

## Family Work Life Balance Task Force Recommendations

The Family Work Life Balance Task Force was created by Provost Scott Bass and the Faculty Senate in November, 2012, to review, investigate and make recommendations on University services and practices on issues of child, spousal, family and elder care. The members of the Task Force are:

Candice Nelson, SPA, Chair  
David Hunter, WCL  
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Advisory to the Task Force are:

Beth Muha, Assistant Vice President for Human Resources  
Ann Joiner, Senior Director of Employee Benefits  
Dorothy O'Donnell, Staff Council

The Task Force solicited informal input from faculty on work life balance issues, and drafted a survey to send to all faculty to ascertain their awareness of work life programs at AU and the importance of such programs to the faculty. Based on our discussions, the Task Force recommends the following:

- 1) The University should provide emergency back-up care for children, spouses/partners and parents of faculty (as well as for faculty themselves) as part of an optional benefits package. This emergency back-up care should include options for both center-based and at-home care.

Funding for such a program was approved by the Board of Trustees for the next two year budget cycle, and the Benefits Office is preparing to send out RFPs to emergency care providers. It is expected that emergency back-up care will be available beginning in August, 2013.

- 2) The Office of the Vice President for Finance and Treasury should work with AU Facilities to clearly identify and label lactation rooms solely for the purpose of lactation on both the main campus and at the law school. These rooms should comply with District of Columbia law with respect to lactation.

Currently there is a lactation room in Bender Library, but it is not identified as such and access to the room requires a key from library staff. There is an office in Kay Spiritual Life Center that is used from time to time as a lactation room, but the availability of this office for this purpose is by word of mouth. There is a lactation room with a refrigerator in the law library. It is not identified on the outside but information about it is widely disseminated through student advisory services and otherwise. Women wanting to use it can have their IDs coded for access to the room.

- 3) The University should provide language in the Faculty Manual to allow for pre-tenure faculty to request an extension of time for a tenure consideration based on personal or professional situations that substantially impede their normal, expected professional development. Appendix I of this report recommends circumstances that would qualify for an extension of time.

In 2009 a policy on Modified Work Arrangements was signed by the President and Provost. That policy states:

"Parental Delay of Tenure Consideration

For tenure - track faculty, requests for modified duties may be combined with requests for parental delay of consideration for tenure as specified in the Faculty Manual. A faculty member who is the primary caregiver for a newly born or newly adopted child may postpone tenure consideration for up to one year per event up to a maximum number of two years of delay, including all other types of leave. All such delays must be requested and approved before the sixth, or final, year of pre-tenure service."

- 4) Information about the work life programs available to faculty and how faculty can apply for, or take advantage of, such programs should be described in detail and the information should be clearly available and accessible on both the Dean of Academic Affairs and the HR websites.

Currently information on work life programs is not easily accessible, nor are faculty necessarily aware of all of the programs that exist and how to take advantage of the programs.

- 5) The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment should conduct a survey of the faculty to better understand the work life balance issues that faculty face, and consider possible additional reforms based on the survey responses. Appendix II contains a draft survey prepared by the Task Force.

The Task Force views it as important to learn directly from faculty what work life balance issues they face rather than making assumptions about what those issues are. The Task Force has designed a survey to solicit these opinions. The Task Force highlights the importance of soliciting these opinions in a way that protects the anonymity of survey respondents since faculty may be reluctant to share their opinions on controversial issues otherwise.

- 6) The University should consider expanding child care opportunities on campus to accommodate children younger than 2 ½ years, and to accommodate faculty who teach later than 6 p.m.

The current Child Development Center accepts children between the ages of 2 ½ and 5, and is open from 9-6. Faculty with younger children have no opportunities on campus for child care, and faculty who teach in the evening must find alternatives to child care off campus.

## Appendix I

A pre-tenure faculty member may request an extension of time for tenure consideration based on personal or professional circumstances that substantially impede his or her expected professional development as defined by the *Faculty Manual* and specific unit guidelines for tenure and promotion.

The university may grant a maximum of 2 one-year extensions, customarily only if each relates to a different initiating event.

Sample list of professional circumstances that might support a delay of tenure consideration:

- Unforeseeable disruptions to major scholarly efforts that are beyond the control of the faculty member
- Death or acute illness of a doctoral advisor (for Acting Assistant Professors) or co-author.
- Major loss of research facilities or scholarship itself due to acts of Nature (*force majeure*)- including floods, fire, earthquake, etc.

Sample list of personal circumstances that might support a delay of tenure consideration:

- Military service
- Illness or injury to the faculty member
- Faculty member's primary care giver role in the following examples of acute family responsibilities: (note: Family members include domestic partner and same sex partner.)
  - Childbirth or Adoption
  - Care of ill or injured family member
  - Death of a family member

Requests for delay of tenure should be submitted to the chair and the dean within 90 days of the qualifying event. The approval of the chair and the Dean should be submitted to the Dean of Academic Affairs within 10 business days thereafter. The "tenure clock" may not be stopped in the year of the tenure review (typically the sixth year of service).

## Appendix II

### Draft

#### Family Work Life Balance Faculty Survey

1. American University currently provides the following work life programs to faculty. Please rate how familiar you are with each program. (1=very familiar, 5=not familiar at all)

- a) Modified work arrangements due to family or medical events
- b) Tuition exchange programs
- c) Tuition remission for children/spouses/domestic partners attending AU
- d) Long term disability
- e) Short term disability
- f) Spousal employment assistance
- g) Adoptive/maternity leave
- h) Parental leave
- i) Tenure clock stoppage for new/adoptive parents
- j) Child development center
- k) Dependent care flexible spending accounts

2. Again considering the work life programs provided at AU, how important is each program to you? (1=very important, 5=not important)

- a) Modified work arrangements due to family or medical events
- b) Tuition exchange programs
- c) Tuition remission for children/spouses/domestic partners attending AU
- d) Long term disability
- e) Short term disability
- f) Spousal employment assistance
- g) Adoptive/maternity leave
- h) Parental leave
- i) Tenure clock stoppage for new/adoptive parents
- j) Child development center
- k) Dependent care flexible spending accounts
- l) Leave without pay

3. Please list other work life programs and benefits that you would like to see at AU, and, for each program and benefit, rate its importance to you. (1=very important, 5=not important)

4. The University is considering providing emergency back-up care for children, spouses/partners, and parents of faculty (as well as for faculty themselves) as part of an optional benefits package. If such care was available, how interested would you be in using such a program?(1=very interested, 5=not interested)

5. For whom would you most likely use emergency back-up care? (Please list all that apply.)

- a) Infants
- b) Preschool children
- c) School aged children
- d) Adults (spouses, partners, parents, self)

6. For children, would you prefer a licensed child care provider who would come to your home, or would you prefer the services of a day care facility?

- a) In home care
- b) Day care facility

Demographic Qs:

Tenure line/term

Gender

Age (under 40) (40-55) (over 55)