

Family Benefits at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst: An Assessment¹

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“Where academic job advertisements now routinely say “Women and minorities are encouraged to apply, imagine schools advertising ‘Junior faculty typically succeed in our institution because we help to give them the resources to do their work and the time they need to think and to live their lives.’ The second advertisement would attract tremendous interest from academic job candidates. I look forward to the day when it is as ubiquitous as the first.” (Jacobs 2004)

For the last eight years, the University of Massachusetts-Amherst has been at the forefront of an innovative group of universities nationwide that have recognized the importance of family-friendly benefits for recruiting and retaining a diverse faculty. Since 2001, both men and women UMass tenure-line faculty, senior lecturers, and librarians are eligible for a full semester of paid parental leave upon a birth or adoption.² Assistant professors who take a leave are granted an automatic tenure year delay, an acknowledgement of the fact that many faculty are attempting to combine intensive periods of parenting at the same time that they are working toward their first major promotion. And faculty who must care for a sick or elderly family member are also granted access to tenure delay stops and paid leave. The university, which maintains an on-campus childcare program, also provides childcare tuition subsidies to recently-hired junior faculty and offers pre-tax flexible spending accounts for childcare expenses. The University also operates the Office of Family Resources (the OFR) located in the Student Union that provides parent educational workshops, resource referrals, on-campus activities for campus families with young children, and manages a Family Center for campus and local community families located in downtown Amherst. Finally, the Office of Faculty Development (OFD) provides care support through an institutional subscription to Sittercity, which allows faculty to find caregivers for family members (and pets!) throughout the country.

The Joint Administration-MSP Work-Life committee designed a campus-wide faculty survey to assess the status of these new family benefits after they had been in effect for almost a decade. This report details who does and does not use these benefits, how benefit eligibility status differentially impacts faculty, and what the possible consequences are of these benefits for faculty and for the university at large.

Major findings from this report include:

- University of Massachusetts is well ahead of most universities in its paid parental leave, automatic tenure clock adjustment, and subsidized childcare benefits for new faculty. However, its on-campus childcare facility and availability for faculty and librarians is weaker than at many comparable institutions.
- Despite the existence of family-friendly benefits, many faculty who need them do not use them:

¹ We gratefully acknowledge the helpful comments of Brian Baldi, Mary Deane Sorcinelli, Maryanne Gallagher and the invaluable assistance of Lori Reardon on this project, which was funded by the Office of Faculty Development’s Mellon Mutual Mentoring fund, the UMass Provost’s Office, and the Massachusetts Society of Professors.

² For children adopted under the age of 5.

- Close to half of eligible UMass faculty do not take paid family leave, despite the fact that many are in dual career marriages and take on significant caregiving responsibilities for their children. Overall, men are less likely to take leaves, while women faculty in the sciences are less likely than other women to take a parental leave.
- Paid parental leave remains a privilege predominantly for tenure line faculty and librarians; staff and most contract faculty do not qualify for the benefit.
 - Senior contract faculty who do qualify are, on average, beyond their (biological) childbearing years.
- Less than half of eligible tenure line faculty slow their tenure clock to adjust for having children.
- Faculty parents who had children at UMass after family-friendly benefits were introduced are more satisfied than those who had children prior to eligibility.
- Most faculty parents want to use the University childcare program but they have been unable to access it due to severely limited availability and its lack of infant care. An additional deterrent is its expense, at about 15,000 a year for a toddler and \$14,000 a year for a preschooler enrolled full-time.

Background

In the late 20th century, the rising family demands of an increasingly feminized labor force resulted in a series of policy changes across American workplaces. The 1993 federal Family Medical and Family Leave Act (FMLA) legislated that employees³ be eligible for up to twelve weeks a year of unpaid leave for the birth of a child or sickness. Many states widened coverage of FMLA to include a larger number of workers and expanded definitions of family. In addition to state and national legislation, some private firms in the corporate world introduced additional family-friendly benefits to their salaried, professional employees (some of these benefits preceded FMLA). According to a national study of private sector medium and large firms, today most offer flex-time work arrangements, and about half offer dependent care pre-tax spending accounts, part-time work options, job-sharing, and partially-paid family leaves (Bond, Galinsky, Kim, & Brownfield 2005). Studies have linked the existence of such family initiatives in the work place to enhanced firm productivity and employee satisfaction with work-family balance (Perry-Smith and Blum 2000; Hill, 2005; Hill, Ferris, & Martinson 2003; Hill, Martinson, Ferris, & Baker, 2004b). On-site childcare has been shown to significantly increase employee productivity, reduce absenteeism and increase company profits (Shellenback 2004).

Similar trends have occurred over the same time period in the academy; however, faculty face unique challenges based on their demographic characteristics and the demands of tenure line employment. Most faculty do not complete their doctoral and post-doctoral educations until their early to mid thirties, a life stage during which many are also beginning to form families. The average age of the assistant professor is 40 years old (Jacobs 2004). Assistant tenure-line faculty therefore confront a double work-family bind—at the same time that many are experiencing an intensive period of care giving needs in the home they are also facing high productivity expectations in the workplace in order to make tenure within the first six years of employment. This is

³ This includes only those working in firms with 50 or more employees who have been employed there full-time for a year

particularly acute for women faculty, who more often than men carry the major care giving responsibilities in the household (O'Loughlin 2005).

Not surprisingly, it is a major factor behind why women faculty have higher attrition rates from the academy and are less likely to be promoted than men (Goulden et al. 2009; Mason and Goulden 2004). In one study, 82% of women assistant professors faculty report that they found having children to be a "serious impediment to tenure" (Finkel and Olswang 1996). In the absence of work-family balance supports, women faculty who stay in the academy commonly delay child bearing until after tenure or do not have children at all (Varner 2000a). As a result, a high proportion of women faculty report having fewer children than desired, a sentiment most prevalent at research intensive universities (Drago and Colbeck 2003).

