

BACKGROUND

GOVERNING REGULATION: AUTOMATIC EXTENSION OF PROBATIONARY PERIODS

Recommendation: The *Governing Regulation, Part X, Regulations Affecting Employment*, be revised. The revision implements an automatic one-year extension of the probationary period for regular, special and extension title series faculty who become the parent of a child or children by birth, adoption, or guardianship, or who become the guardian of a family member for the purpose of providing care to that person. The revision is effective academic year 2007-2008.

University of Kentucky *Governing Regulation, Part X, Regulations Affecting Employment*, relates to the employment of the University's faculty and staff. A revised copy of GR X is enclosed as Attachment A. Language being deleted is stricken and language being inserted is underlined. The attached revision:

- adds a new subsection, B.1(c), entitled "Automatic Extension of Probationary Periods" applicable to faculty
- revises subsection B.1.(b) to include the automatic extension of the probationary period as one of the factors that permit a faculty member's probationary period to exceed seven years

Background:

In fall 2005 the Sloan Foundation published a report on family-friendly policies in higher education. The report found that 86 percent of Research I Institutions offer a formal policy extending the probationary period upon the birth or adoption of a child. During summer 2005 Princeton University announced that it was implementing a new policy extending the probationary period: one that would automatically extend the probationary period for faculty upon the birth or adoption of a child. Princeton's prior policy had functioned as all other policies do: on a request-only basis. An institutional study revealed that most faculty members do not take advantage of the policy, fearing that the extension of time will be held against them during their tenure and promotion review. Other internal studies performed by Research I institutions (University of California System, University of Michigan) revealed similar findings. Thus, Princeton concluded that to make the policy as effective and universal as possible it must be granted automatically. Furthermore, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) recommends that the extension policy should be in the form of a clear entitlement under institutional policies, rather than in the form of an individually negotiated agreement or informal practice.

At the University of Kentucky, the Committee on Women Faculty in the College of Arts & Sciences studied the tenure extension issue and strongly endorsed a campus-wide adoption policy similar to Princeton University. Presently, the University of Kentucky does not offer a policy to automatically extend the probationary period upon the birth or

adoption of a child, yet both the University's Top 20 Business Plan and the Strategic Plan state that the University must recruit and retain the most talented faculty. Providing competitive benefits to faculty is a key to accomplishing the University's goals. Implementing a policy to automatically extend the probationary period, for not only the birth or adoption of a child, but also for assuming guardianship to care for a family member, will provide the University with a competitive advantage among Research I institutions. The implementation costs are relatively low, and the potential benefits are significant: more competitive recruiting, higher faculty morale, and stronger tenure/promotion dossiers.

The UK Faculty Development Subcommittee of the University Committee on Strategic Planning and Priorities (UCAPP), in their March 2007 report to the Provost made the following recommendation. The University should adopt policies that help faculty members' balance competing demands of work and personal/family responsibilities:

- a Modified Duties/parental leave policy attendant to childbirth
 - a flexible tenure clock attendant to childbirth or adoption.
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