

Faculty Life Committee Year-End Summary 2018-2019:

Committee members: Julia Cartwright, Andrea Glenn, Michelle Hale, Jenni Cox, Sundar Krishnan, Mark Siciliano, Ray Stewart.

Overall, there have been ~5 policies that we have focused on as a committee from August.

1. Parental Leave.
2. Daycare opportunities & policies regarding inclement weather.
3. Temporary Housing.
4. Development of a website for new faculty.
5. Tenure clock policy.

1) Parental Leave

This subject was worked on in a previous year by the Faculty and Staff benefits committee – they drafted a proposal to suggest maternity leave for staff. We wrote a supporting statement in the summer 2018 for this motion.

No official policy exists to cover parents experiencing the birth/foster or adoption placement of a child. While there are some guidelines that are available, they are not being applied consistently across the university. By developing a policy for parental leave, with gender-neutral language to highlight the equality within the family unit, we hope to build on the 4th pillar to encourage a healthy work-life balance.

The committee spent many hours working on developing **two** different parental leave policies for faculty/staff who are on 9 month contracts, and those that are on 12 month contracts and thus accrue sick time and vacation. a) 9-month faculty parental leave policy; b) 12-month faculty/staff parental leave policy.

These policies were first drafted in the Fall, and subsequently edited and improved with feedback from the steering committee. The policy for 9 month faculty/staff was brought before the full senate and discussed before being voted through at a subsequent senate meeting in the Spring. This was closely followed by the 12 month faculty/staff policy, which was brought to the full senate and voted on in the same session with a motion to stay the rules. This has allowed both policy drafts to be considered by the same group of senators and to be considered by the administration in close proximity to one another.

2) Daycare

There is a significant need for daycare on campus. There are long waitlists to get into certain daycares around Tuscaloosa.

The committee gathered data from a number of daycares in the greater Tuscaloosa area to determine how extensive the problem is.

Our data supported the findings from the previous year that daycare continues to be a massive problem. E.g. Some daycares have long lists and limited places & have some slightly unconventional methods for requiring parents to sign up.

The Faculty and Staff Benefits committee have previously worked on this, and had put forward a charge to suggest a separate daycare facility on campus. We are composing a resolution in support of this proposal. This needs to be done. With increasing hires = more potential for daycare issues. This is not going to go away. The CHIME IN survey is also a source of data that highlights the extent of the problem.

Other concerns include inclement weather – we are working to try to implement some support on campus in instances when local schools close, but the university does not.

3) Temporary Housing.

The university has very limited accommodation available for incoming faculty. A few colleges have access to some property for temporary living, at the discretion of the dean. These limited accommodations are heavily oversubscribed – there is clearly a market to expand this. Many other universities have support for new faculty, including temporary housing.

We performed some data gathering to determine the extent of housing issues across campus.

We are drafting a proposal to suggest that the university invests in some accommodation for incoming new faculty and staff, especially those from further afield, who would greatly benefit from having a temporary residence in order to establish an identity (SSN) and bank account etc.

4) Development of a website for new faculty/current faculty.

We have been gathering information to put on a new website with which to provide information for incoming and current faculty about the Tuscaloosa area in general. This website would provide a useful tool for staff and faculty to learn information ranging from where the post offices are, to how to open a bank account, as well as providing an example of overall budgets based on living expenses. Many universities have similar tools that are invaluable for those that are not local to the area, and this information is not currently available in a single place for UA staff and faculty.

We have been gathering information towards this effort and are continuing to work on this.

5) Tenure clock policy

There were concerns from some faculty that once a tenure clock extension is requested after the birth of a child, that if the faculty member decides they want to forgo the extension and go up for tenure on their regular schedule, that it would be considered early tenure, and they would be held to an “exceptional” standard. With the new faculty handbook, the requirements for early tenure are no longer considered different from those for tenure on the regular schedule. Thus, we felt that the issue would no longer be a problem with the new faculty handbook.

Future goals:

1. We will continue to work to and support efforts to expand daycare facilities on campus, and may draw a motion to submit to the senate in the next few months.
2. We shall work to draft a proposal to suggest that the university invests funds towards providing temporary housing to incoming new faculty and staff, especially those from across-state or international locations.
3. Work on information for a website to help incoming faculty and staff.

We would continue to suggest that members of the senate update their colleagues about issues that are being raised by the senate. This enables transparency regarding topics being developed...