

# Work-Family Balance

## Becoming a Parent: Financial Realities for Female Faculty

Becoming a parent is quite possibly the single most important event in a person's life. Although fathers and parents who adopt face many of the same kinds of challenges as women faculty who choose to bear their own children, pregnancy carries its own unique set of challenges that have practical consequences in terms of financial compensation from the University (paid leave). The most important thing to remember is that it is very important to be aware of what your resources and limitations are regarding parental and medical leave and to plan accordingly. Here are some important facts to keep in mind regarding parental and medical leave:

- Parental leave is unpaid leave: this means that UCF will allow you to take up to six months off to be with your baby, but this leave is unpaid. What we usually refer to as "paid maternity leave" is in fact the use of sick days accumulated each pay period. Fathers may use their sick days while their spouses are under the care of a physician (usually 6-8 weeks after the birth of an infant). Adoptive parents can only use sick leave following an adoption if their child is sick.  
[http://www.hr.ucf.edu/web/loa\\_wc/parental.shtml](http://www.hr.ucf.edu/web/loa_wc/parental.shtml)
- The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) [http://www.hr.ucf.edu/web/loa\\_wc/fmla.shtml](http://www.hr.ucf.edu/web/loa_wc/fmla.shtml), guarantees that you may take up to twelve weeks of UNPAID leave following the birth or adoption of a child. If you are on the tenure track, you must take FMLA in order to stop your "tenure clock."  
<http://www.dol.gov/dol/topic/benefits-leave/fmla.htm>
- Because the only paid leave a woman is eligible for after giving birth is directly related to medical need, the amount of paid time off that female faculty are eligible for depends on the kind of birth they have: on average, six weeks following a vaginal birth and eight weeks following a C-section.
- If you are put on bed rest due to a complicated or high-risk pregnancy, the days you spend on bed rest are subtracted from the total amount of "sick days" you have accumulated over your time at UCF. Potentially, this means that if you exhaust your accumulated sick days prior to giving birth, you cannot get any paid time off for recovery after giving birth.

For the above stated reasons, it is very important to consider participating in the "sick leave pool" [http://regulations.ucf.edu/~regs/pdf/notices/3.0261FacultyandAPSickLeavePool\\_FINALJuly10.pdf](http://regulations.ucf.edu/~regs/pdf/notices/3.0261FacultyandAPSickLeavePool_FINALJuly10.pdf) if you have been at UCF for more than one year and are considering having children. United Faculty of Florida, the faculty union, recommends purchasing long-term disability insurance, which could supplement your income in the event that you are on bed rest for an extended period of time or if you give birth to a child requiring intensive medical care and must go on a prolonged parental leave to care for a sick child. (Disability Insurance Carriers at UCF in 2012 include Gabor and Colonial).

- If you are a 9-month faculty member and you give birth once you are off-contract, you may not use your sick leave to receive compensation in your post-partum period.

Human resources periodically offers a "Parent + Child = Parental Leave" workshop that covers a lot of information involving the logistics of requesting parental leave. Although the workshop is meant to address the needs of both 12-month and 9-month employees and is not directed specifically at faculty members, the

information disseminated in these workshops is extremely useful.

<http://www.hr.ucf.edu/web/training/calendar.shtml>. If you can attend one well in advance of making the decision to become parents, please do. Detailed information regarding parental leave can also be found at UCF human resources [Parental Leave](#) website.

The information presented in the previous section was compiled from the UCF human resources website as well as further clarification from the Office of Faculty Affairs. <http://www.facultyrelations.ucf.edu/>  
<http://www.collectivebargaining.ucf.edu/pages/CBA.htm>  
<http://www.facultyrelations.ucf.edu/docs/FacultyHandbook.pdf>  
<http://www.policies.ucf.edu/>

## Having Children While on the Tenure Track

Women faculty and their partners navigate several issues when deciding to have children, whether biological or adopted, while on tenure track, including health and leave benefits, tenure clock extensions, and equal treatment in employment. There are a number of important benefits offered by the United Florida Faculty (UFF) Union membership for women faculty who are planning to have a child during the pre-tenure period. Of particular relevance are:

- **Tenure Clock:** While this is not an entitlement, expecting parents, regardless of whether the child is biological or adopted, can currently request that their tenure clock be stopped. Tenure postponement requests are usually for 1 year, but can be requested for more or less time. However, complicated pregnancies, the birth, or adoption of a child with disabilities, or cases of other extensive medical problems requiring the possibility to stop the clock for a longer time might also be needed. One can always ask for such accommodations; however, there are no formal policies that include these circumstances as criteria for postponement of tenure review. The Union is currently launching discussions with the administration aiming to expand qualifying criteria to stop the tenure clock so that these situations can be built into the university policy in a formal way. The Union also regularly holds workshops and mentoring for P&T, RIA, and TIP: these workshops offer a safe place to talk about concerns during the pre-tenure period, whether related to parenthood status or other issues, which might not be possible to bring up within the department or any other venue due to confidentiality concerns.

### Some important issues to understand about tenure clock eligibility:

- **Delivery/Adoption Due Date:** Faculty who are due to deliver or adopt when they are off contract (i.e., summer, not teaching and not on a grant) will find it more difficult to postpone tenure review, as they have to request a “permission to have a variation” from their chairs and the dean. To get this extension you would need to show that the birth makes you unable to carry out the tasks necessary for tenure, i.e., teaching, research, and service. If you are off contract, then only research could potentially be impaired, depending on your specific case.
- **Letter in Your File:** If the chair and dean agree to give you an extension, they normally place a letter in your tenure file explaining the extension without giving the reason. However sometimes the letter includes a reason, which can potentially lead to prejudice during your review process, therefore, you should ask them to not include a reason in your letter. The Union is planning to pursue standard wording in such letters to protect your privacy and prevent any potential bias in your tenure review process.

- Who Can Ask for Extension:  
Men are also eligible for tenure postponement, and if both expecting parents are tenure earning faculty, each is evaluated for tenure postponement individually, and thus each could get an extension (decision is made at the college level). In terms of same-sex union, the university has no policy specifically addressing whether or not the non-childbearing parent is eligible for tenure postponement. Likewise, there is no specific policy for same-sex adopting parents. Both of these situations would be evaluated on case-by-case basis at the college level.
- Timing of Your Request:  
Your request to stop the tenure clock must be received by the Office of Faculty Relations before the end of the spring semester prior to the fall semester of the employee's final year of eligibility. Here is the Tenure Clock Adjustment Form:  
<http://facultyrelations.ucf.edu/docs/forms/TenureClockAdjustmentForm.pdf>
- Legal representation in cases of discrimination or harassment based on parental status or gender:  
Typical situations might involve cases of harassment against new mothers (or fathers) who miss teaching or service work because of a sick child or other problem related to parenthood, or cases of poor scheduling of teaching that makes parenthood extra difficult. Initially in these cases, the Union represents the faculty as the mediator in an informal process of reconciliation, and later if necessary it provides free legal representation in a formal legal process.

The above section was compiled based on information from the Director of the United Florida Faculty Union, as well as the Assistant Director of the Faculty Affairs Office.

Link to the UFF: <http://www.uffucf.org/>

### **Words of Wisdom**

Here are some tips from successfully tenured UCF women faculty who had a child during the pre-tenure period:

- *Plan far in advance – learn about your options, rights, and your requirements vis-à-vis the university*
- *Convert your classes into web mode, if possible, so that you can teach from home if needed*
- *Publish early and often before you get pregnant to minimize this stress once you get pregnant and later*
- *Carefully consider the timing of your birth or adoption, if possible, since this is key for your ability to get a tenure clock extension*
- *Request tenure clock extension based on your needs and desires (1 year is typical, but more or less is possible)*
- *Prepare and format as much of your tenure portfolio as possible, as early as possible*
- *Request Tuesday/Thursday class schedules and minimal new prep*