In an effort to retain women faculty and to recognize the overall family demands of faculty members, universities have begun to adopt work-family reforms specifically suited to the university setting. We briefly describe trends in four important family policy categories that have been shown to positively impact faculty morale and productivity: tenure clock delay, paid parental leave, flexible tenure track and on-campus childcare.

a) Paid Parental Leave

A 2007 nationally representative survey of 545 colleges and universities found that paid maternity leave is granted by a majority of universities, although it is most often on a six-week basis during pregnancy (defined as a disability), rather than for caretaking following childbearing (CEW 2007). It is comparatively rare for men to have access to this benefit, with about 36% of institutions offering some amount of paid leave for fathers. Altogether, less than 30% of the institutions in the 2007 study offered a full semester of paid leave to mothers (CEW 2007). But among these institutions, the vast majority (90%) extend the benefit to contract faculty. One of the most generous policies in the country is offered by the University of California system, which includes a full paid semester of paid leave to all parents and a second paid semester for biological mothers (Frasch et al. 2009).

b) Tenure Clock Delay

Tenure adjustment options are an increasingly common approach taken by universities to ease the challenges of faculty work-family balance. These initiatives enable parents to delay their tenure decision year to account for lost productivity due to birth and caregiving. Almost all of the top U.S. research institutions offer this option, although it is often at the behest and negotiation of the individual faculty member (ACE 2005). Because many faculty hesitate to request tenure delays under this structure, some universities are now making it an automatic feature of faculty parental leave, which has increased faculty participation dramatically (faculty may opt out by request).

c) Childcare Benefits

Approximately 80% of 26 top research institutions surveyed in 2005 offer childcare services on campus, and 70% offer pre-tax spending accounts to be used toward dependent care expenses (ACE 2005). Many faculty, however, report that infant care and after-school care is unavailable in their on-campus facilities (O'Loughlin 2005). Identified as a major resource for achieving work-family balance and increasing productivity, some campuses have pursued grants to construct expanded childcare centers that cater to the work schedules of faculty (Wilson 2005). Less common is

emergency and sick care for faculty children when standard arrangements fall through, a benefit offered by about 23% of the institutions surveyed (ACE 2005).

d) Part-Time Tenure Track

The ability to move between full-time status and part-time status during tenure years is a potential benefit that is receiving increasing attention at research intensive universities. This policy enables part-time faculty members to remain on the tenure line, but provides additional time before their tenure decision year is activated. According to a 2005 survey of 26 top research institutions, only about 30% offer this option to faculty (ACE 2005). Those that do often offer part-time/full-time transition options for associate and full professors as well.

Despite the emergence of these family-friendly initiatives at many institutions in the United States, university culture has not always kept up apace with family-friendly policies. In studies analyzing take up rates of such policies, most men and about half of women report not taking advantage of tenure delay options and reduced teaching loads, even when they needed it (Drago and Colbeck 2003). At one prominent research institution that offers paid parental leave only tiny percentages of faculty reported taking paid leave when they had a child (7 out of 500); all of them were women (Drago et al. 2001). There also appears to be considerable variation in benefit take up rates by department within universities (Drago and Colbeck 2003).

Studies have found that faculty under-utilization of family benefits is driven in large part by bias avoidance and fear of discrimination (Armenti 2004; Drago et al. 2002; Ward & Wolf-Wendel 2007). Even at the University of California schools, which have highly progressive family policies, benefits are underutilized due to faculty concerns over how usage might impact their tenure and promotion (Mason et al. 2005). Such concerns are not necessarily unfounded, as judged by a recent ruling by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission finding the University of California Santa Barbara at fault for denying a faculty member tenure after taking parental leave (Jaschik 2005). In addition to cultural resistance, poor benefit take up rates can also be attributed to institutional inertia in the communication of such policies. Mason et al. (2005) found that one reason for low take up rates among UC faculty was that only a quarter knew about the university's full spectrum of faculty family benefits.

In the results that follow, we assess the situation at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, in the context of these national trends. It is important to note that the university does not have an official policy on part-time tenure routes; however, it does offer paid parental leave, tenure clock adjustments, and childcare benefits, all of which we cover in this report.

Methods

Data were collected as part of a faculty caregiver equity study commissioned by the Joint Administration-MSP Work-Life committee, and funded by the MSP, the provost's office, and the Office of Faculty Development. To best understand the experience of faculty the researchers used both surveys and focus group interviews.

Our data collection process is documented in detail in a separate report (Templer et al. 2009). Survey data were collected in December 2008 and February 2009, through a web-based survey, as well as a paper survey sent through campus mail. Although the email request came from the Massachusetts Society of Professors, deans and

department chairs also promoted survey participation. It was stressed that faculty only participate in the survey once. Seven hundred and twenty people *started* the surveys (a 61% response rate), but only three hundred and forty nine faculty completed surveys, (a 30% response rate).⁴ We focus our analyses on the 349 completed surveys. Men were somewhat underrepresented and women were somewhat overrepresented in our sample, although men and women faculty compose similar proportions—53% of the sample is female while 45% is male.⁵ The higher response rate for women than men in this sample is consistent with other campus studies that address work-life and work-family balance (University of Wisconsin 1999; Suitor et al. 2001). By rank, our sample is relatively similar to the population, although assistant professors were overrepresented and contract faculty and full professors were slightly underrepresented. There was relatively good representation by college; however, faculty in the College of Engineering and the College of Natural Sciences and Mathematics were slightly underrepresented, while members of the College of Social and Behavioral Science were slightly overrepresented.

Six focus group luncheons for faculty were held in April of 2009. All contract, assistant, and associate faculty members were sent an email invitation to participate in the focus groups, of the 100+ faculty who responded to the invitation, 65 participated. Faculty worked in small groups of 3-5 for the first 15-20 minutes. Each group answered: (1) what challenges have you experienced regarding work-life balance while employed at the University of Massachusetts and (2) what types of programs, services, and/or other support would help you most in terms of navigating work-life balance? After working in small groups a larger group discussion was facilitated by representatives from the MSP and the Office of Faculty Development.

Findings

Leave Taking

Of all the parents who completed surveys in our dataset, only 25% were eligible for parental leave. This is largely because many UMass faculty became parents either before being hired by the university or because they had their children prior to the 2001 eligibility period. Most lecturers were ineligible for parental leave even after 2001, since they must have worked a) full-time for six years b) have a renewed contract in hand and c) and be contracted to the university specifically through the state of Massachusetts. In this first section of the report we focus on the 75 births that occurred to those who were eligible for parental leave as of 2001.

⁴ This response rate is average for a web-based survey (Shih and Fan 2008).

⁵ In comparison, the population gender composition is 38% women and 61% men.

