

Rowan University Senate

Parental Leave Taskforce Report

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Committee Members:

Kaitlin Mallouk, Mechanical Engineering (Chair)
DJ Angelone, Psychology
Karen Brager, Communication Studies
Erica Chirico, CMSRU
Tom Dinzeo, Psychology
Cindy Finer, Advising
Michele Hewitt, College of Business
Zeynep Isik-Ercan, Associate Dean, College of Education
Lindsey James, University Housing
Jennifer Matthews, Library
Andy Watkins, President's Office

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Executive Summary

Justification for Need for Policy

A quick Google search of the topic Work-Life Balance will result in numerous articles, blogs, papers and surveys discussing the issue. It has reached such importance because the average employee is beginning to expect employers provide better ways for the employee to attain this balance, especially with respect to becoming parents. Millennials are leading this transition. Many “would take a pay cut, forgo a promotion or be willing to move to manage work-life demands better.” (Schulte, 2015) Furthermore, Schulte (2015) notes that almost 40% of young employees in the U.S. are so unhappy with the amount of paid parental leave employers offer that they would be willing to relocate to other countries. These surveys indicate the need to focus on providing benefits that will attract young employees in an increasingly global economy where choices are numerous.

Another reason to offer attractive benefits such as paid parental leave is retention of employees. A recent survey by Staples Business Advantage Workplace Index shows that “22% of employees switch jobs as a result of issues relating to work-life balance” (Dresdale, 2017). This number itself is quite large, but the magnitude of its effect is most obvious when the costs associated with non-productive time while searching for a replacement, recruitment, and the training of the new employee are also considered.

Continued productivity can also be affected by offering attractive benefit policies. Frequently employers can only see the cost and downtime that are associated with extended leaves of any nature. However, an employee that returns to work after the addition of a child frequently perseverates about leaving the child too early and not caring for him effectively. This will invariably lead to low levels of productivity and constant distraction. As Milligan (2017) notes, it is vital “to create happier, more-stable workforces that are far less likely to be distracted at the office because of unfinished tasks at home”.

Rowan’s current parental leave policy reflects federal and state *minimums* (Table 1). However, a review of policies from peer institutions reveals that Rowan is one of the few that does not provide *paid parental leave* (Table 2). As noted above, research suggests that longer, paid leaves improve maternal mental health, and presumably productivity (Chatterji 2012) and that providing fathers with designated leaves can lead to more balanced gender roles and prevent bleed over between work and family obligations (Brandt 2015). Generous parental leave policies can also enhance recruitment efforts for top talent, as demonstrated by many multinational corporations who have enhanced their leave policies in recent years (O’Connor 2016). Additionally, many of Rowan’s peer and aspirant institutions have implemented leave policies that supplant the federal and state minimums, which indicates that Rowan is behind the current trends in parental leave and putting itself at a recruiting disadvantage.

Approach Taken by Taskforce

In spring 2016, a Parental Leave Taskforce was formed by the University Senate. The taskforce has met regularly over the course of 10 months to research parental leave policies within and outside of Rowan. Aside from a literature review and web search to determine other school's policies, the task force also conducted a survey. The 9-item survey was distributed to all full-time faculty and professional staff at Rowan University (Glassboro). Individuals that indicated that they had children (or adopted) while at Rowan were asked to rate/share their experiences with existing parental leave policies. Results suggest an overall low level of satisfaction (5.6 on scale of 10) and the desire for changes (i.e., paid leave, standardized/clear policies and options).

Based on our research, we developed a proposed policy (Table 1) that we believe addresses the needs of all Rowan employees in a fair and equitable manner and acts as a recruitment and retention tool to attract and retain top talent across the university.

Proposed Policy

Table 1. Summary of current and proposed policy. The proposed policy would include options A and B to be chosen by the employee.

