be) "natural" caregivers. Research evidence is clear on three points: children are well-served when they are cared for in families with shared nurturance responsibility; fathers want to be more involved in family life, but feel constrained by work expectations; and when families make gendered choices about family care, women are much less likely to succeed in even the most family-friendly work environment. The intent of our policies is to make the same accommodations available and acceptable for both men and women.
- The goal is to replace medical models of family leave that view family caregiving needs as emergencies with models that view family leave of all types as part of a flexible workplace that recognizes the importance of family caregiving to a sustainable economy.
- A concerted educational component must be an essential piece of our policies; to best disseminate information about policies and benefits, to change discriminatory norms, and to facilitate uniform and fair implementation across disciplines and colleges.

Creating a family-friendly work environment involves an array of policy initiatives and practices. Family leave provisions are but one necessary step toward this goal. Changing personal attitudes and interactional expectations within academic departments are also required, and require special attention beyond policy change.

Guidelines for Administrators

Remember the “*big picture*” - recognize that meeting the work-life balance needs of faculty creates a sustainable workforce. The following are some suggestions to help you and your department meet these needs, and assist with the provisions included in the AAUP contract.

Consider

- Scheduling meeting times to accommodate family life
- Encouraging and modeling open discussion about family issues
- Creating opportunities to include family in some social events.

Make the provisions visible - once you are familiar with the specifics of the provisions, assist faculty to learn about them.

- Disseminate widely and proactively. Include on college and department websites.
- Make provisions an agenda item at chairs’ councils and faculty meetings
- Distribute this brochure to all faculty, including prospective faculty.



URI AAUP 2007-2010 Contract, Article 21.6

Family Leaves

The primary purpose of a family leave is to provide a faculty member with support necessary to balance effectively employment and family needs. Family leave may be taken as parental leave, elder care needs, partner needs or other family needs. Paid and unpaid leaves are available. Accumulated sick leave may be utilized during family leave with appropriate medical documentation.

Guidelines for Colleagues

A key characteristic of an effective workplace is co-worker support. Everyone has outside responsibilities across the life course. Consider doing the following:

- Promote a culture of “coverage” rather than competition by filling in for colleagues who need to take time off. This is one way to build a culture of mutual respect and support that will ultimately benefit every member of the department.
- Engage in conversations about family and personal events with colleagues. This decreases feelings of isolation among those who may be quietly experiencing life-work challenges.
- Respect the personal choices of colleagues, and avoid making uninformed assumptions. People rarely disclose everything that may be happening in their lives.
- Remember that “As colleagues, professors have obligations that derive from common membership in the community of scholars. Professors do not discriminate against or harass colleagues.” (AAUP Article 8.1)

“Among other things, employees in more effective and flexible workplaces are more likely than other workers to have greater engagement in their jobs, higher levels of job satisfaction, stronger intentions to remain with their companies, less negative and stressful spillover from job to home, less negative spillover from home to job and better mental health”

*National Study of the Changing Workforce,
Families and Work Institute, 1997, 2002, & 2008*

Embrace the intent of the provisions - the following suggestions help you communicate parental and family leave as a routine and expected part of meeting the life-course needs of faculty. Ensure that faculty are confident that they can take a leave without fear of negative consequences.

- Meet parental and other family leave requests positively and with flexibility
- Make the transition out and back as smooth as possible.
- Remember that a leave cannot impact workload upon return

Create a “culture of coverage” - promote the idea that all faculty will have needs outside the workplace, and engage in proactive conversations about how best to work together to accommodate those needs when they arise.

- Use every opportunity to discuss current and future needs concerning the policy in the department and college
- Reward and/or reinforce cooperation and helpfulness.

TO ADMINISTRATORS: A NOTE ON BIAS AVOIDANCE

According to a recent study (Drago, et al, 2005) **bias avoidance** refers to the strategies that faculty members adopt to avoid being perceived as choosing family over work. This bias avoidance is particularly salient in academia where there is a norm of long hours and a culture that assumes that family life is at odds to the demands of being a productive faculty member. Many faculty (particularly women) engage in strategies that hide family commitments such as delaying childbirth, having fewer children than they would like, and not asking for family related needs. Please do your part in helping to reduce this bias avoidance by modeling work/family balance and by supporting colleagues and family friendly policies.

Guidelines for Faculty Seeking to Use Family Leave

1. What kind of leave might you be interested in taking?

- If you interested in taking paid parental leave, you must have been employed at URI for at least one year upon the arrival of your child. If this occurs in the summer and you are on a 9-month contract, you may not be eligible to receive the full 6 weeks of paid leave (Article 21.6.1).
- If you choose to take additional time after the paid leave, you may use accumulated sick leave with medical documentation, and/or make use of the unpaid leave options (health benefits are provided up to one year) (Article 21.3; Article 21.6; 21.6.2).
- Using parental or other family leave for work or career-related purposes is considered a violation of University policy

2. Who to tell?

- It may be helpful to confide in a trusted peer for support.
- Tell your department chair first. Work with your chair to tell the Dean and Human Resources, or other appropriate parties.

3. What to tell?

- Present the situation professionally and confidently. Do not be apologetic or try to diminish your needs as a caregiver.
- Develop 2-3 scenarios to suggest for class coverage, service responsibilities, grant activities, and strategies for staying on track, etc.
- Discuss your potential plans for your leave, including type and length of leave, and engage in planning for possible work modifications.

4. When to tell?

- First keep in mind what is best for you, and try to balance that with the department's needs.
- While one month's lead time is required, try to give as much lead time as you can in order to facilitate effective department planning.

5. What kinds of impacts will your leave have?

- Your leave should have no impact on your return to work. You should not be expected to make up the work you've missed. You should be expected to resume your contractual duties upon your return (Article 21.8).
- You may be entitled to request other workload modifications and a tenure clock extension (Article 21.6.3; Article 19.2).

TO FACULTY: A NOTE ON BIAS AVOIDANCE

In the past, caretaking responsibilities were not highly valued in the workplace, prompting some workers to use strategies to hide those activities in order to avoid negative evaluations. Engaging in these bias avoidance strategies has been particularly true of women workers (Drago, et al, 2005). Today, however, emphasis is being increasingly placed on achieving a balance between work and personal/family life. Avoid the tendency to engage in behaviors that hide or diminish your family needs and responsibilities. Find a role model who effectively balances work and life, who demonstrates professional competence while openly and confidently attending to personal and/or family needs. Remind yourself that all faculty and administrators have these responsibilities, and help create an environment where those needs are respected and satisfied.

"Women with access to paid leave were found to work later into pregnancy, to be less likely to work during the birth month, and to start work sooner once the infant was at least 2 months old." (Joesch, 1997).