



**PROPOSAL FOR PARENTAL LEAVE BENEFIT**

Updated: January 26, 2012

The Committee on the Status of Women and the University Benefits Committee propose a **paid parental leave program** for benefit eligible faculty and staff. This proposal was first presented to the Cabinet in March 2010. At that time, the Cabinet advised that they were delaying acceptance of the proposal, as the University was in the midst of strategic program prioritization. Now that program prioritization has ended, the proposal has been updated to include the new short-term disability program, as well as more information regarding parental leave at comparable colleges and employers.

Three possibilities are proposed. They are designed to work in tandem with short-term disability and FMLA:

- 4 weeks of paid parental leave for birth mothers, fathers, and adoptive parents. Congruent with the mission of the university, the Committee on the Status of Women and the University Benefits Committee strongly endorse this option as the most supportive of the importance of family life. How a new parent would use this benefit would depend on whether they opted into short-term disability (STD) and how much vacation and sick time they have accrued. The following chart shows how this benefit could work.

Birth mother with short-term disability (STD)	Birth with <i>no</i> disability	Fathers and adoptive parents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 weeks of sick time or parental leave would be used during 14 day STD elimination period</li> <li>• 4-6 weeks of 67% STD, with the option of using sick or parental leave to cover benefit premiums</li> <li>• At 6 or 8 weeks, when doctor releases employee to return to work, disability benefits end and sick time can no longer be used</li> <li>• Remainder of FMLA (up to 12 weeks) parental leave, unpaid or vacation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Option to use sick leave until doctor releases employee to return to work at 6 or 8 weeks</li> <li>• 4 weeks parental leave</li> <li>• Remainder of FMLA unpaid or vacation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Option of using 3 days of sick time</li> <li>• 4 weeks parental leave</li> <li>• Remainder of FMLA unpaid or vacation</li> </ul>

Two other options are described below. They would work in a manner similar to that described above.

- 2 weeks of paid parental leave for birth mothers, fathers, and adoptive parents.
- 4 weeks of paid parental leave for birth mothers and 2 weeks of paid parental leave for fathers and adoptive parents (or 4 weeks for birth mother and adoptive and 2 weeks for fathers).

**I. PROPOSED POLICY**

***Policies and Procedures***

<i>SECTION:</i> <b>Administration</b>	<i>NO.</i> <b>DRAFT (as of 1/1/12)</b>		
<i>CHAPTER:</i> <b>Human Resources</b>	<i>ISSUED:</i>	<i>REV. A</i>	<i>REV. B</i>
<i>POLICY:</i> <b>Parental Leave</b>	<b>PAGE 1 OF 1</b>		

**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this policy is to provide paid parental leave to benefit-eligible University employees, (faculty and staff). Parental leave will provide parents with additional flexibility and time to bond with a new child, adjust to their new family situation and provide increased balance to their employment and family obligations.

**ELIGIBILITY:** To be eligible for parental leave, the employee must have been employed by the University in a benefit-eligible status during the entire 12-month period immediately prior to the birth or adoption of a child. In the case where both parents are Creighton employees, both are eligible for this leave.

**POLICY:** The provisions of this policy are:

1. To provide paid leave for the birth or adoptive parent(s).
2. Eligible employees may only use paid parental leave during the first 12 weeks following the birth or adoption of a child. For adoptive parents the leave may begin at the time the employee travels to a destination to obtain the adoptive child.
3. If the employee is eligible for Family and Medical Leave (FMLA), paid parental leave will run concurrently with FMLA leave (please refer to University policy 2.2.14 regarding FMLA).
4. Supervisors are required to work with eligible staff employees. Deans or Department Chairs must work directly with faculty to redistribute duties, including teaching responsibilities, during the entire leave period up to 12 weeks under FMLA.
5. Recognizing that faculty teaching schedules and the academic calendar often present additional challenges for dealing with leave, and that different schools and colleges operate differently, each academic division or school must create a process for providing faculty the requested leave that complies with the minimum requirements of the policy.