Eligible Persons	Current Rowan Policy	Proposed Policy Option A	Proposed Policy Option B
Individuals whose workload is defined by credit hours and whose load is 24 credit hours per academic year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 weeks of unpaid job protection under FMLA. • Accrued sick leave can be used to cover pay during leave (assuming individual has given birth) and must be used prior to other options. • NJ Family Leave Insurance (FLI) covers up to 6 weeks at $\frac{2}{3}$ weekly pay up to \$633/week. • Employee is responsible for their portion of health benefits during this time. If the employee is unpaid for more than 3 months (including time on FLI), then they are responsible for the entire cost of their health insurance premium. 	12 credit release at full pay with benefits	24 credit release at $\frac{3}{4}$ full pay with benefits
Individuals whose workload is defined by hours/weeks and are eligible for benefits		16 weeks leave at full pay with benefits	32 weeks at $\frac{3}{4}$ pay with benefits

Clarifications on proposed policy:

Eligible employees must have been employed at the University for at least one year.

Parental/partner leave is offered in cases of the birth or adoption of a child. Parental/partner leave must be taken within 12 month period of the birth or adoption placement (for all employees). Generally, parental/partner leave must be taken together in one block of time (e.g., an employee should take 16 consecutive weeks off work). Which policy option is taken is at the discretion of the employee. Because employees remain in a paid status, their benefits are unaffected by taking Parental Leave. Approval of alternative parental/partner leave schedules must be approved in writing by the Director of Human Resources. Only one such leave will be granted in any twelve-month period.

Parental/partner leave will occur concurrently with leave provided by the Family Medical Leave Act. In the case of a summer birth or adoption, parental leave would normally be taken in the course of the academic year following the event.

If appropriate, the College will provide funding for leave replacements. Faculty may, but are not required to, request an extension of the probationary period prior to a tenure review.

Supporting Material

Peer and Aspirant Institutional Policies

We reviewed publicly available information on parental leave policies for NJ higher education institutions as well as a select peer/aspirant institutions (Table 2).

Table 2. *Paid* Parental Leave Policies at Peer and Aspirant Institutions (See Appen 1 for details).

	Parental Leave Policy			
Institution	Paid (1-7 wks)	Paid (8-16 wks)	Paternity/ co-Parent	Flexible/Additional Extended Leave Opportunities
Rowan Current	No paid leave; FMLA applies			
Rowan Proposed	Y	Y	Y	12 credit/16 wk leave at full pay with benefits OR 24 credit/32 wk leave at ¾ pay with benefits
Appalachian State University	Y	Y		
Baldwin Wallace University	Y	Y		
Boston University	Y	Y		
Bridgewater State University	Y			
California State Polytechnic U-San Luis Obispo	Y		Y	Tenured Faculty may take up to 12 mos. unpaid leave - Couples may donate their leaves to each other - alternate leave at 40% of workload deduction
California State University Long Beach	Y		Y	Tenured Faculty may take up to 12 mos. unpaid leave - Couples may donate their leaves to each other - alternate leave at 40% of workload deduction
California State U-Northridge	Y		Y	Tenured Faculty may take up to 12 mos. unpaid leave - Couples may donate their leaves to each other - alternate leave at 40% of workload deduction
TCNJ	No paid leave; FMLA applies			

Institution	Paid (1-7 wks)	Paid (8-16 wks)	Paternity/ co-Parent	Flexible/Additional Extended Leave Opportunities
Columbia University	Y	Y	Y	1 Semester at full pay or 2 at ½ pay; partner must work or be in school full-time
Cornell University	Y	Y	Y	Co-parents/adoptive parents 1 semester of partial relief w/full pay in addition to FMLA
City University of New York	Y	Y	Y	System-wide policy; 8 weeks full pay concurrent w/FMLA or reduced workload for a semester to the equivalent of 6 weeks of teaching time. Women who have given birth get 6 weeks sick leave before 8 weeks start so possible to get full semester off w/full pay
Drexel University	Y	Y	Y	Faculty eligible for up to 12 weeks of salary continuation and may be relieved of teaching duties
Elmhurst College	Y		Y	
Florida Atlantic University	Y	Y	Y	One semester of fully paid parental leave for mother or father (but can only be used once for each child)
Florida State University	Y	Y	Y	Unpaid leave of absence up to 6 mos.
George Mason University	Y	Y		1 semester at 100% or 2 semesters at 50%
Indiana Univ.	Y	Y		
Jamestown Community College	Y			"Family or Domestic Partner Leave" which allows unpaid leave up to 1 year w/o loss of benefits. Pregnant faculty members can use sick leave benefits for duration of FMLA
Kean University	No paid leave; FMLA applies			
Loyola University	Y	Y	Y	Applies regardless of length of service.
Michigan State University	Y		Y	6 weeks of paid leave available to both parents if both are employees of MSU
Montclair State	No paid leave; FMLA applies			
NJIT	No paid leave; FMLA applies			
New York University	Y		Y	All parents may get reduced load up to 1 semester or ½ reduced load for 2 semesters at full pay
Ohio University	Y		Y	Applies to both mothers and fathers

