

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

## Background

Many university faculty members have children. A survey of University of California (UC) faculty showed that 44% of tenured women are married with children, compared to 70% of tenured men; survey responses also noted that women faculty and graduate students feel that they must choose between work and family.<sup>1</sup> The UC system hopes that it will gain a competitive edge in recruiting and retaining existing faculty, particularly women who would not otherwise continue in academia. A UC report noted that “work-family concerns are frequently cited by first-offer faculty candidates (both women and men) who turned down a position with UC, and by professors (both women and men) who left UC faculty positions.”<sup>2</sup>

## Description

Some universities, including UC and Harvard University, offer faculty members who are responsible for at least 50% of caregiving with the option of taking a leave during which they would perform a reduced level of duties. At UC, the leave can be taken from 3 months before to 12 months following the birth of a newborn or adoption of a child under age 5<sup>3</sup> while Harvard offers the leave only after birth or adoption.<sup>4</sup> Faculty members who take the leave at both universities generally receive relief from teaching duties for one to two semesters/terms, depending on the department. Under maternity leave that is taken concurrently with teaching relief, Harvard faculty would not be required to fulfill non-teaching duties either.<sup>4</sup> In addition, UC maintains funding to obtain a replacement lecturer/professional while a faculty member is taking reduced duties leave.<sup>5</sup> To access the funding, each department or unit submits a request. According to the UC director of equity and welfare,<sup>5</sup> several other US universities have implemented similar policies using UC as a model.

## 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*).

This practice transforms work arrangements and levels the playing field by allocating resources that enable faculty to integrate professional and household lives. A 2009 study of UC-Berkeley faculty found that awareness of the reduced duties leave option increased from 2003 to 2009.<sup>6</sup> In addition, among faculty members whose child was born before 2003, 6% of men and 71% of women used the leave, whereas 59% of men and 86% of women faculty whose child was born in 2007 or later used the leave.<sup>6</sup>

## *Implementation lessons learned*

Institutions should consider outreach efforts to both raise awareness of and gain acceptance for this practice from the institutional community. A 2002-2003 survey of UC faculty found

that over half of eligible female faculty members and one-quarter of eligible male faculty members had not used the reduced duties leave because they were unaware of the policy or because they “[feared] that there [would] be negative repercussions to their professional careers—especially, negative opinions from faculty colleagues—if they [made] use of the existing policies.”<sup>2</sup>

### **Summary conclusions**

By offering reduced duties leave, institutions communicate to faculty that both full-time and reduced duties are considered legitimate. However, it is important for institutions to raise awareness of the practice’s availability, as well as to promote an accepting environment that does not prevent faculty from taking advantage of it. This practice can more fully fulfill its gender transformative potential when faculty who take reduced duties leave do not need to fear colleagues’ or administrators’ perceptions that they are not committed to their work.

### **Reference(s) and source(s)**

1. 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).
2. 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).
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. Harvard University, July 1, 2006. Office of the Senior Vice Provost for Faculty Development and Diversity. Guidelines for Faculty Maternity and Parental Leave.  
[http://www.provost.harvard.edu/policies\\_guidelines/Maternity\\_and\\_Parental\\_Leave\\_Guidelines.pdf](http://www.provost.harvard.edu/policies_guidelines/Maternity_and_Parental_Leave_Guidelines.pdf) (accessed June 13, 2011).
5. Email correspondence with Karie Frasch, Director of Equity and Welfare, University of California, Berkeley. May 31, 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](http://vpaafw.chance.berkeley.edu/Images/Faculty_Climate_Survey_Report_2011.pdf) (accessed June 9, 2011).