**SCOPE:** This policy applies to all benefit-eligible employees (faculty and staff).

**ADMINISTRATION AND INTERPRETATION:** Questions regarding this policy should be directed to the Associate Vice President of Human Resources.

**AMENDMENT OR TERMINATION OF THIS POLICY:** Creighton University reserves the right to modify, amend or terminate this policy at any time.

## II. CREIGHTON'S CURRENT LEAVE SITUATION

Creighton provides no paid parental leave. Creighton adheres to the federally mandated FMLA policy, which requires that qualified employees be allowed up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave to care for children. While some employees can afford to take unpaid leave, most cannot. Typically, pregnant women, of necessity, use sick and/or vacation time to address pregnancy-related medical needs. Combine this with the fact that short term disability (which pays 67% of salary, presuming the employee has paid into this system) requires a 2 week waiting period, and women are more often than not exhausting their sick and/or vacation time for their pregnancy and a minimal paid maternity leave. Generally, doctors require 6 weeks at home, and daycares do not accept infants before 6 or 8 weeks. With these realities, even employees who take a minimal amount of time off work following a birth are often left with little or no paid leave to use later if they get sick or need to care for a sick child. Those employees who have not paid into disability have even less flexibility.

Men whose wives have given birth are currently only able to utilize 3 days of sick leave plus vacation time (if available) to bond with their newborns. Additionally, adoptive parents (especially those adopting internationally), often must spend time traveling to pick up their child, and then helping their child adjust to their new home. While these new parents are covered by FMLA, adoptive mothers and fathers are currently only able to utilize vacation time to pay for their leave (which staff and 12 month faculty members accrue, but 9 month faculty members do not).

It bears mentioning that the United States is one of only a handful of countries in the world that does not provide paid parental leave, thus individual organizations are left with the responsibility of providing leave as an employee benefit. The State of California is the only state in the U.S. that provides paid parental leave (6 weeks each for mothers and fathers). Thus, Creighton (like institutions in the other 49 states) must create its own paid parental leave policy.

## III. WHY PARENTAL LEAVE

A Parental Leave Policy that provides paid parental leave to all benefit-eligible University employees will provide parents with additional flexibility and time to bond with their new child, adjust to their new family situation and provide increased balance to their employment and family obligations. It will allow parents to reserve a portion of their sick time to take newborns to well baby doctor appointments, as well as to care for themselves or their children in the case of illness. A parental leave policy is a way that our organization can live out our commitment to promoting social justice by ensuring that all employees, regardless of gender or pay, are provided the financial support needed to start or add to their families.

- **Adherence to Our Core Values:** Cura personalis is one of the core Jesuit values, and caring for the whole person includes being aware of and sensitive to our employees' family responsibilities. In addition, our mission statement recognizes "the importance of family life," as a core value and the Creighton Credo states: "We believe in supporting all persons in their responsible contributions to the community through family, social interactions, and all life-endavors." A paid parental leave policy is a way to live into these stated values that, as an institution, we hold dear.
- **Recruiting and Retention: One of Creighton's strategic objectives is to attract and retain faculty, staff and students.** The good will and loyalty of employees are very important to Creighton if we are to realize our goals as an institution of excellence in the midst of trying economic times. Employees, especially younger faculty and staff, are quite sensitive about employee benefit issues in general and "family-friendly" policies in particular. A parental leave benefit would be notably "family-friendly" and would have a positive effect on both recruitment and retention of faculty and staff. In addition, Creighton University desires to be an "Employer of Choice" in the Omaha metropolitan area, a survey that is heavily based on work/life benefits. A paid parental leave program would improve our profile in this area.