Figure 1: Paid Parental Leave Taken by Eligible Faculty (N= 75 births)

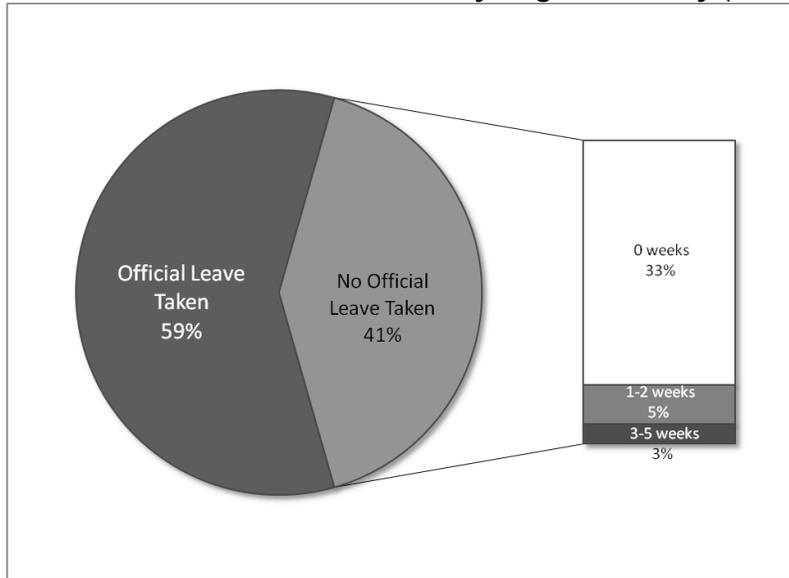


Figure 1 shows that only 59% of eligible births occurring among UMass faculty were accompanied by a parental leave. This finding approximates a previous study on a small sample of UMass parents, which found that 63% of parents had taken advantage of their leave benefits (O’Meara 2007). Among non-leave taking faculty, Figure 1 indicates some took informal leave arrangements (about 1 to 5 weeks), but most of the non-leave takers took no leave. We asked parents to detail any informal *unpaid* leave arrangements made with their department chairs. Three people who took no leave reported that they were given lightened loads for a semester and another took a ½ sabbatical.

Why do so many UMass faculty not take parental leave? Research from other universities has shown that faculty tend underuse family benefits, particularly in environments where faculty perceive low cultural support for family demands (Drago et al. 2002; Erskine & Spalter-Roth 2005). It is possible that some segments of UMass faculty feel they are less qualified than others to take a parental leave—or some may simply feel they do not require it.⁶ One faculty member commented on the gap between family-friendly policies at UMass and on-the-ground cultural acceptance for such practices in the open-ended section of the survey, *“In many ways, thanks to the Union’s efforts, I am grateful for all that the university has done to help with balancing family and work responsibilities. At the same time, I remain frustrated over the lack of encouragement I received to take family leave...”*. This sentiment may have particular ramifications for men faculty, who are not traditionally associated with caregiving in the immediate aftermath of a birth. Figure 2 addresses the gender composition of parental leave take-up at UMass.

⁶ One focus group discussion described how faculty Research Associates are often unable to take parental leave even when eligible. Indicating the funding constraints of external grant requirements, a faculty member remarked, *“I can’t tell NSF I’m going to take leave to go read Good Night Moon for four months.”* (April 28)

Figure 2. Faculty Eligible for Parental Leave by Gender (N=75 births)

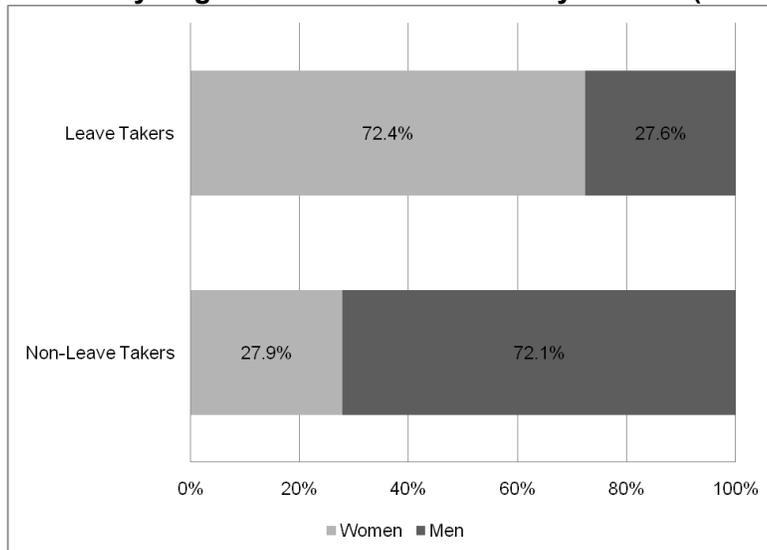
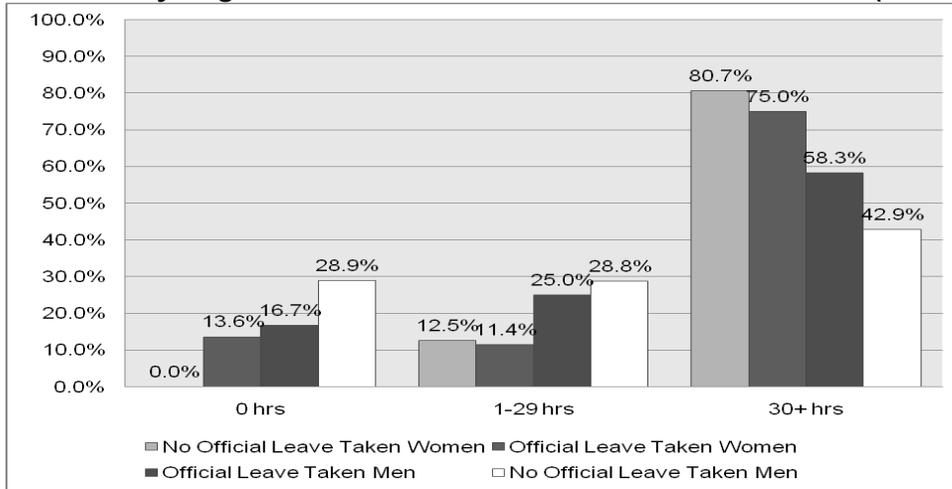


Figure 2 suggests that parental leave is a highly gendered phenomenon at UMass, although close to 30% of mothers go without a parental leave. Yet, majorities of mothers take leaves, while a minority of fathers takes them. Our focus group data combined with the survey data tell a nuanced story about the experience of men faculty with parental leave. On the one hand, there appear to be strong cultural assumptions in some departments that operate to discourage men from taking parental leave. On the other hand, fewer faculty men may need leave to the same extent as women, since they are more likely than women to have a primary caregiver partner. In the next figure we compare how leave taking is associated with the household partner's average work time and gender.