Institution	Paid (1-7 wks)	Paid (8-16 wks)	Paternity/ co-Parent	Flexible/Additional Extended Leave Opportunities
Old Dominion University	Y	Y	Y	1 semester paid for mother and father; also 6-8 weeks full paid leave following childbirth which removes service expectations during that time
Penn State University	Y		Y	At least two weeks within three months full salary for partner following birth. Flexible work arrangements including telecommuting are available.
Princeton University	Y			Faculty eligible for one semester relief from classes or two semesters of half relief
Rider University	Y			An employee may receive two-thirds of his or her weekly compensation, up to the statutory maximum, for up to six weeks, during any 12 month period
Rutgers	No paid leave; FMLA applies			
Swarthmore University	Y		Y	One month of paid leave. Must be taken within first 6 months of the birth; Parental leave normally taken as a one-course reduction in teaching load.
Temple University	Y	Y	Y	Can be assigned modified duties; can stop-the-clock
University of California - Berkeley	Y		Y	1 year modified teaching and service for birth mothers and 1 semester for fathers/partners (no teaching and reduced service so can focus on keeping an active research program)
University of Delaware	Y		Y	Can be granted 1 semester administered load; stop-the-clock for each child up to 2 years
Univ. of Mich.	Y	Y		
University of Pennsylvania	Y	Y		
University of South Carolina	Y	Y	Y	Modified duties are available for primary and secondary caregiver. The faculty member is released from onsite duties for 1 semester or the equivalent of 1 semester distributed over 2 semesters. Reductions in service; research activities continue. Flexible work schedule option for staff
University of South Florida	Y	Y		
Wm. Paterson	No paid leave; FMLA applies			

Parental Leave Questionnaire

Summary of Findings

The Parental Leave Questionnaire (see [Appendix 2](#)) was emailed to all full-time faculty & staff on the Glassboro campus. A total of 198 people responded with the majority (57%) indicating they have had children or adopted while employed at Rowan. Of those who took leave, most used a combination of mechanism to support leave (FMLA, sick time, disability, NJFLA). The mean number of leave days for females was approximately 82 days vs 3 days for males. Participants were asked to rate their satisfaction with parental leave policies while at Rowan on a scale from 1 (extremely dissatisfied) to 10 (extremely satisfied). The ratings were normally distributed with no significant skew or outliers (see figure 1). The overall mean score was 5.22 (SD 2.7) [females 5.6 (2.8); males 4.4 (2.4)]. Thus, the average satisfaction scores can be viewed as falling at the very lowest boundaries of satisfaction (very close to the boundary with dissatisfaction).

