PARENTAL LEAVE FAQ

Q: What is Parental Leave?
A: Parental leave is a new policy that will provide an eligible faculty member the ability to request up to a maximum of one semester of leave at full pay in connection with the birth or adoption of a child. The policy also allows for the spouse or partner of a primary care giver to request a paid two week leave or a 3 credit course load reduction.

Q: Who is eligible?
A: All tenured or tenure-track faculty with a minimum of one academic year of employment at Adams State College in the preceding 12 months who will become primary or secondary care giver due to the birth or adoption of a child.

Q: Are Instructors eligible?
A: The parental leave committee only included tenure and tenure track faculty in the definition of covered employees.

Q: I just found out that I am going to become a primary care giver, what do I do first?
A: You must contact your Department Chair and Human Resources as soon as possible, and in most cases no later than 60 days before the end of the semester before the semester of leave. Human Resources will then assist you with the appropriate paperwork.

Q: How is Parental leave different from Family Medical Leave (FML)?
A: FML provides an employee with the right to take up to 12 weeks of un-paid leave due to the birth or adoption of a child and protects the employee’s job. There is no requirement under the Family Medical Leave Act that the leave be paid. While the use of approved leave cannot be used against an employee in employment decisions, our current policy is silent on the effect a leave has on tenure evaluations and calculation of the probationary period.

Parental leave provides paid leave for a full semester and allows the faculty member to formally stop the tenure clock for the year in which they take leave to prevent any adverse consequence of taking a semester leave.

Q: How is Parental Leave different from Sick Leave?
A: Full time faculty members are granted 66 workdays of paid sick leave per fiscal year. This paid time may be taken in connection with pregnancy, birth, and recovery. Generally a physician will determine that a woman is physically recovered from pregnancy and birth in 6-8 weeks post delivery. At that time the employee is no longer “disabled” or sick and not eligible to use paid sick leave.

Q: How is this policy different from current policy?
A: This policy would extend the leave allowed from 12 weeks to a full semester, 16 weeks. It also extends the amount of paid leave to a full semester where sick leave would only have covered 6-8 weeks.

Q: Do FML, Sick, and Parental leave run concurrently or consecutively?
A: All leaves run concurrently. For example, an employee cannot take a semester of Parental leave and at the end of the semester take an additional 12 weeks of unpaid FML.

Q: How does Parental leave impact the Tenure process for Probationary faculty?
A: The faculty member must request that the tenure clock be stopped. A probationary faculty will not be evaluated for the year that she/he took leave. For a probationary faculty who takes a fall semester leave, her/his retention hearing would be postponed until the following fall, when the faculty member would submit her/his evidence folder for the year before she/he took leave. The faculty member would be reissued the same contract for the academic year at the same Probationary status as the year before she/he took leave. The faculty member’s tenure clock would then resume, following the normal pattern of retention and tenure hearings. The retention hearing following the leave will have three semesters of evidence.

Q: How will courses be covered during a leave? Who is responsible for making those arrangements?
A: As with any other type of approved leave, i.e. sabbatical or leave without pay (LWOP), there is a variety of options for covering faculty load, including but not limited to offering faculty to teach overloads, hiring adjuncts, or not offering classes. It is the responsibility of the Department Chair, in consultation with the VPAA, to determine the appropriate measures to cover faculty load and to provide funding when necessary. The intent of the policy is to increase planning and communication between the faculty member, Department Chair and VPAA. Proper planning and analysis should alleviate undue burden on department’s faculty while providing continuity in teaching for students.

A faculty member may participate in the planning process, prior to the start of their leave, however they are not responsible for arranging coverage or making alternative arrangements.

Q: Is a faculty member required to perform any work while on leave?
A: No.

Q: How much is this going to cost the institution and who is going to pay for it?
A: It is difficult to determine an exact dollar amount that this policy will “cost”. The existing policies provide for leave for 12 weeks and 6-8 of those weeks can be paid. Leave time is extended by 4 weeks and paid time off is extended by 8-10 weeks. The number of occurrences in the recent past has been minimal. Optimistically, any additional costs are offset by happy and productive employees who feel valued and supported by the institution, leading to lower turnover and lower replacement costs while making us more competitive in hiring.
Q: How is Parental Leave going to affect the rest of the Department?
A: Just like other leave, i.e. sabbatical or LWOP, proper notice and planning is crucial to minimizing the impact of the leave. Planning ahead of time leaves open possibilities for current faculty to take on an overload, a visiting professor may be hired to carry the full load, a class may be cancelled, an adjunct can be located etc. and students have consistency in their courses.

All current leave of absence policies and procedures can be found in the Faculty Handbook, Section X, pages 81 to 96. You may find the current handbook at: http://www.adams.edu/pubs/media/fac-handbook-current.pdf