Figure 3 compares hours of partner employment across parental leave takers and non-leave takers (all but two parents were partnered at time of birth in our survey).⁷ With a sample size of 75 parents, breaking the numbers down into this many categories results in small numbers for some of the figures, so we advise caution in interpretation. Overall, all men are more likely than women to have a homemaker or part-time partner; however, there are important differences by leave-taking status. Those few men who took a leave more often have partners who currently work 30 hours or more, indicating that men taking parental leave are more often in dual-career partnerships. This is also true, of course, among women faculty, majorities of whom have partners working 30 hours a week or more. (Although rare overall, women leave takers are also slightly more likely to have a partner who currently works part-time or stays home than do women who had not taken a leave.) National data has shown that women academics are frequently partnered with men who are equally or more career ambitious than themselves (Moe and Shandy 2009). Our data confirms that women at UMass are more often in dual career relationships than men. One faculty member described her family situation this way: *"Having a two-career family means always feeling squeezed in all directions."* (survey comment section)

⁷ This is not necessarily the work arrangement they had as of the time of birth but rather the distribution of care in their families at survey date.

Figure 3. Faculty Eligible for Parental Leave Partner Hours Worked (N=75 births)



Because of these differing partnership and work arrangements, it is sometimes assumed that men who take parental leave do not truly need it. Yet, the argument could also be made that all parents, regardless of gender and partner arrangements, need to spend quality time with their newborn. One such exchange occurred among faculty focus group members, which raised just such concerns:

Woman 1: “[there] should be some way to make sure only primary caregivers can take parental leave. I don’t want to gender it but...normally women are the primary caregivers.

Man: “In my case I took parental leave as the primary caregiver. My wife is an engineer and only had two weeks off after our child was born.”

Woman 2: “You are an exception. I am in [X department]⁸. The men I see taking parental leave sit in their office and do research....” (April 30, 2009)

In order to shed light on anecdotal reports such as this, we asked parent respondents in our survey what sort of leave their partner had as of the birth, as well as how much caregiving they currently engage in. Men who took parental leave most commonly had partners who had little to no paid parental leave. There were also a few cases of joint-faculty couples who took back-to-back paid leave (faculty can take the leave in the semester of the birth, or the one immediately following the birth). Some men also noted that although their partners were working full time when they took faculty leave, they eventually cut back to part-time or quit their jobs.

⁸ The departmental identity is omitted for confidentiality.

Figure 4. Parental Leave among Eligible Faculty by Caregiving Status in Family (N=75 births)

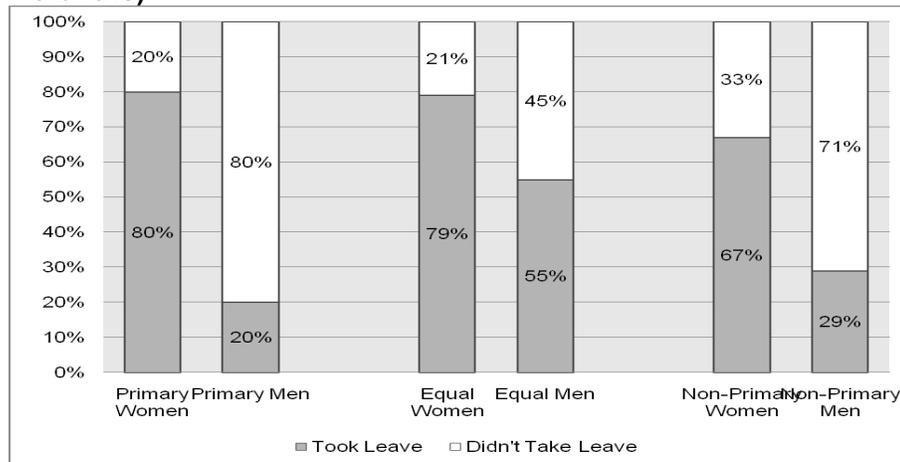


Figure 4 compares whether men and women took a paid leave based on their caregiving responsibilities in the household. We define childcare contributions in terms of being shared equally between partners (delineated by “equal”), being the primary responsibility of the respondent (“primary”), or being the primary responsibility of their spouse (“non-primary”).⁹ Looking at those who hold primary responsibility for the children (the two bars to the left), we see surprisingly high percentages of faculty who, despite their responsibilities, did not take parental leave. While it is gratifying that most of these women took a paid leave (80%), one-fifth of these women did not. The pattern is reversed among men faculty, where the majority of primary caregiver men did not take a paid leave for which they were eligible. We see similar trends among women and men who report sharing childcare responsibilities equally with their partners. More women than men take paid leave, although the number of participating men is higher in this caregiving category than previously.

The final two bars in Figure 4 show the percentages of leavetaking among women and men faculty who were *not* the primary caregivers. For men with partners who do the primary care, most (71%) did not take paid leave. However about 30% did. Yet, the numbers in these tables are small: 5 of 17 men with spouses who do most of the childcare took a leave). In addition, there is the issue of timing and data measurement mentioned earlier. One of the five men who took paid leave mentioned in the open-ended comments that it was not until *after* he took his leave that his wife cut back to part-time. For women who have partners that take on most of the childcare (there were three), two took paid leave and one did not. These numbers are tiny to begin with, but it is not surprising that they took the leave despite having a supportive partner since women do the childbearing and, if applicable, the breastfeeding.

