

Leave Policy for Faculty

Kalamazoo College seeks to provide all of its full-time faculty the support that they need to continue to develop as teachers, as scholars, and as human beings. The College recognizes that personal circumstances of faculty may require some flexibility in terms of leaves for faculty—and corresponding adjustments in the probationary periods for tenure-track faculty. The following guidelines are set down to address those situations that occasionally arise in which full-time faculty might request leaves of absence from the College, and in which pre-tenure faculty may seek to extend the probationary period for a period of time.

1. When an individual receives a sabbatical or academic leave from the College

Faculty may request sabbatical and research leaves of absence from the College. Sabbatical and academic leave requests by tenured faculty will be supported by the Provost if, and only if, (s)he determines that the faculty member's department will not suffer from that faculty member's absence. In some circumstances the College may be able to replace the faculty member in question, but this will not automatically be the case, and the College reserves the right to deny a request by a faculty member for a leave of absence.

If a faculty member requests a research leave funded by the College during the probationary period, that leave may be approved by the Provost if, and only if, the Provost determines that the faculty member's department will not suffer during the period in question. Should a leave of absence be granted by the Provost the faculty member in question will ordinarily *not* be able to extend the probationary period during that period; the period during which time the faculty member will be away from campus will under normal circumstances count toward the probationary period.

2. When an individual receives an external grant and wants a "leave without pay" from the College for a short or extended period of time

Faculty at Kalamazoo College should be encouraged to seek outside research grants. Leave requests by tenured faculty will be supported by the Provost if, and only if, (s)he determines that the faculty member's department will not suffer from that faculty member's absence. In some circumstances the College may be able to replace the faculty member in question using funds made available by the faculty member's unused salary, but this will not automatically be the case, and the College reserves the right to deny a request by a faculty member for a leave of absence. This applies to probationary faculty as well as tenured faculty. To make the prospect of an outside grant more attractive to probationary College faculty, they should normally have the option to extend the probationary period for a period of time. As a general rule, a faculty member should be able to be away from campus for no more than two years during the probationary period, and no more than one of these years can be applied to the probationary period. If there is to be an extension of the probationary period, the faculty member *must* request this

extension at the time that the discussions for the period of leave are originally undertaken. Requests for an extension of the probationary period may *not* be made after the research leave period has begun or after it has been completed.

3. When an individual requests a leave for personal medical reasons, involving an illness that makes him/her unable to fulfill his/her responsibilities to the College

In cases of personal medical exigency the faculty member in question should normally have his or her request for a leave from the College approved by the Provost. For probationary faculty, this should include, with the approval of the Provost, an extension of the probationary period should the faculty member involved request this.

If a faculty member submits to the Provost within six months of an appropriately documented illness a request that the probationary period be extended for an appropriate period of time, the Provost will, within thirty days, respond to the request and if (s)he has approved the extension of the probationary period will note that extension in the faculty member's personnel file. Under normal circumstances this type of eventuality will result only when the cause of the absence is clearly beyond the control of the faculty member.

4. When an individual requests a leave for *family* reasons

Adhering to the Family Medical Leave Act guidelines, Kalamazoo College has a maternity/paternity leave policy for its employees set by and available from the Human Resources Office. At the time that a probationary faculty member requests a leave of this type, (s)he may request an extension of the probationary period of up to one year.

Other leave requests for family reasons by tenured faculty will be supported by the Provost if, and only if, (s)he determines that the faculty member's department will not suffer from that faculty member's absence. In some circumstances the College may be able to replace the faculty member in question using funds made available by the faculty member's unused salary, but this will not automatically be the case, and the College reserves the right to deny a request by a faculty member for a leave of absence.

A probationary faculty member may submit to the Provost a request that the probationary period be extended for an appropriate period of time when a family situation has so distracted the attention of the faculty member that (s)he has not been able to adequately perform his or her duties, entirely for reasons beyond his control. A serious long-term illness of a family member or a death in the family with corresponding long-term distractions might be examples of the kind of situations which might reasonably be eligible for this type of policy.

Requests for this kind of extension of time will normally be decided on a case-by-case basis, after appropriate discussion between the Provost, the faculty member, and the Faculty Personnel Committee. As outlined above, the request for the extension of the probationary period should come within a brief period of the event, six months at the

most. The key, as described above, is that the event would have to be beyond the control of the faculty member and would have to have been a major distraction for the individual.

