

To: Legislative History

From: Dave Kieda, Dean, The Graduate School

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Date: June 14, 2022

Re: University-wide Graduate Student Parental Leave policy proposal 6-409
and University-wide Postdoctoral Parental Leave policy proposal Rule 6-309A

Introduction and Background

The Graduate School is proposing the creation of Policy 6-409 (and Rule 6-309A) to incorporate a university-wide uniform policy on Parental Leave for graduate students and postdoctoral fellows. The new and updated policies will establish a minimum Parental Leave Benefit for all graduate students and postdoctoral fellows across campus. These policies ensure equal benefit access for graduate students and postdoctoral research associates across campus. This policy update is vital for compliance with the Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO)/Title IX requirements. It is consistent with the best practice recommendations of the major federal funding agencies, including the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Science Foundation (NSF).

The current Parental Leave policies for graduate students and postdoctoral fellows were implemented on a piece-meal, ad-hoc basis across campus, with a wide range of eligibility and provided benefits. The updated policies will provide access to a minimum amount of Parental Leave benefits for graduate students and postdoctoral fellows across campus. In support of the two policies, the University has committed to the establishment of a central funding pool, administered by the Graduate School, to cover the cost of the parental leave benefits for those students and fellows in eligible positions. The central pool is designed to eliminate any financial barrier to the provision of a uniform Parental Leave benefit across the University.

New Regulations

[Policy 6-409](#)

- Defines eligibility requirements for graduate students
 - Matriculation time in the Program
 - Requires Good Standing in Program

- Defines the Number of Eligible Leaves of Absence
- Establishes that academic units may extend terms beyond the policy minimum
- Defines terms of Parental Leave of Absence
 - Duration and timing, and external constraints from funding agencies
 - Benefits for co-parents at the U
 - Provide extension of limits to time-to-degree
 - Right to remain in/continue the graduate/professional program
- Additional Terms for students supported through Tuition-Benefit Eligible job codes
 - Relief from duties of the job requirements
 - Provision of continued stipend support during the leave
 - Resumption of duties after the leave
- Notification and Approval Process
 - Administration by Graduate School
 - Notification of Program faculty and administration
 - Establishment of an agreement for return after Parental Leave of Absence
 - Availability of OEO in creating an agreement for return.
- Additional accommodations and the roles of OEO, CDA, and ADA

Rule R6-309A

- Defines eligibility requirements for postdoctoral fellows
- Defines types of Parental Leave of Absence
 - Absence with Modified Duties
 - Paid Leave benefit
 - Right to return to the position
 - Relationship to Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA)
- Notification and Approval Process
 - Administration by Graduate School/Office of Postdoctoral Affairs
 - Notification of faculty advisor and administration
 - Establishment of an agreement for return after Parental Leave of Absence
 - Establishes that academic units may extend terms beyond the policy minimum
 - Unanticipated events exception
 - Availability of OEO in creating an agreement for return.
- Additional accommodations and the roles of OEO and ADA

Regulation Development Process

The Graduate School worked with stakeholders across campus to develop the policy, including the Directors of Graduate Studies, the Office for Faculty, the Office of Equal Opportunity, the Office of General Counsel, the Office of the VP for Research, the University CFO, the members of the Academic Senate, the Council of Academic Deans, Human Resources (both main campus and University Hospital) , and the Academic Leadership Team. We also have engaged the entire Graduate Student and Postdoctoral scholars across campus with the latest draft of the proposals, and have received and incorporated extensive feedback from these communities.

The Graduate School presented a recommendation for the Postdoctoral Parental Leave Policy to the IPC and Academic Senate in 2020 and 2021, where it was subsequently approved for drafting a policy. The Graduate School Parental Leave policy was drafted in Spring 2020 to unify the graduate program Parental Leave policies across campus. The policy was updated in Spring 2022 to align language and policy structure with the proposed postdoctoral parental leave policy. Both policies were vetted to be compliant with NIH and NSF's requirements and OEO requirements. The Graduate School presented these policy changes to the Institutional Policy Committee on April 8, 2022, which endorsed the proposed policy changes with several comments that have been subsequently addressed. The Graduate School presented the proposed policy changes to the Senate Advisory Committee on Academic Policy (SACAP) on April 29, 2022; SACAP unanimously endorsed moving the policy to the June 2022 Academic Senate Executive Committee. The proposal was approved by the Executive Committee under summer authority on June 6, 2022 and the Board of Trustees on June 14, 2022 with an effective date of July 1, 2022. The proposal will be presented for the information of the full Academic Senate in Fall 2022.