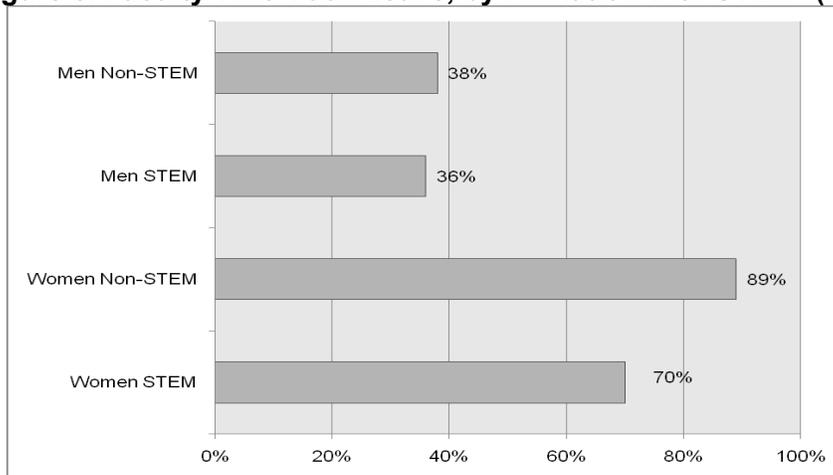
Overall, the trends in Figures 3 and 4 suggest that most women and some men who “opt out” of parental leave do *need* the leave; indeed, many have major care responsibilities in dual-career households. The sentiment voiced in a focus group that men take the leave even when they do not need it is an exception to the rule; 21% of primary caregiver men and 45% of equal caregiver men did not take a paid leave. Men may be

⁹ As in the last figure, these are not care giving arrangements as of the time of the birth, but rather at of the time of survey.

facing pressure to *not* take the leave, which was in fact indicated by more than one participant in the focus groups.

It is often assumed that departments composed primarily of men tend toward cultures that discourage parental leave-taking. Indeed, in discussing parental leave, one female scientist noted that, "*Gaps in research are looked at negatively by my peers.*" We examine parental leave-taking patterns in STEM (Engineering, Life Sciences, and Physical Sciences Clusters) and see some evidence for this. Although samples are small, in Figure 5 our data show that only 70% of STEM women took leave, as compared to 89% of other women. However, among men there was no difference. That is, across the board, fewer men faculty take leave at UMass, but the number is no lower in STEM than in other departments. With fewer women colleagues, women in the STEM schools may feel less comfortable asking for leave. National studies find that the reason faculty often do not ask for leave or reduced course loads is fear of adverse career consequences careers (Drago & Colbeck 2003). This perception is likely to be more acute in departmental contexts where leave-taking has not been culturally accepted.

Figure 5. Faculty Who Took Leave, by Affiliation with STEM* (N=75 births)

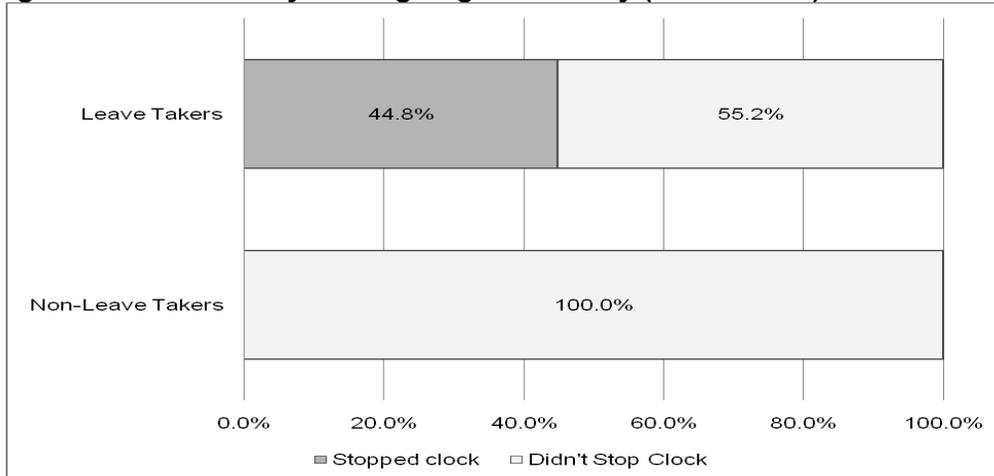


The collision between faculty childbearing years with their tenure track years is a widely lamented reality of the academy. While most universities are increasingly offering the option to delay the tenure decision year when faculty have children, the University of Massachusetts is one of the few institutions to grant it automatically. This was a stipulation added in 2007-08 to the parental leave cluster of benefits. Formerly, faculty members had to proactively request cessation of their tenure clock and concerns were raised over whether this created a disincentive for faculty members.

Figure 6 shows that many pre-tenure parents in our survey did not request a tenure clock adjustment. Only 45% of parents who used parental leave also decided to stop their tenure clock. None of the parents who opted out of parental leave had their tenure delayed. It is likely that this is driven by the same culturally normative forces that make faculty feel unentitled to parental leave. The automatic tenure delay policy may reverse these trends for leave-takers. A remaining problem, however, is that automatic delays are not extended to those faculty parents who opt out of paid parental leave, largely because there is no system in place to track the childbearing of faculty who do not file paperwork for a paid leave. Given that a nontrivial number of parents who opt out of paid leave are major caregivers in dual-career families, it is important that these

individuals know they can still delay their tenure clock even if they feel uncomfortable taking a paid leave.

Figure 6. Tenure Delay Among Eligible Faculty (N=43 births)



Childcare

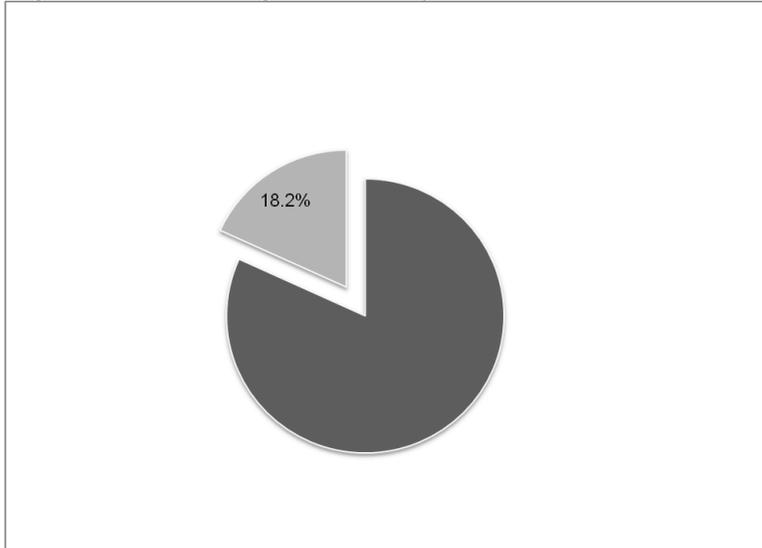
The existence of on-campus childcare has been identified as one of the most important resources in achieving faculty work-family balance (Wilson 2005). The median cost for full-time group childcare center care for two children in Hampshire and Franklin County is approximately \$20,000 a year (Child Care Outlook 2009)¹⁰. But in the immediate Amherst area high quality childcare is in high demand, scarce, and expensive; for example, average 2010 childcare tuition for a toddler and a preschooler at Amherst Montessori is \$34,300 a year, at Cushman Scott Children’s Center it is \$36,000 a year, and at All About Learning it is \$23,300 a year.