- **Acceptance by Employers:** More and more employers and educational institutions are offering paid parental leave and in an increasingly competitive environment for talented people, many want to remain competitive with their competitors and colleagues. According to a 2004 Sloan Foundation funded study, 51% of elite or top-tier schools offer more than 6 weeks of paid leave to faculty and staff (Yoest, 2004). We can only presume that in the past 7 years, this number has continued to grow. The universities and local employers presented in section V below provide a range of 2 weeks up to 1 full semester of paid leave to birth mothers/primary caregivers and 1 week up to 1 full semester of paid leave to birth fathers/secondary caregivers/adoptive parents.
- **Compliance with Federal Funding Agencies:** NIH and other agencies that provide grant funding allow up to 8 weeks of paid leave for employees whose salaries are paid by grants, provided that the institution has a policy in place that provides similar leave for other employees. The lack of a paid parental leave policy has not allowed Creighton researchers to utilize this benefit up to this point.
- **Social Benefit:** Many people cannot afford unpaid time off and thus are not afforded the necessary bonding time with a new child. Paid parental leave allows employees to save their vacation and sick time, rather than exhausting their paid leave balances as newborns or newly adopted children typically need regular doctor's visits, immunizations and care that the parent will need to use paid time off for in the first year. Allowing parents the time to bond with and take care of their new children properly decreases stress, which benefits coworkers and the rest of the organization.
- **Work/life balance:** In addition to needing paid time off, parents need to know that their employer is committed to family life and willing to allow the time necessary for a child and parents to establish and build a healthy, loving relationship. There is a growing recognition that our workplaces should give family concerns a higher priority in order to keep valuable employees happy, productive and committed to their employer while maintaining a work/life balance. Particularly at a Catholic and Jesuit institution, we should be communicating this pro-family message in tangible ways.

#### IV. WHY FATHERS NEED LEAVE TOO

- According to a survey of fathers conducted by the National Fatherhood Initiative in 2006, "work responsibilities" are the number one obstacle to good fathering.
- Research suggests that fathers' early involvement with infants is crucial to work/family balance. Time off of work to attend to a newly born or adopted child helps fathers bond with their babies, support their wives in breastfeeding, learn infant care skills, attend doctor appointments, and to deal with sleep deprivation and other difficulties that come with the addition of a baby to a family (Doucet, 2009). Additionally, there is growing evidence that taking parental leave positively impacts fathers' relationships with their children long after the leave is over (Tanaka & Waldfogel, 2007).
- We can no longer assume that all fathers are the "breadwinners" and responsible for working while the mother stays at home to care for the child(ren). Two incomes are increasingly more common and necessary, and it is also increasingly common for females to be the primary "breadwinner" in a family...while also continuing to do more than their share of housework and childcare (Mason, 2010). An equal paid leave benefit for fathers allows families to be more flexible in childcare and work arrangements and to make choices that are best for the needs of their individual families. Fathers' paid leave may allow mothers to return to work more quickly and for both parents to more equally share childrearing. When men are more equally involved in childcare tasks, their wives also benefit from a healthier work/family balance.
- Unfortunately, even in companies where paternity leave is available, cultural pressures make it difficult for men to take advantage of this leave. At Creighton, where we say we are committed to the importance of family life, we have the opportunity to make our policy live up to our mission and to encourage dads to be dads. In addition to it being a matter of gender equity, Creighton has the opportunity to be a leader in the fight against the unhealthy cultural pressures that work against involved fatherhood at the expense of families and children.

## V. Summary

Paid parental leave has become a common benefit in many organizations. 60% of Creighton's workforce is female and it is projected that 60% of new incoming faculty will be female. Employers sensitive to family life recognize the importance of parental leave for both female and male employees. Many employers find that offering paid parental leave creates good will and a sense of employee commitment to the organization and creates a positive "family-friendly" image.

It is our sincere hope that after reviewing this proposal, the Cabinet will approve a paid parental leave program for Creighton University.

