

**Administrative Policy:** Guidelines for Course Release for Faculty on New Parent Leave

**Scope:** Full-time tenure-track and non-tenure-track faculty members taking a new parent leave under the university's New Parent Leave Policy.

**I. PURPOSE**

RIT currently has a [New Parent Leave](#) policy that provides leave time to parents after the birth or adoption of a child. That policy provides four weeks of paid leave for the primary caregiver and two weeks of paid leave for the secondary caregiver. There are no teaching, scholarship, or service expectations for faculty while on such a leave. Upon returning from leave, faculty expectations in teaching, scholarship, and service are once again re-instituted. However, because such leaves may create significant and negative disruptions in the classroom for both faculty and students, this policy provides guidance on releasing faculty from teaching after taking a new parent leave.

**II. GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

One of our key principles is that all students deserve high quality educational experiences. Therefore, this policy provides guidance to ensure that continuity and quality of instruction is maintained in cases where a faculty member with teaching responsibility takes a new parent leave during a term in which the faculty member would normally teach. The role of the supervisor is critical in this process. Collaboration between the supervisor and the faculty member in upholding this principle, while providing appropriate leave for primary and secondary caregivers, is a core element of this policy. In addition, this policy recognizes that births and adoptions come with remarkable uncertainty. Faculty and administrators have responsibilities to build work plans that are flexible enough to acknowledge contingency and disruption.

**III. DEFINITIONS**

- a. Definitions for "Primary Caregiver" and "Secondary Caregiver" are provided in the university's New Parent Leave Policy.
- b. "New Parent Leave" refers to the four-week paid leave granted to the Primary Caregiver or the two-week paid leave granted to the Secondary Caregiver after the birth or adoption of a child to be taken within one year of the birth or adoption. "Short Term Disability Leave" refers to the eight-week medical leave granted to the birth mother of a newborn child.
- c. "Term" refers to either fall or spring semester and does not include summer.

**IV. GUIDELINES**

- a. All colleges shall follow university policies under the New Parent Leave Policy. During this leave time, the caregiver is released from all expectations related to scholarship, teaching, and service.

- b. Given the potential disruption that may occur for students when the faculty-of-record changes within a term, a Primary Caregiver with teaching responsibilities is eligible for course release time for one term. The timing of that release time is to be negotiated between the faculty member and the faculty member's supervisor, taking into consideration both the needs of the new parent and any disruption that may occur to students. Typically, the course release occurs during the term in which the primary caregiver takes their 4 week New Parent leave. In cases where release time is granted, the faculty member shall revise their plan of work to indicate how expectations in service and scholarship will offset reduced teaching expectations.
- c. Given that a Primary Caregiver may take their New Parent Leave within the first year of a child's birth or adoption, it is essential that supervisors and new parents discuss the leave structure chosen by the new parent and how that structure will or will not disrupt the teaching mission of the unit. (For example, different types of disruption may occur if a Primary Caregiver chooses to take their New Parent Leave in one four-week block in the middle of a term, as opposed to spreading that leave out over an entire 12 month period, as allowed by policy.) Eligibility for course release in IV.b. recognizes that sufficient disruption exists to warrant course releases when the faculty-of-record needs to change due to the Primary Caregiver's new parent leave.
- d. Secondary Caregivers may also be granted flexibility in their work schedules associated with teaching, service, and scholarship. Any such flexibility shall be approved by the Secondary Caregiver's supervisor and shall be clearly articulated in the Secondary Caregiver's plan of work.
- e. The fact that modifications were made to a full-time faculty member's plan of work due to the provisions of this policy or other university policies shall not negatively impact the faculty member's review/performance rating for that time period.

Responsible Office: Office of the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs

Approval Date: April 2017

Effective Date: July 1, 2017

Policy History