The University operates an on-campus childcare facility, the Center for Early Education and Care (CEEC), which has been in operation for over three decades in facilities that were built in the 1930’s by the UMass Extension and originally used for 4-H youth programming. CEEC provides care for 27 toddler and 60 preschool age children of graduate and undergraduate students, staff, and faculty. CEEC is licensed by the state Department of Early Education and Care and maintains accreditation by the National Academy of Early Childhood Program of the National Association for the Education of Young Children.

Unfortunately, very few faculty parents with young children report having used this important campus resource. Figure 7 shows that of the 216 UMass parents, who had young children while childcare was available on campus, less than 20% have had their children enrolled in the UMass campus daycare facility.

¹⁰ Assuming one is a toddler and the other is a preschooler (preschool costs are about \$50 lower per week)

Figure 7. Percentage of Faculty Parents who Used UMass Childcare* (N=216)



* Of parents who had children of daycare age when UMass Facilities were in existence

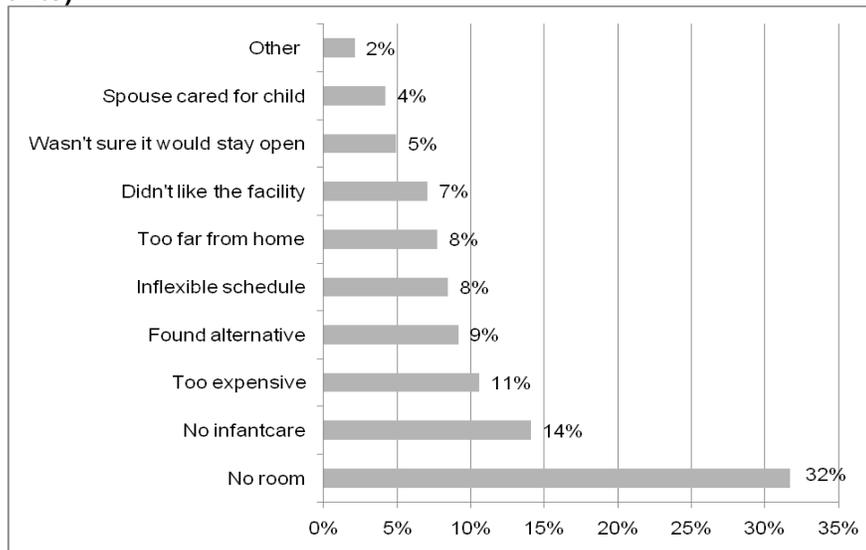
In the survey we asked faculty parents to list the reasons why they did not use the on-campus program.¹¹ Figure 8 shows the most commonly listed reasons for non-use. The most common reason reported by 32% of parents for not using the CEEC is not due to lack of interest, but to lack of available slots when they had their children. The facility has a capacity of only 87 full-time slots which usually serve 95 children enrolled due to some part week schedules. Due to GEO contract specifications, two of the six classrooms (1 toddler and 1 preschool) give enrollment priority to students. Currently 55% of the childcare spaces are used by children of graduate and undergraduates students.

Lack of space is a recurring complaint in the faculty focus group and survey data. One faculty member's survey response, "*Still on waiting list... waiting... waiting... waiting... Would love to use them if given the chance!*" is representative of many comments we received regarding the on-campus childcare services.

Another parent wrote: "*I did not get a spot - I would really have loved to have access to the childcare as it would give me more time to work, it's excellent care, and it would also be great to have my child close to me on campus.*" The current waitlist is of 40+ children for the preschool and toddler slots at CEEC (a number that is lower than usual due to the economic recession), and another 37 infants are on the waiting list to enroll when their children become toddler age of 15 months.

¹¹ Not all parents filled this information out, which is why the sample size is lower in Figure 10 compared to Figure 9.

Figure 8. Reasons Faculty Parents Listed For Not Using UMass Childcare (N=142 parents)



After lack of enrollment space, the second most-commonly cited reason reported by 14% of parents for not using CEEC is the lack of infant care options. Children may not be enrolled in the toddler classrooms until the age of 15 months. With parental leave extending for one semester, most faculty parents require childcare services when they return to work and their children are 4-6 months of age. During the focus group discussions, the need for infant care was raised often and with many rounds of agreement from other participants. One respondent commented, “*who’s going to be able to take leave for 15 months waiting until UMASS childcare is available?*” (April 28) Infant care is offered at campus-affiliated childcare programs at each of the other five-college campuses.

Eleven percent of faculty reported not using the on-campus program because of the high cost of childcare tuition. While childcare tuition rates at some universities are subsidized for faculty and staff, CEEC receives campus funds to offset the operation of the student priority classrooms, forcing the Center to rely on high tuition rates for faculty and staff in order to meet the costs of operating the non-subsidized classrooms. Currently, the cost for two full-year full-time¹² enrolled children (a toddler and a preschooler) is just over \$29,000. This is \$9,000 more than group center care median prices in the Hampshire and Franklin county area, although it is about average when compared to childcare centers at the five-colleges and in the local Amherst area. Incidentally, after the 2002 announcement by the University that CEEC would be closed, many faculty reported that they chose not to use the on-campus program for fear of its day-to-day instability.