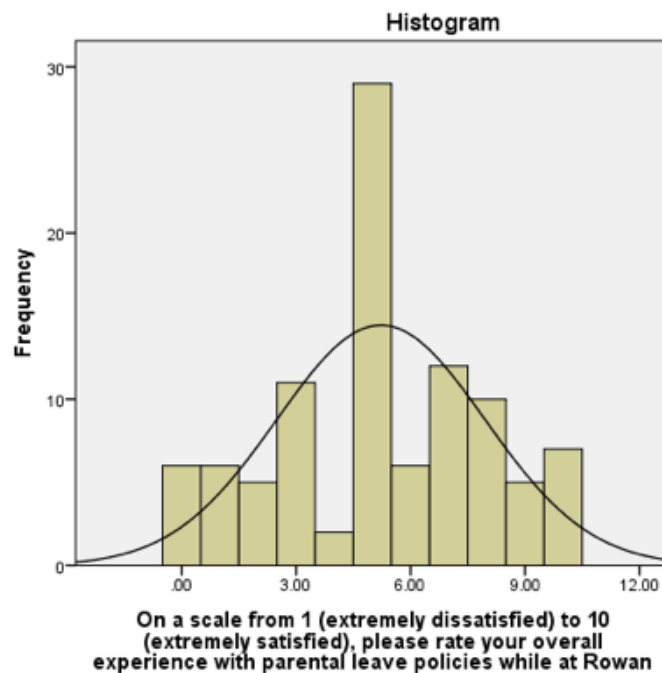


Figure 1: Distribution of satisfaction scores (1-10) among those with leave experience(s) (n=98)

The open-ended portion of the survey simply asked “**Would you recommend any changes to the existing policies or procedures? If so, please indicate what elements you might change.**” The most common themes included (a) the desire for paid leave (suggestions ranging from 6 weeks to 6 months), (b) greater flexibility in time-duration options (e.g., 1 semester full

pay or 2 semesters half-pay for faculty), and (c) continued subsidized health insurance for the duration of the leave period. In these comments, member expressed frustration over needing to use vacation and sick time in order to avoid undue financial hardship. Several members also mentioned that these policies be extended to males (paternity leave) and include adoption scenarios.

The following quotes illustrate this sentiment:

1. *"A policy that allowed for a full semester of teaching release at full pay or a full academic year of half teaching load reduction would be a huge benefit to new parents. Paid leave that doesn't require the use of sick time would also be an advantage, especially for newer hires who may not have accrued sick time. The constant claim that we are eligible for 12 weeks of leave is completely ridiculous when you consider that not only are we not paid during that full leave, **but we still have to pay our health premiums during that time.** This makes taking more than your accrued sick time something that only a privileged few can take advantage of (those with spouses whose salaries can support the family, those who use their spouse's health benefits, etc)."*
2. *"YES: provide a MINIMUM of one semester off (paid) per birth—that would address teaching, research, and service. people cannot afford to take unpaid leave, so many end up taking none at all. Continue subsidizing health insurance premiums for the entire duration of leave. Many employees obtain insurance for their entire families through Rowan, and the current limitations on the amount of time you can be on "inactive" status without having to pay the full cost of insurance premiums mean that many people cannot afford to take the leaves to which they are entitled. Allow new parents to return to work with modified duties, reduced workload, and/or an option to go part time after taking a parental leave."*

In addition, the written statements also suggested a desire for clear policies that are applied in a consistent fashion across departments/positions. Participants suggested that there be a handbook or website that clearly lists options and workshops to educate employees and supervisors about these policies. The following are representative quotes:

1. *"it would have been extremely helpful to have a handbook that clearly spelled out the policies and procedures as well as a timeline customized to my specific dates and situation. An even more helpful option would be to have an interactive database that includes all pertinent information (sick days, vacation days, start/end dates for FMLA, NJFLA, NJTDB, etc. etc.). The database could include a message/notes feature that records correspondences between the employee and HR."*
2. *"there needs to be a policy, and a procedure! Both need to be clearly delineated online- as many other institutions do- so faculty can easily find the information. My understanding is that leave and adjusted duties vary widely by department/college. That's really unfair. Many of my friends at other institutions just get a semester of paid leave, period, regardless of what time of year they become parents. Faculty becoming parents should not be viewed as an inconvenience/aberration: rather, parental leave policies should be part of sensible, productivity-boosting policy to attract and keep talented faculty!"*

References

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Detailed Description of Parental Leave Policies of Select Institutions

