

Date: April 12, 2022
To: CLA Faculty Senate
From: CLA Faculty Senate Agenda Committee
Subject: Request for CLA response to DEI Committee Report on Parental Leave

Background:

- A. During its [October 5, 2021](#) meeting, Patricia Boling presented a concern shared with the Agenda Committee via the [Qualtrics portal](#) related to recruiting and retaining a diverse and talented faculty. The issue has to do with the College of Liberal Arts' administration of parental and family leave. The Qualtrics Survey contribution noted that parental leave is currently highly variable across the college, with much discretion going to unit heads. It appears that many units in our college offer only the six week Family & Medical Leave Act (FMLA) option, requiring combinations of overloads, returns to teaching regardless of childcare coverage, or asking other members of the department to cover courses. This is in contrast to our peer institutions, many of which offer faculty full semester leaves to faculty when they grow their families.
- B. The contributor asked if the Senate could act to create a consistent family leave policy applied equally across the college, recognizing the difficulties of asking faculty recently on leave to teach a segment of a sixteen week class, the power imbalances of asking faculty to cover classes, and the ways in which Purdue falls short of peer institutions in making this a desirable place to work.
- C. At the [November 9, 2021](#) meeting, the Senate charged the Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion committee (DEI), whose members were newly announced at the same meeting, to investigate and report back to the Senate by March 2022 on the current parental leave practices and issues in the College. She suggested that the Senate Faculty Affairs Committee (FAC) also be consulted, but asked that DEI be the focus given the issues related to faculty diversity and retention presented to the Senate.
- D. The CLA Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee authored a ["Report on Parental Leave"](#) on February 18, 2022, and presented it to the CLA Faculty Senate on March 8, 2022. The statement was published on the CLA web site and shared electronically with the Senate on March 9, 2022. The brief version of the Report that was presented at the March 8th Senate meeting emphasized comparisons with other Big 10 and AAU institutions and made four recommendations on the 8th (and final) page of the Report.
- E. The resolution below incorporates three of those recommendations, leaving aside the call to make parental leave mandatory out of recognition that this is a controversial proposal.

Resolved:

The College of Liberal Arts Faculty Senate recommends that the CLA administration, department heads and other unit administrators adopt the following policies and principles:

1. Make a full semester off from teaching the norm, not the exception. Units should provide a full semester course release where appropriate, the idea being to accommodate the arrival of a new baby without requiring the parent taking the leave to teach a few weeks at the beginning or end of a semester, or expecting them to curtail or resume administrative, advising and service responsibilities mid-semester.
2. Form committees at the departmental level to assign leave responsibilities and coverages, thereby moving that discussion away from the head and into a collegial body.
3. Designate a CLA fund to be used to pay for VAPs, TAs, and lectureships to cover class or lab work that departments cannot easily afford.

4. Waive the requirement that faculty must work 12 months before they are eligible for parental leave out of recognition that very few faculty members take a position with the intent of giving birth to a child immediately.

Further resolved:

5. The Senate recognizes that welcoming faculty who are forming families while they are at Purdue is important to fostering a more diverse CLA faculty and fostering gender justice.
6. The Senate will further engage the suggestions for action presented here in Fall 2022.