PARENTAL LEAVE

NOTE: Refer to the Cornell Policy website (http://www.policy.cornell.edu/vol6_9.cfm) for the most current policy.

According to the bylaws of the university, the “…functions of the University Faculty shall be to consider questions of educational policy which concern more than one college, school or separate academic unit, or are general in nature…”

Responsibility of: Committee on Academic Programs and Policies. The Committee concerns itself with academic programs and policies which are independent of or extend beyond the single or joint jurisdiction of a school or college faculty; policies governing the use of, and plans for, university-wide academic facilities and services, such as libraries, classrooms, and computers; and proposals for new degrees (including the combination, modification or abandonment of old degrees. It reports to the Faculty Senate

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The Senate considered the issue of parental leave at its May 1998 meeting. Professor Carlo Montemagno, Agricultural and Biological Engineering and Chair, Academic Programs and Policies Committee, entertained questions from the body on the resolution. He outlined the Committee’s rationale for drafting the policy:

- Create uniformity in the application of parental leave benefits to Faculty throughout the University.
- To give adoptive parents the same rights to parental leave as natural parents.
- Make Cornell more friendly towards women, in particular to encourage women to see Cornell as a place where they would not need to make choices between a career or a family.

After debate, the resolution on parental leave policy carried as follows:

WHEREAS, tenure track faculty members undergo great stress during their entire non-tenured probationary period, and

WHEREAS, the care of a newborn or newly adopted child always requires considerable time and effort, and

WHEREAS, Cornell University desires to create an environment in which non-tenured tenure track faculty do not have to choose between their career and parenthood, and
WHEREAS, the law does not allow Cornell to distinguish between the gender of parents and between newborn and newly adopted children in the granting of childcare leave benefits,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Senate recommends that Cornell adopt the following policy for non-tenured tenure track faculty members who are the primary care-giving parent\(^1\) of newborn or newly adopted children less than five years old.

Eligible faculty members\(^2\) may receive a workload reduction (at full salary) for a single semester to care for a newborn or adopted child. They may choose any semester that overlaps with the first year following the child’s arrival. During that semester, the eligible faculty members will be excused from teaching, administrative, and extension assignments. They will be, however, expected to make themselves available for consultation with students and continue with their research. Eligible faculty members may, with the permission of their chair, elect instead to take two sequential semesters of partial workload reduction by agreeing to teach half of their normal course load and making themselves available for half of the administrative assignments they normally perform.

The workload relief provision will supplement any disability coverage associated with childbirth if applicable.

The tenure clock will be delayed for one semester for any faculty member electing to take one semester of workload relief or two semesters of partial workload relief.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the appropriate officers of the administration take steps (1) to ensure that all other members of the Cornell faculty and staff are made aware of their rights and responsibilities under the Family and Medical Leave Act and under the relevant provisions of Cornell’s disability policy, and (2) to urge supervisors to exercise appropriate levels of flexibility in work assignments and other arrangements for primary care parents.

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\(^1\)A “primary care-giving parent” is defined as one who has primary responsibility for the care of a child, and is either a single parent or one whose partner is employed.

\(^2\)“Eligible faculty member” in this document means a full-time non-tenured tenure track faculty member who is the primary care-giving parent of a newborn or newly adopted child less than five years old.