



## **Resolution Policy**

	Action Item
	For Information Only

**Date:** February 26, 2018

**RE:** Senate Resolution: #180216-1

Rowan University Senate Parental Leave Taskforce Report Submitted December 8, 2017

### 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 nonproductive 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 fulltime 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	12 weeks of unpaid job protection under FMLA. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Accrued sick leave can be used to cover pay during leave (assuming individual has given birth) and must be used prior to other options.</li><li>● NJ Family Leave Insurance (FLI) covers up to 6 weeks at <math>\frac{2}{3}</math> weekly pay up to \$633/week.</li><li>● 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</li></ul>	12 credit release at full pay with benefits	24 credit release at $\frac{2}{3}$ full pay with benefits

	responsible for the entire cost of their health		
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.

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