## VI. INDUSTRY SUPPORT

### Partial List of Universities and other local Omaha employers Offering Paid Leave Programs\*

Organization	Maternity Leave	Paternity/Adoptive Leave
<b><i>Jesuit Institutions</i></b>		
Boston College	8 weeks paid leave	1 week paid leave
Holy Cross	Faculty: 8 weeks leave and then modified duties or 1 semester at 2/3 pay	
John Carroll	6 weeks paid leave	
Loyola Maryland	Staff: 6 weeks paid leave Faculty: 1 semester paid leave	Staff: 6 weeks paid leave for fathers/ adoptive parents Faculty: 1 semester paid leave for fathers/ adoptive parents
Loyola Marymount	Faculty: 1 semester at full pay or 2 semesters at half pay	
Loyola New Orleans	Staff: 4 weeks paid Faculty/Admin: 8 weeks paid or 16 at half pay	Staff: 4 weeks paid leave for fathers/ adoptive parents/ foster parents
Marquette	Faculty: Can opt for "alternative duties" and be relieved of teaching for 1 semester at full pay.	Faculty: Can opt for "alternative duties" and be relieved of teaching for 1 semester at full pay.
Regis		2 weeks parental leave for fathers/spouses or adoptive parents paid out of sick time
<b><i>Other Universities</i></b>		
Carlton College	Staff: 12 weeks paid leave for primary caregiver Faculty: 1 term release from teaching duties and non-teaching duties or 2 terms with half pay for primary caregiver	Staff: 3 weeks paid leave for secondary caregiver/ adoptive parents Faculty: 1 course release from teaching duties and reduction of non-teaching duties at 2/3 pay for secondary caregiver/ adoptive parents
Doane College	Faculty: Work w/ faculty member to cover classes, typically for a whole semester. This	

	leave is paid.	
Grinnell College	<p>Staff: 6 weeks paid parenting leave</p> <p>Faculty: One-semester paid leave or a total of two course reductions in teaching over two consecutive semesters.</p> <p>If both parents work for the College and are eligible for leave, each is entitled to six weeks of paid leave (or equivalent if the spouse/partner is a faculty member). This benefit is not transferrable to the other parent. In addition, the couple may only take a combined total of twelve weeks of leave under the Family Medical Leave Act.</p>	<p>Staff: 6 weeks paid parenting leave</p> <p>Faculty: One-semester paid leave or a total of two course reductions in teaching over two consecutive semesters.</p> <p>If both parents, as Grinnell faculty members, are eligible for a family leave on account of the birth or placement of a child, the College will grant a one-semester paid leave to only one of the two parents. If the parents select the two-course reduction option, this reduction may be divided between the two parents.</p>
MIT	<p>Staff: Minimum 8 weeks paid w/ doctor's note.</p> <p>Faculty: 1 semester release from all duties, save advising students.</p>	Faculty: 1 semester release from all duties, save advising students.
Nebraska Indian Community College	Faculty and staff: 5 week paid maternity, additional time-off covered by optional disability coverage	Faculty and staff: 3 weeks paid paternity
Nebraska Wesleyan University	Faculty and staff: 6 weeks paid leave	Faculty and staff: 6 weeks paid leave
Northwestern	Faculty: 1 term release from all duties, save advising students, for birth or adoption	Faculty: 1 term release from all duties, save advising students, for birth or adoption
Ohio State	240 hours (6 weeks) paid leave for birth mothers	120 hours (3 weeks) paid leave for fathers and adoptive parents
Simpson College	<p>Faculty and staff: Six weeks paid leave which will typically begin immediately following the birth of the child but may begin prior to the birth if medically necessary.</p> <p>Faculty: In lieu of the 6 weeks of paid Maternal Disability Leave or the 2 weeks of paid New Child Leave described above, an eligible faculty member may elect to take leave for that entire semester during which the leave would have otherwise been utilized, at half-pay.</p>	<p>Faculty/Staff: At the time of birth, or placement of an adopted child, the parent, if eligible, may take two weeks of paid leave, called New Child Leave.</p> <p>Faculty/Staff Adoption: In the case of adoption, Simpson College will provide an eligible employee \$1,000 per adopted child to help cover the cost associated with adoption. <a href="http://www.simpson.edu/hr/handbook/benefits.html">http://www.simpson.edu/hr/handbook/benefits.html</a></p>
Swarthmore	<p>Staff: 1 month paid leave</p> <p>Faculty: 1 semester release from teaching duties</p>	<p>Staff: 1 month paid leave for father/ adoption</p> <p>Faculty: 1 course release for one semester for father/ adoption</p>
University of Kansas	Faculty: 6-8 weeks paid, then "modified duties" to eliminate teaching obligations.	Faculty: 6-8 weeks paid, then "modified duties" to eliminate teaching obligations for "co-equal"

