PROPOSED RESOLUTION FOR A PARENTAL LEAVE POLICY FOR 12-MONTH FULL-TIME FACULTY MEMBERS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA

Whereas, the fourth pillar of The University of Alabama’s strategic plan is to provide opportunities and resources that promote work-life balance and enhance the recruitment and retention of outstanding faculty and staff; and

Whereas, a policy that requires that 12-month faculty use sick and/or annual leave for prenatal care and post-natal recovery and bonding time penalizes faculty members who choose to become parents, compared to those who do not become parents, by removing their leave benefits: faculty who choose to become parents are still susceptible to illness and are still deserving of vacation time; and

Whereas, parental leave policies have been found to improve morale, productivity, recruitment and retention rates; and

Whereas, a policy that requires that 12-month faculty use sick and/or annual leave for prenatal care and post-natal recovery and bonding time provides an inadequate amount of parental leave for faculty members who are relatively new hires, which may hinder the university’s ability to recruit outstanding candidates, and also unintentionally incentivizes faculty members to delay starting families, which, coupled with the known reduction of fertility with age, would reduce the fertility window and/or increase the likelihood of high-risk pregnancies associated with older age; and

Whereas, (1) adequate prenatal care is associated with lower risk of prematurity, stillbirth, early and late neonatal death, and infant death, and (2) the recommended number of prenatal visits for an uncomplicated pregnancy is about 153, a policy that requires that 12-month faculty use sick and/or annual leave for prenatal care discourages faculty members from attending prenatal visits because doing so takes away from their remaining post-natal recovery and bonding time; and

Whereas, a 2019 study found that nearly half of females in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics in the US leave full-time science after having their first child; and

Whereas, the millennial generation is expected to make up 75% of the workforce by 2025 and a recent study found that parental leave was among millennials’ top concerns; and

Whereas, a policy that is not limited by gender or sexual orientation is in line with The University of Alabama’s mission to create an accepting and inclusive work environment; and

Whereas, a number of comparable public universities have adopted paid parental leave policies for faculty who accrue sick and annual leave without requiring them to use their accrued leave, including Florida State University (6 months), Indiana University (6
Therefore, be it resolved by the Faculty Senate of The University of Alabama that the University is encouraged to adopt the following policies regarding parental leave for 12-month full-time faculty members:

Policy for Parental Leave for 12-month Full-time Faculty Members

This policy applies to 12-month full time faculty who have given or are going to give birth to a child/children, or become a parent of a newly born or adopted/fostered child/children, or who are recovering from miscarriage, abortion, or any pregnancy or childbirth related health outcomes. Faculty members who accrue sick and annual leave will receive 8 weeks of paid leave (40 days) to cover the time necessary for the medical recovery period as defined by the individual’s health provider and/or to provide time for initial bonding with the child. Faculty members will not be required to use sick and/or annual leave, but may use it to extend their leave time beyond 8 weeks. Paid leave will be provided regardless of the amount of time the faculty member has been employed by the University. In addition, 48 hours of paid leave will be provided for any pregnancy-, foster-, or adoption-related doctor’s appointments or meetings prior to the arrival/placement/adoption of the child.

1The National Bureau of Economic Research https://www.nber.org/papers/w23069
6https://fda.fsu.edu/faculty-employment/faculty-leave/parental-leave-FAQ
9https://www.colorado.edu/hr/policies-guidance/paid-parental-leave-guidance
10https://www.colorado.edu/today/2018/06/26/cu-boulder-enhances-parental-leave-policy-offering-6-weeks-pay
11https://hr.arizona.edu/employees-affiliates/leaves/paid-parental-leave
12https://facultyexcellence.ucf.edu/paid-parental-leave/
13https://www.hr.vt.edu/benefits/leave.html