

discussed 2-23-10
Faculty Senate meeting

Lee, Lori

From: DuBose, Katrina
Sent: Tuesday, February 23, 2010 12:33 PM
To: Faculty Welfare Committee
Subject: FW: Concerns Regarding the Proposed Changes to the Maternity/Paternity Leave Policy

Hi,

Below is another e-mail about the SIDL policy.

Katrina

From: Luchsinger, Heidi
Sent: Monday, February 15, 2010 11:03 AM
To: DuBose, Katrina
Subject: Concerns Regarding the Proposed Changes to the Maternity/Paternity Leave Policy

Dear Dr. DuBose,

I am writing to you, as Chair of the Faculty Welfare Committee, in support of your efforts and to express my concern for the proposed changes to the policy for "Serious Illness and Disability Leave" for faculty at East Carolina University. I am particularly concerned with the proposed changes in regard to maternity and paternity leave for faculty. My main concern is that these proposed changes **directly and negatively target young faculty (male and female)** who are in the critical stages of building their early professional careers and who are also in the **middle to later stages of child-bearing age**. Both of these facts can pose tremendous stress and difficulty on faculty already even without the additional challenges put in place through restrictions for their ability to care for newborn or newly adopted children. If additional obstacles are put in place for this segment of the faculty, it is only logical that there will be a decrease in faculty productivity and job satisfaction at ECU in addition to a significant decrease in East Carolina University's ability to retain and recruit valued members of the faculty community. As we look to the future, this is clearly counterproductive. Furthermore, it does not make sense to change a policy which was implemented only a few years ago after extensive work and consultation of the faculty.

The follow changes are of particular concern:

- a) Reduction of paid maternity leave from 15 to 12 weeks: A full semester is 15 weeks. Should maternity leave be reduced to less than a semester, this would be disruptive to students who would be given a new professor for the last 3 weeks of classes and units would have the nearly impossible task of hiring a replacement instructor to teach classes for only a partial semester. Disruption of class for students fails to be a good idea when our institution is so concerned with **student retention**. This would cause stress and discontent for students, the mother or father on leave, and the replacement instructor.
- b) Change to the time frame for when maternity leave can be taken: this needs to be clarified and it would seem equitable to adopt policies similar to other institutions in North Carolina of which specify maternity leave must be taken within 12 months of the birth or adoption of a child. Should maternity leave be required to begin strictly after the birth/adoption of a child, this would imply that faculty with

9-month contracts who gave birth or adopted a child during the summer and between contractual periods, would not be eligible for maternity leave or their leave would be abbreviated. It is simply inhumane to expect that conception and pregnancy can be controlled to the extent that birth can be scheduled to occur at a particular time. This should be taken in particular consideration when many **female faculty who bear children are in the middle to later stages of their child-bearing years when scheduling pregnancy can be next to impossible.**

Many thanks for your concern and efforts in working towards a fair resolution to the proposed changes to the maternity/paternity leave policy proposed by the East Carolina University administration.

Best,

Heidi M. Luchsinger, PhD
Teaching Assistant Professor
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East Carolina University
Greenville, NC 27858