One of the potential advantages to an on-campus childcare center is that its hours of operation are compatible with the faculty workday. However, a reason 8% of faculty list for not using the CEEC is its inflexible schedule. It does not offer part-day enrollment schedules in the full day classrooms and its hours of operation do not coincide exactly with campus hours. UMass classes begin at 8:00 am and most departmental meetings and colloquia are held 4:00 - 5:30 or 6:00pm. In contrast, CEEC provides a core-day

¹² Including the extra charge for a 5:30 pm instead of a 4:15pm pick up.

program from 8:15 am - 4:15pm and charges an additional fee for the extended-day hours through 5:30pm. A faculty member who has children enrolled at CEEC commented in the open-ended response section of the survey that it, *"is nearly impossible to be competitive in our fields of research and also do well teaching when we cannot even put in a 40 hour week because of these limitations in daycare hours. Simply extending the "regular" daycare hours to go from 7:30am-5:30 or 6pm (without increasing the price!) would make a huge difference for a lot of us."*

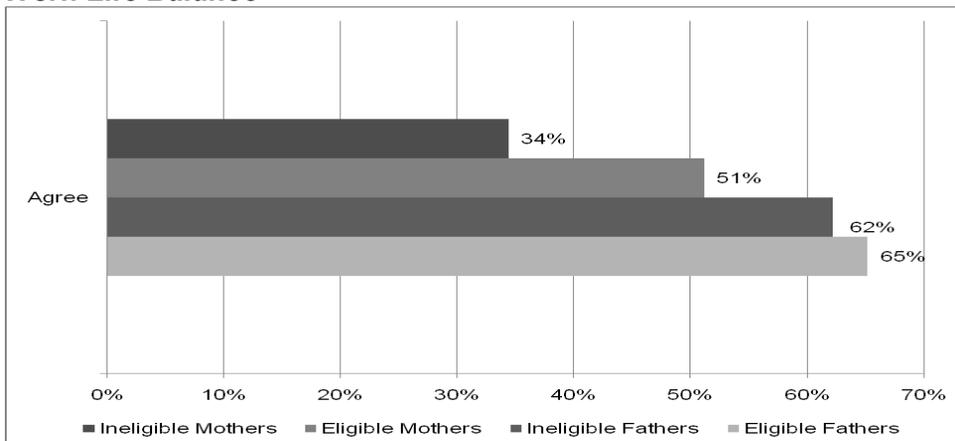
Although UMass offers on-campus childcare, our findings indicate that most faculty are unable to access it. The university recently offered childcare subsidies to new faculty, but this is an empty gesture when the intended recipients are unable to use the services for which they have been subsidized. Some focus group discussions among older faculty parents reveal a collective sense of nostalgia for the erstwhile "Skinner Lab." A faculty member noted, *"In my early years when I came here, there was excellent care on campus. My son was 2 1/2 and now he is 25 years old...at that time there was ample childcare, we had the Skinner lab school; we went on to have three more children."* This was a small 4-day a week half-day childcare center started in 1971 that was run through the Department of Education with a focus on child development research and teacher training. For many years operating costs were subsidized by a generous donor and graduate students were hired to work as TAs in the program with research grant monies. In 2004 it was closed due to budget cuts in the School of Education.

Effect of Family-Friendly Policies on Morale

One advantage to family-friendly policies is the potential for increased satisfaction and loyalty among faculty members. Opportunities for faculty to balance work and family life have been a major retention goal for universities nationwide. Although formalized parental leave and tenure clock adjustment options have only been offered at UMass since July 2001, we are interested in how the attitudes of faculty who had children prior to eligibility compare to faculty who had their children in a more family-friendly policy environment.

Figure 9 compares parents who had children before parental benefits were introduced (or who had them afterward but weren't eligible due to their contract status) to those who had children afterward on the following statement: *"My Dept/Program Provides a Supportive Environment for Achieving Work-Life Balance."* We find that faculty who became parents after benefits were implemented express higher levels of agreement with this statement. This is mainly true of women faculty, with a gap of 17% between the two groups. This gap is likely underestimated in size since post-eligibility women have younger children in need of more intensive caregiving than women who had their children prior to 2001. Men's differences are much smaller. Overall satisfaction is generally much higher for men than for women, regardless of eligibility status. This trend probably indicates the fact that women universally have more care giving responsibilities to balance than men, no matter how supportive the work environment.

Figure 9. Faculty with Children Under 12, By Benefit Eligibility Status (N=123 parents) "My Dept/Program Provides a Supportive Environment for Achieving Work-Life Balance"

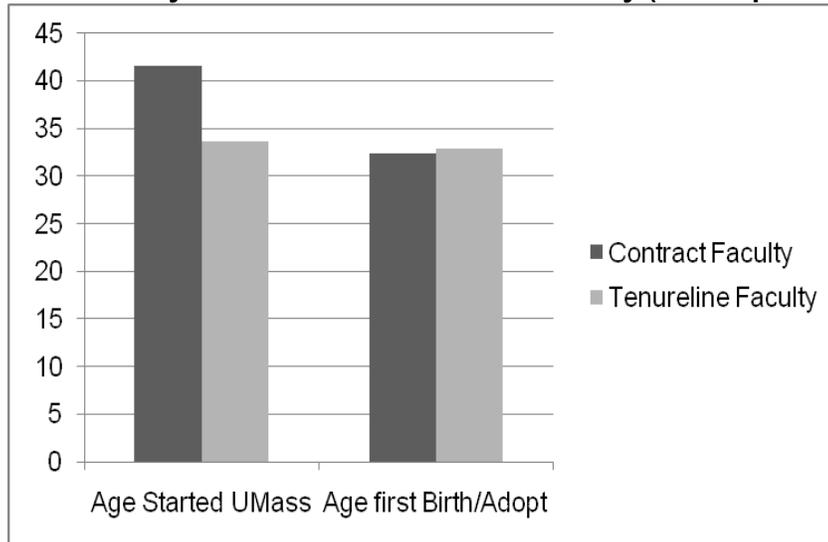


Prior to the introduction of the 2001 benefits, faculty parents made their own childbearing arrangements. In the past, individual approaches to work-life balance at UMass were highly dependent upon on the climate and precedent set within specific departments. About 10% of faculty in our survey who had children prior to eligibility used a sabbatical; another 10% were granted varying degrees of paid leave. Most, however, either did not take any kind of leave or used their FMLA benefit for unpaid leave. Open-ended survey responses indicate that prior to the formalization of parental leave policies most parents simply made do by getting less sleep, juggling their schedules, and generally getting less research done.

