

Family Friendly Recommendations for Academic Departments

Starting a family is a wonderful, life-affirming experience, yet can create tremendous stress and anxiety when returning to work, especially for academics. Caring for other family members can also present similar joys and challenges.

At UC Davis, we seek to establish an environment that (a) nurtures scholars at any stage in their career so that they can achieve tenure or security of employment and continue to contribute to their academic community throughout their career, and (b) promotes a reasonable balance between professional demands and family life for all our academic colleagues. To that end, we have come up with a list of strongly recommended practices for department chairs and leaders. We encourage leaders to be as flexible as possible to make these life transitions work well for everyone, and to do their best to provide resources and information for their academic colleagues. Full details of the UC Davis Academic Work Life Program are available [here](#), but we want to highlight the following practices for departments to consider when they learn of faculty/academics who are navigating these issues.

1. When you learn a colleague or their partner has become pregnant or is planning to adopt or foster a child, meeting with them to talk through which courses they would like to teach when they return to work. We encourage you to assign them courses they have taught before, rather than ask them to develop and teach new courses. Please be as flexible and generous as possible.
2. The campus provides central funding for course releases to assist faculty in temporarily reducing their instructional workload. They should not be assigned additional compensatory teaching when they return to work full-time, which would defeat the purpose of providing paid leave and Active Service Modified Duties (ASMD).
3. Because every individual case is unique, have your colleague contact Academic Affairs to discuss their leave and/or ASMD plans. Our colleagues can help them understand the Academic Work Life Program and explore their options. Contact Brad Horton (bhorton@ucdavis.edu) or Dr. Binnie Singh (binsingh@ucdavis.edu). In addition, let them know which departmental/shared service support personnel they should work with to process leave and/or ASMD requests.
4. Provide your colleague (and all academic appointees in your unit) the name(s) and contact information of your college or school's Work Life Advisor(s), which can be found [here](#). Encourage your colleague to contact the Advisor to discuss their plans after their child's birth/adoption/foster placement and to ask any questions they have. Also encourage your colleague to consult the [Academic Work Life web pages](#) to find resources that may be useful after their child arrives or when their care for a family member begins.
5. Be sure that scholars early in their careers know they can extend their tenure or security of employment clock, as well as request postponement of their mid-career evaluation if relevant. When they use the UC Davis Work Life Program, e.g., leave, ASMD, etc., they automatically receive a one-year extension to the clock.

Tenured faculty who become parents through birth, adoption, or foster placement, can postpone a merit or promotion action without adversely impacting their normative time at rank and step.

6. When scheduling courses, consider giving priority whenever possible to faculty members who are pregnant or are in the process of adopting or foster placement, have babies/very young children, or have family care obligations so that they can indicate their preference for times that work for them. Do your best not to obligate them to submit choices outside of prime instructional hours if they cannot be available then for family-related reasons.
7. It is important to consider all departmental events in a manner that is inclusionary. Talk with your faculty members who are pregnant or are in the process of adopting or foster placement, have babies/very young children, or have family care obligations to find out what times work best for them for faculty meetings, and which times would preclude their participation. Try to work around those parameters so that the faculty can be included in departmental affairs once they return to work. Although some departments have held their faculty meetings on a set day/time for many years, try to consider more flexible approaches, even temporarily, if that timing does not work for those with family obligations. Let your colleagues know that they are welcome to join faculty meetings and faculty seminars remotely if necessary to accommodate their family's needs. Please use the same considerations for all other departmental events such as job talks, a departmental retreat, or even happy hour. If you are planning departmental events, schedule them during working hours, 9am and 5pm. Parents of small children may need to go home when the workday is over, so it is best to not schedule departmental events after work hours. Faculty parents want and need to build relationships with their colleagues, especially if they do not have tenure yet, and it is essential for them to be able to attend important departmental events.
8. Try to provide the option of limiting the amount of service for a new parent at least for the first year after they return full-time to work, even if they have tenure or security of employment. Providing the option to limit service for colleagues with other family care obligations is also recommended, depending on their needs.
9. Finally, we encourage you to check in with your colleagues with small children or those caring for other family members when they return to work to learn what their needs are. Even if you cannot solve problems such as daycare for sick children, it is helpful for them to know that they have a sympathetic leader or colleague who not only cares that they succeed academically, but is also invested in their well-being, and that there may be additional helpful resources available to them that they may have not been aware of. We provide you with a list of these below.

Additional Resources

- Academic Work Life Program (including information on leave, ASMD, clock extensions, etc.):
<https://academicaffairs.ucdavis.edu/work-life>
 - Faculty Advisors for Work Life: <https://academicaffairs.ucdavis.edu/faculty-advisors-work-life>
 - Advice for managing instruction while supporting family commitments:
https://aadocs.ucdavis.edu/Managing_Instruction_and_Family_Needs_03.29.20.pdf

- Faculty Parent Support Group: <https://academicaffairs.ucdavis.edu/faculty-support-group-new-parents>
- Academic Cooler Bag Program: <https://academicaffairs.ucdavis.edu/academic-cooler-bag-program>
- Lactation Support Program: <https://hr.ucdavis.edu/departments/worklife-wellness/breastfeeding>
- Family Care and Childcare:
 - Adult and Elder Care: <https://worklife-wellness.ucdavis.edu/departments/worklife-wellness/family-care/adults-elders>
 - Childcare Options: <https://hr.ucdavis.edu/departments/worklife-wellness/children/child-care/ucd>
 - Family Care Resources (including Sitter City): <https://worklife-wellness.ucdavis.edu/departments/worklife-wellness/children/care-advantage>