- Appalachian State University: faculty get 1 semester of paid leave for the birth or care of an infant within a year of the birth. It is in the faculty handbook. Doesn't apply to staff, though.
- Baldwin Wallace University: faculty get 1 semester of paid leave
- Boston University offers up to 3 months of paid maternity leave. FMLA for all other instances.
- Bridgewater State University: 10 days paid maternity leave
- California State Polytechnic U - San Luis Obispo: 30 days of paid parental leave for the birth of a child, which runs concurrent with FMLA for all faculty members. Tenured faculty may take up to 12 months of unpaid parental leave.
- California State University Long Beach: Parental leave is a paid leave of up to 30 academic work days for employees who become parents through the birth of their own child, adoption, or foster care. Spouse or partner who is also a faculty employee may donate all or part of his/her parental leave to the other spouse or partner; or 40% workload reduction for one semester.
- Cal State U Northridge: 30 days of paid parental leave for the birth of a child, which runs concurrent with FMLA.
- College of New Jersey: no paid leave, FMLA applies
- Columbia: Parental leave at Columbia is 1 semester at full pay or 2 at half pay. Avail to mothers or fathers. Eligible only if partner works or is in school full time,
- Cornell: offers 8 weeks paid leave for the birth parent, and for co-parents or adoptive parents one semester of partial relief with full pay, in addition to FMLA.
- CUNY, the City University of New York: has a system-wide "paid parental leave" policy: either 8 weeks leave at full pay, running concurrently with FMLA leave, or a reduced workload for a semester, to the equivalent of 6 weeks of teaching time (whatever that works out to). Women who have given birth get 6 weeks sick leave before the 8 weeks start, so it's possible to have a full semester off with full pay.
- Drexel University: 12 weeks paid faculty/parental. Faculty eligible for up to 12 weeks of salary continuation and may be relieved of teaching duties.
- Elmhurst College: 80 hours of Paid Parental Leave for Full-Time Administrative and Hourly Employees. "The College will provide Paid Parental Leave to an Eligible Employee during the first 12 months following birth or adoption.
- Florida Atlantic University: One semester of fully paid parental leave (applies to mom or dad, but both can not take it for the same kid). Can use it once every three years. Need to have been full time faculty for a year to use it.
- Florida State University: offers up to 6 months paid leave for the birth of a child. This can only be utilized once. Also an unpaid leave of absence for up to 6 months.

- George Mason University: One semester at 100% or two semesters at 50%.
- Indiana University: Offers 12 weeks of paid leave for the purpose of family formation. Other forms of family leave may provide only partial pay.
- Jamestown Community College: grants four weeks of paid leave for a new birth or adoption to male or female employees. The leave must be taken within 6 months of the birth or adoption. If both parents are employees, only one parent is eligible. Also, There is "Family or Domestic Partner Leave" which allows unpaid leave for up to 1 year without loss of benefits. Pregnant faculty members can use sick leave benefits for the duration of FMLA (12 weeks)
- Kean University: No paid leave, FMLA Applies
- Loyola University: "Faculty Parental Leave" Both tenured and tenure-track faculty, without regard to length of service, and full-time affiliate and four-fifths-time faculty members with at least one year of service may apply for one semester of paid parental leave due to the birth or adoption of a child, or the assignment of a foster child. Such leave may only be taken during the first year of birth, adoption, or assignment.
- Michigan State: 12 weeks leave, 6 weeks paid. Effective Jan 1, 2017, the 6 weeks can be used by both parents for the same child, if both parents are employees of MSU.
- Montclair State: no paid leave, FMLA applies
- New Jersey Institute of Technology: no paid leave, FMLA applies.
- New York University: offers 6 weeks paid maternity leave for a birth mother, and all parents may get reduced load for up to one semester or a half reduced load for 2 semesters, at full pay.
- Ohio University: six weeks paid for both mothers and fathers.
- Old Dominion University: one semester of paid teaching leave for both mothers and fathers. There is also 6-8 weeks full paid leave following childbirth, which removes service expectations during that time.
- Penn State University: full salary at least six weeks following birth by faculty member or placement of child by adoption. At least two weeks within three months full salary for partner following birth. Flexible work arrangements "to provide a greater capability for each employee to establish their own program of working hours within the workweek without changing the number of hours worked." This includes telecommuting.
- Princeton University: 2 weeks of paid leave (faculty or staff), one semester relief from classes or two semesters of half relief for faculty.
- Rider University: up to 6 weeks paid leave; An employee may receive two-thirds of his/her weekly compensation, up to the statutory maximum, for up to six weeks, during any 12 month period.
- Rutgers University: no paid leave, FMLA applies
- Swarthmore University: 1 month paid parental leave for birth/adoption. Parental leave normally taken as a one-course reduction in teaching load.
- Temple University: 6-8 weeks paid to birth mothers, 12 weeks unpaid FMLA adoptive parents and fathers. Can be assigned modified duties and stop-the-clock.
- University of California -- Berkeley: six weeks paid leave (no sick days, as faculty apparently don't have these, so it can't be extended except via lower pay disability insurance) but then one year 'modified teaching and service' for birth mothers and one semester for