If a faculty member submits to the Provost within six months of an appropriately documented family event a request that the probationary period be extended for an appropriate period of time, the Provost will, within thirty days, respond to the request and if (s)he has approved the extension of the probationary period will note that extension in the faculty member's personnel file.

5. When an individual has negotiated a shorter-than-normal probationary period at the time of employment and decides subsequently that (s)he wants that shorter period extended

If a faculty member has negotiated an abbreviated probationary period at the time of her/his being hired by the College, and subsequently wants to extend the probationary period back to the "normal" period, (s)he may do so under limited circumstances. The Provost may approve such a change providing that this request is made *prior to* the end of the faculty member's first year at the College. This type of request may be made only once, and once made cannot be changed. In no circumstance can the probationary period be extended to more than the normal six-year term.

Adopted 2/26/98

Faculty Development Flexible Workload Policy For New Faculty Parents

Introduction

The most important resource of Kalamazoo College is its faculty. While we often offer this statement as an articulation of the respect that we have for our hard-working faculty, it needs to be an action principle as well as a statement of general philosophy. Hiring the best faculty available, and then retaining the best faculty who are here, are the most pressing challenges that we face on a year-in, year-out basis.

We have been fortunate as an institution to have been given a significant resource base by trustees in recent years to help us hire the best new faculty available. Our “start up” package – including a course release in the first year, a new computer, individual research funds, and then a full one-term leave following the third year review – competes with the very best such packages in the country to help us attract outstanding new faculty.

This helps us to attract and retain the best faculty, but we need to do more.

A college that seeks to attract and retain the best faculty must demonstrate to its faculty that it understands the resources that are needed by active and productive scholars, and outstanding and caring teachers and advisors, not only to survive, but to flourish.

A college that seeks to attract and retain the best faculty must demonstrate to its faculty that it understands the ultimate value of human relationships, and that the college supports those with family responsibilities.

To this end, Kalamazoo College announced a new policy which took effect in the Fall term of 2002. The policy described here applies to teaching faculty, for reasons that will become clear in the document.

I. The Principles

Parenthood demands time. Being a college professor demands time. It is reasonable to assume that a member of our faculty will not be able to devote the same amount of time to her or his classes and advising, College service commitments, and professional development activities immediately after bringing a baby into the family as was the case before the arrival of the baby.

Under the law, birth mothers are granted six weeks’ medical leave following a birth. Because of the special demands of the teaching role, depending upon when the six weeks’ leave ends the College may not be able to place a faculty member back in the classroom in any specific ten-week academic term. This is because we cannot “hold open” the teaching slot for up to six weeks for an individual; classes must take place

consistently during an academic term. With a ten-week term, if an individual is going to miss more than (more or less) two weeks of the term, it will very likely be necessary for the College to hire a substitute instructor to cover that faculty member's classes: adjunct faculty cannot usually be hired for *part* of an academic term.¹ It would be punitive – and illegal – for us to force our birth mother colleagues to take unpaid leave for the duration of the academic term in which they had medical leave because there were no teaching assignments available for three, or four, or even eight weeks for them to assume.

Kalamazoo College has informally responded to this situation in the recent past by developing and utilizing the principle of a *flexible workload* for new faculty parents. Recognizing that our faculty perform a variety of tasks in a variety of roles *in addition to the responsibilities of a classroom instructor*, the College has asked new birth mothers who have had medical leave to spend the part of the term after they return from medical leave focusing upon *other* responsibilities of their jobs. The focus of their time has been on departmental responsibilities – they may spend time on SIP supervision, working on a departmental web page, contributing to departmental self-study activities, taking a leading role in long-range departmental planning, or on any of a variety of other tasks that would otherwise have to be handled by departmental colleagues in addition to their respective full teaching loads – thus, their flexible workload assignments help the rest of the department as well as the new mother. Similarly, there is never a shortage of College-level work to be done – including committee research, institutional research, participation on search committees, or working with department chairs on special projects – and they might help out with this type of work, as well.

