

Pregnancy/Maternity Leave Replacement Funding

P/F Rank: 2 (tied)

Educational level: *University* | Beneficiaries: *Faculty*

Background

Often due in part to legal requirements, many universities offer pregnancy/maternity leave to their employees. However, employees may be reluctant to take this leave if they believe it would damage their careers or if compensation during pregnancy/maternity leave is structured such that they cannot afford to take it.

Description

Some institutions provide funding to hire temporary replacements for employees who are taking pregnancy/maternity leave. Since the 1994 approval and 1998 updating of its employment equity plan,¹ the University of Alberta established a Childbirth Leave Replacement Fund that has remained a negotiated benefit in the university's agreement with faculty as of the agreement's July 2008 amendments.² Similarly, the University of California maintains central funding to obtain a replacement lecturer/professional while a faculty member is taking pregnancy leave or reduced duties leave.^{3,4} Departments submit requests to their respective campuses, though to date only some campuses have instituted this centralized funding structure.⁵

Results

Reviewers rated this practice as featuring the following gender transformative characteristics:

- Transform family, school, and/or work arrangements so that women are not economically or socially penalized/disadvantaged for caregiving (*critical criterion*)
- Change or attempt to change an imbalance of power or otherwise level the playing field (*critical criterion*)
- Challenge and change common discriminatory gender beliefs or norms (*critical criterion*)
- Introduce, make use of, or further the (existing) legal protections for women.

This practice transforms work arrangements and levels the playing field by allocating resources to enable employees to take pregnancy/maternity leave. Replacement funding helps to make pregnancy/maternity leave less disruptive to employers' workforce planning and more viable for employees concerned about how their leave might affect colleagues' workloads and perceptions of them. Reviewers noted that institutions must plan for employees' pregnancies, regardless of whether they establish replacement funding mechanisms. Yet without such mechanisms, employees might feel pressured to return before they are ready to do so, and other employees might have increased workloads that could lead them to resent colleagues who are taking leave.

More documentation is needed on the design and effects of this practice. Little evidence was available on the use of replacement funding or on how it affected faculty members' professional lives. The University of California conducted a faculty climate survey at its Berkeley campus and found that, from 2003 to 2009, faculty awareness of maternity leave

policies increased.⁶ However, no information is available on faculty members' awareness of or attitudes toward replacement funding.

Summary conclusions

This practice has gender transformative potential when made available in conjunction with pregnancy/maternity leave, and as with most interventions, when the beneficiaries (i.e., faculty) are aware of the option. Reviewers recommended that institutions implement pregnancy/maternity leave and pregnancy/maternity leave replacement funding together. When replacement funding is not feasible, pregnancy/maternity leave should still be offered.

Reference(s) and source(s)

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2. University of Alberta. July 2006, rev. July 2007 and July 2008. Faculty Agreement. <http://www.hrs.ualberta.ca/Agreements/Academic/Faculty.pdf> (accessed June 14, 2011).
3. University of California. Existing Elements of the Family Friendly Package for UC Ladder-Rank Faculty. <http://ucfamilyedge.berkeley.edu/initiatives.html> (accessed May 5, 2011).
4. Email correspondence with Karie Frasch, Director of Equity and Welfare, University of California, Berkeley. May 31, 2011.
5. University of California Family Friendly Edge. Centralized Funding for Family Leave and Modified Duties. <http://ucfamilyedge.berkeley.edu/Centralized%20funding.pdf> (accessed June 14, 2011).
6. Stacy, Angelica, Sheldon Zedeck, Marc Goulden, and Karie Frasch. 2011. Report on the University of California, Berkeley Faculty Climate Survey. University of California, Berkeley. http://vpaafw.chance.berkeley.edu/Images/Faculty_Climate_Survey_Report_2011.pdf (accessed June 9, 2011).

Other references used in this review

- Mason, Mary Ann and Marc Goulden. Nov-Dec 2004. Do babies matter (Part II)? Closing the baby gap. *Academe* 90(6): 10-15. <http://ucfamilyedge.berkeley.edu/babies%20matterII.pdf> (accessed June 9, 2011).
- Mason, Mary Ann, Angelica Stacy, Marc Goulden, Carol Hoffman, and Karie Frasch. 2005. University of California Faculty Family-Friendly Edge: an Initiative for Tenure-Track Faculty at the University of California. Report. <http://ucfamilyedge.berkeley.edu/ucfamilyedge.pdf> (accessed June 9, 2011).