		caregiver.
University of Michigan	Staff: 6 weeks paid Faculty: paid 1 academic term	Faculty: paid 1 academic term
University of Saint Thomas	Up to two weeks of paid leave in conjunction with the birth or adoption of a child  Faculty have release time for 2 courses and need to make up the third course within the year	Up to two weeks of paid leave in conjunction with the birth or adoption of a child
Villanova University	6 weeks paid for primary caregiver, birth or adoption	Have 'parental leave', which is a special feature of the FMLA policy. This policy allows the father (in the case of a birth), or either parent (in the case of an adoption), to be paid for up to 6 of the 12 FMLA weeks using available sick time. They would not otherwise be able to use their sick time if they were not medically unable to work.
Washington College	Staff & Faculty: 15 weeks paid	Staff & Faculty: 15 weeks paid
<b>Omaha Employers</b>		
Con Agra	Up to 8 weeks for birth mother	2 weeks paid leave for birth father or adoptive parents
Gavilon	Exempt (salaried) mother receives Short-term disability up to 13 weeks at 100% of pay. Non-exempt receive short-term disability up to 13 weeks at 60% of pay.	2 weeks paid leave for biological fathers and spouses of newborn child's mother.
Oriental Trading Company	6-8 weeks at 100% per doctor's note	1 week paid

*\*Information was not included in this list if the organization only offers the option to use sick/vacation time, rather than an additional paid leave benefit.*

## VII. HOW WILL THIS WORK?

For staff and many 12-month faculty members, the implementation of the policy will be rather straightforward. Employees will notify their supervisor and HR of the need for an upcoming parental leave. Under FMLA, qualified employees have always been entitled to up to 12 weeks of job-protected leave, so the proposed policy simply allows for them to receive payment during part of that time. For employees who wish to extend their leave beyond their paid leave, they may use vacation (in the case of men or adoptive parents) or a combination of sick, disability, and vacation (in the case of birth mothers).

In the case of 9-month (and perhaps some 12-month) teaching faculty, further work will be needed after passage of this policy to interpret how it will apply to faculty. Because semester teaching schedules do not easily allow a professor to be absent from a month or more of a semester, divisions will most likely need to interpret leave in terms of course release time equivalent to the minimum requirements of the policy. Because faculty time is treated differently in each college or school, these processes must be worked out at the college or school level, presumably by ad hoc task forces in consultation with their Deans.

## VIII. SUPPORT

The policy has received the formal support of the Staff Advisory Council, the Faculty Council, and the Academic Council.

## IX. COST ESTIMATES

As salary dollars are already budgeted, offering paid leave is not an across the board additional expense. Employees on leave are generally not replaced for the short term, and it is expected that the majority of departments impacted by these leaves will continue to simply redistribute work in the employees' absence. The exception to this will likely be with faculty, where some additional adjunct or overload pay may be required. Some schools or colleges already budget for temporary faculty to cover leaves, and some do not, so it is difficult to know exactly what these costs will be.

### Known variables

- Average annual births (medical claims) 2007-2010 = 89
- Average annual FMLA claims for birth or adoption 2007-2011 = 54
- Number of maternity leaves of absence 2007-2011 = 216
- Number of paternity leaves of absence 2007-2011 = 52
- Average university salary = \$24/hr

### Unknown variables

- How work loads are currently redistributed (numbers of temps and special pays incurred)
  - Potential special pays for covering workloads/teaching loads
  - Hiring temporary employees to cover workloads/teaching loads, although some areas already budget for this contingency

### Assumptions:

- 110 parental leave claims per year
- 20% of those would need to have a temp assume their responsibilities

Based on these assumptions, the total cost to the university would be:

- 4 weeks maternity/4 weeks paternity = \$84,480
- 4 weeks maternity/2 weeks paternity = \$63,360 (assuming that men and women are each 50% of the total)
- 2 weeks maternity/2 weeks paternity = \$42,240

## IX. REFERENCES

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