fathers/partners. This means no teaching and reduced service so we can focus on keeping an active research program.

- University of Delaware: full pay 6 weeks for birth mothers, foster care/adoption/parental leave qualify for 12 week FMLA,
- University of Michigan: one semester paid leave
- University of Pennsylvania: "Medical leave resulting from pregnancy shall entitle employees under this policy to paid leave for up to eight (8) weeks in the case of a normal delivery, and up to ten (10) weeks for a Caesarean Section, or the length of time determined to be medically necessary as certified by the employee's physician. Such paid leave consists of sick leave, 50% of PTO, and STD."

<https://www.hr.upenn.edu/myhr/resources/policy/benefits/new-child-policy>

- University of South Carolina: One semester of modified duties which means a complete release of on campus duties. Full pay and benefits. Applies in cases of birth and adoption and can be granted for mothers or fathers...whoever is the primary parent.
- University of South Florida: Instructional Faculty will be eligible for up to 19.5 contiguous weeks, or one semester of paid parental leave. Non-instructional Faculty are eligible for up to three months of contiguous paid parental leave. Hours paid not by the employee's accrued leave must be reimbursed when the Faculty member resigns, retires, or otherwise permanently terminates employment with the university.
- William Paterson University: no paid leave, FMLA applies

Appendix 2: Survey Questions

1. Are you currently, or formerly, a full-time employee at Rowan
2. Have you (or your spouse/partner) given birth to, or adopted, a child while YOU were a full time employee at Rowan?
3. During what period of time? (If multiple instances, cite the most recent)
 - a. Prior to 1992
 - b. 1993-1997
 - c. 1998-2002
 - d. 2003-2007
 - e. 2008-2012
 - f. 2013-2017
4. Please indicate the amount of leave time (in days) that you took when your child was born/adopted. If not time was taken, type the number "0" in the space below.
5. Was this leave:
 - a. Paid
 - b. Unpaid
 - c. A combination of paid and unpaid
6. What mechanism(s) did you utilize to support your leave?
 - a. Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)
 - b. NJ Family Leave Act (NJFLA)
 - c. NJ Temporary Disability Benefits (NJTDB)
 - d. Combination of the above or other arrangement (use text box below to specify)
7. Please describe your general experience with obtaining, utilizing, and returning from parental leave: (indicate "not applicable" or NA if no attempt was made to obtain leave)
8. Would you recommend any changes to the existing policies or procedures? If so, please indicate what elements you might change.
9. On a scale from 1 (extremely dissatisfied) to 10 (extremely satisfied), please rate your overall experience with parental leave policies while at Rowan University.

Appendix 3 Estimated Cost of Implementation

Based on the 2016 data for the AFT Bargaining Unit, 23 individuals took parental leave. A faculty / professional staff breakdown was unavailable. Assuming those individuals are all faculty being paid at the average assistant professor salary of \$72,000/year, teaching 9 credits per semester, and being replaced by adjuncts, the approximate cost of Option A, above, would be **\$305,325/year**

$$\frac{23 \text{ people}}{\text{year}} \times \frac{9 \text{ credits}}{\text{person}} \times \frac{\$1475}{\text{credit}} \text{adjunct pay} = \$305,325/\text{year}$$

The approximate cost of Option B would be **\$196,650/year**.

$$\frac{23 \text{ people}}{\text{year}} \times \left(\frac{18 \text{ credits}}{\text{person}} \times \frac{\$1475}{\text{credit}} \text{adjunct pay} - \frac{1}{4} (\text{Average Faculty Salary}) \right) = \$196,650/\text{year}$$