

FAMILY LEAVE AND TENURE CLOCK EXTENSION

<http://www.washington.edu/admin/acadpers/policies/leaves-MedFamTen.html>

<http://www.washington.edu/faculty/facsenate/handbook/04-05-08.html>

The UW has an official family leave and tenure clock extension policy that allows a faculty member to take a medical and/or family leave (such as leave surrounding the birth of a child). If a leave of six months or more is taken, faculty are AUTOMATICALLY ENTITLED TO NOT COUNT that year towards mandatory tenure review. The use of leave does not automatically update the faculty tenure clock. Department chairs need to submit notice through the dean to the Provost to have the tenure clock recalculated. In the case that a faculty member did not take leave or did not take enough leave to trigger an “automatic” tenure clock extension, the faculty can still request a year tenure extension ANY TIME PRIOR TO THE YEAR OF REVIEW. Again, the department chair will submit the formal request on behalf of the faculty member.

This tenure clock extension policy recognizes that faculty may be significantly distracted from their research and academic capabilities during medical or family leave. Unfortunately, many pre-tenure faculty are reluctant to use this policy, believing a bias or stigma exists. Chairs must assure faculty that the time on leave will not be unfairly evaluated.

Given that the tenure clock generally coincides with the biological clock, women faculty face particularly difficult timing decisions regarding this balance. To that end, departments should seek to offer supportive solutions. The best practices highlighted next could also benefit new fathers or other faculty who are experiencing major life transitions.

FAMILY LEAVE BEST PRACTICES:

Many of these practices would hold for adoptive parents as well, and could be applied to new fathers. Often when women in SEM departments become pregnant, there is no precedent for a family leave package in their departments. Some examples of best family leave practices include:

- offering course release in both the quarter the baby is due (bearing in mind that older women tend to have high-risk pregnancies) and the following quarter (at the UW, leave paid by the state is not available in the summer). Paid leave is available to women as disability leave associated with childbirth and recovery. Unpaid leave is available to men and women for the purpose of care of newly born or adopted children.
- creating funding resources which could be used to support salary, cost-share post-docs, etc.
- encouraging all faculty to be supportive (such as allowing infants to be brought to meetings and scheduling meetings not too early or late in the day to arrange for daycare drop-off and pickup)
- providing extra student teaching support for the first quarter the faculty teaches after returning from family leave
- working closely with the faculty member to determine course and committee assignments that may be more manageable during the quarter of her/his return.

If you have additional questions, feel free to contact ADVANCE (advance@enr.washington.edu).