This practice has served us well in the past, and in our current **Faculty Development Flexible Workload** policy we will try to expand it. The principles are the same:

- The College recognizes that faculty development time is crucial for faculty to grow and improve professionally; it is worthwhile for the College to devote resources to this end in order to help its faculty.
- Having a new child in the home will pose an additional challenge for the faculty member in terms of his or her professional growth and development.
- Faculty perform a variety of tasks *in addition to* being classroom instructors; because a faculty member is not serving as a classroom instructor in a given term does not mean that the individual is not working “full time” for the College.

¹ Even if it were possible to hire a visiting faculty member for only part of an academic term, a very good argument can be made that it is not a good idea to do so. Continuity through an academic term has value, and switching instructors mid-term – even if they were both willing to do so – would almost unavoidably disrupt the educational experience of the students involved.

II. Practice

In the Fall, 2002 term we will start a **Faculty Development Flexible Workload** plan that seeks to respond to this need. The key principle is that this is not a work reduction for our faculty, but rather a reassignment of work responsibilities. There are a number of jobs done by Kalamazoo College faculty all the time, and by offering some flexibility in the balance of teaching and non-teaching assignments, we seek to be responsive to a clearly-felt faculty need.

1. Birth mothers. Birth mothers are at the present time entitled to six weeks' medical leave following the birth of a child. (Individual doctors may recommend more than this in specific cases.) If a birth mother will miss more than two weeks of class as a result of a birth (or the medical leave following a birth), the mother will not be assigned teaching responsibilities for the duration of the term of the leave in order to continue to earn a full-time faculty salary (regardless of whether that period is before or after the birth). Rather, a *flexible work* assignment will be made for the remainder of the term for *all teaching responsibilities*.²

If the six-week medical leave period takes place exclusively during the summer, so that the birth mother has not benefited from a flexible work reassignment as a consequence of the birth, then she will be eligible for the option described in #2. The justification for this is simple: our goal is to *help faculty development*. If a mother uses her entire summer in newborn care, she will not be able to engage in research that will contribute to her professional development. We want her to have some part of the time she would otherwise lose, thus justifying the policy outlined in #2.

2. Birth fathers, adoptive mothers and fathers, and birth mothers who did not receive flexible work assignments because their entire "maternity leave" period came during the summer. Our policy will be to give a faculty member who is in one of these four categories a *flexible work reassignment in place of one normally-assigned course* in the term of the arrival of the baby or in a subsequent term of the faculty member's choosing within one year of the arrival of the baby.

In each of these cases, determination of the flexible work assignment will be made in consultation with the Provost and the department chair and documented as early as possible to allow for maximum planning flexibility. In all cases this should take place by first week of Fall for a Spring reassignment, first week of Spring for a Fall reassignment, and Commencement week for a Winter reassignment.

² This recognizes that not all departments have identical teaching responsibilities. In some departments the "normal" teaching load is two courses per term, six courses per year. In other departments – the natural sciences and computer science – the "normal" teaching load is four courses per year, to reflect the extra responsibilities of lab sections of the class.

III. Concluding Comments

Life is not always tidy, and babies are well known for not being considerate of the world around them as they decide when to join us. In most instances our faculty colleagues will be able to predict the approximate arrival date of their babies, but we know that babies often come late, and often come early, and any number of factors can interfere with advanced planning. In all cases a soon-to-be birth mother should notify her chair and the provost as soon as she feels prepared to do so in order to discuss plans for covering for her time away from class. While we understand that families may wish to wait until several months into a pregnancy before making any public announcements, it is clear that warning about the need for a flexible work assignment will help us to minimize problems in the transition. Similarly, birth fathers and adoptive parents will need to make alternative plans well in advance.

We end as we began. The most important resource of Kalamazoo College is its faculty. If we want to have the outstanding faculty that we need to be viewed as one of this nation's premier small liberal arts colleges, we must demonstrate a degree of flexibility and responsiveness – within a context of institutional responsibility to our students and to financial resources – that faculty feel permits them to grow and develop as teachers, as scholars, and as human beings. At the end of the day, this will not only benefit the individual faculty involved, but it will also benefit Kalamazoo College, the other faculty at the College, and the students of the College.

Approved by the Provost's Office and the Faculty Executive Committee, Spring, 2002
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