The previous figure raises the question of who remains ineligible for these policies even after 2001. It is important to mention that the number of ineligible members would be much higher if this survey had included non-MSP union members, such as university staff, who are ineligible for paid parental leave benefits. While all tenure line faculty are eligible for parental leave, most contract faculty are not eligibility. Of the 14 contract faculty in our sample who had children since 2001, only four met all the requirements to take parental leave. Figure 10 compares contract faculty and tenure-line faculty in average age at hire and average age at first birth or adoption. The average age at hire for tenure-line faculty (34) is much younger than for contract faculty (42). By the time the average contract faculty member becomes eligible for parental leave (after 6 years of employ), they are nearing fifty years of age. Unless women contract faculty plan to adopt, this family benefit is symbolic at best. One focus group respondent put it this way, *"You are hired at 35, and 6 years later you are eligible...By then your eggs have dried up."* (April 3). Perhaps the most common theme regarding parental leave in the focus groups centered on how different standards of benefit eligibility exacerbate existing tenure line and contract faculty inequality.

Comparing the average age at first birth for both groups of faculty in Figure 10 to the average age at hire, it is clear that many faculty parents had their child prior to hire. And indeed, among our total survey population of 227 parents, almost half had their children prior to being hired at UMass. Thus, based simply on the demography of the academy, many tenure line and most contract faculty parents do not place demands on the university family benefit system at all.

Figure 10. Average Age at UMass Employment and Age at First Birth/Adopt By Contract and Tenureline Faculty (N=226 parents)



Discussion and Recommendations

UMass should be commended for embracing important policies that ease the work-family balancing act that many faculty face. Increased satisfaction among faculty members who are now eligible for these benefits provide preliminary evidence that the University may be more able to retain a more diverse faculty due to these policies. However, there remain challenges in the implementation of these policies. Many eligible faculty do not use the benefits available to them. This is particularly true for men, although large minorities of women also pass up these opportunities. Because many of these parents are primary or equal caregivers in dual-career households, it is likely that they fear that using the benefits may threaten their career or they do not know about the benefits. In addition, by the time contract faculty are eligible for parental leave benefits, most have aged out of childbearing. Unequal access to family benefits for contract faculty, who comprise a growing population of the university, contributes toward a climate of first and second-class citizenship status among faculty (needless to say, UMass staff have even more limited citizenship status in this regard). Finally, childcare on campus has failed to meet the needs of most faculty families due to its limited enrollment capacity, lack of infant age care and high tuition cost.

What can we do to further improve the university’s family friendly climate and reputation? With excellent policies already set in place, minor cultural changes will improve the family friendly climate at the University of Massachusetts significantly. We recommend two types of policy changes: the first, which requires shifting the culture of UMass and the second, which requires financial investment.

Programs requiring cultural change:

- (1) *Educate Deans, Chairs and Personnel Committees about family friendly policies.* Institutional and departmental support for standard family friendly policies will increase knowledge among faculty and reduce negative associations with those policies. UMass should set a campus-wide standard that systematically communicates family policy options to faculty members on a recurring basis, such as

at the opening faculty meeting every year and/or in an annual “work-life balance appreciation” week. The University of California, for example, distributes a highly effective family friendly “Toolkit” to its chairs and deans (see <http://ucfamilyedge.berkeley.edu/ChairsandDeansToolkitFinal7-07.pdf>)

- (2) *Publicly recognize departments with a good track record of benefit usage.* Part of changing the culture is publicizing best practices. Departments with a good record of benefit take up among eligible faculty and who have made family-friendly adjustments to departmental scheduling (such as moving faculty meetings mid-day, for example) should get written up in the university magazine and receive recognition at university gatherings.
- (3) *Extend automated tenure adjustment to all assistant professors who become parents.* Currently, the system is automated only for those who have filled out the paperwork to take a parental leave. Our findings indicate that many parents who do not take leave are engaging in major care giving responsibilities in the home. Parents who feel uncomfortable taking a parental leave are unlikely to initiate a tenure clock delay for the same reasons. Therefore, it is important to introduce some tracking mechanism for these parents so that automated tenure delay is extended to them.
- (4) *Add a family leave category to the standard Annual Faculty Review form.* Just the existence of this category will signal that paid leave is a normal stage in the life of a faculty member’s career, and it will allow faculty to indicate why their productivity may have been lower than average in any given period.
- (5) *Make family friendly policies a major public relations component of faculty recruitment efforts.* Despite its unusually excellent family-friendly policies, the university has not promoted or publicized these policies. While the Office of Faculty Development provides information about family benefits to new faculty, a more effective approach would be brochures or other information provided to any faculty who interview for positions at the university.

Programs requiring financial investment:

- (6) *Extend paid parental leave to all faculty, not just tenure line faculty and senior lecturers, and extend tenure delays.* Of all the universities that offer paid leave to faculty, most also extend this benefit to contract faculty. This is a low-cost investment, given that many contract faculty have already had their children prior to hire at UMass, yet will have a high pay-off in terms of its impact on faculty unity and satisfaction. At the same time, extending tenure delays to faculty who enter with a child younger than 5 would support this group with no financial impact on the university.
- (7) *Develop a Flexible Tenure-Track System* Allowing parents of young children, assistant professors that enter UMass with a child younger than 5, and faculty with intense caregiving responsibilities to step on and off the tenure track or take part-time tenure-track appointments is recommended. Again, these policies do not necessarily cost the university much, yet make a remarkable difference in maintaining a diverse faculty.
- (8) *Offer a second semester of paid leave or modified duties to lactating mothers.* Offering this additional option for biological mothers would acknowledge the intensive time commitment and recovery process involved in childbearing and breastfeeding.
- (9) *Expand on-campus childcare services and facilities to include infant care, additional toddler care, and additional hours of operation.* Many faculty parents, especially those with infants, have difficulty accessing and affording childcare on campus. School-age childcare programming and summer childcare programming would also

be beneficial. Additional reports coming out of this survey have shown that women faculty spend less time than men faculty on research and more time on childcare outside of work. Since studies have shown that on-site childcare increases faculty productivity, childcare expansion would help remedy not just work-family balance issues but also potentially narrow the gender gap in research productivity.

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