

**FACULTY SENATE
FACULTY WELFARE COMMITTEE (Norman)
2012-2013 ANNUAL REPORT
SUBMITTED BY MISHA KLEIN, CHAIR**

I. Membership

The members of the 2012-2013 Faculty Welfare Committee, their departments and terms:

Misha Klein	Anthropology, 2012-2015 (co-chair Fall 2012, chair Spring 2013)
Greg Burge	Economics, Fall 2012 (co-chair Fall 2012)
Al Schwarzkopf	Management Information Systems, 2010-2013
Deborah Trytten	Computer Science, 2010-2013
Jerry Weber	Educational Leadership & Policy Studies, 2011-2014
Donna Nelson	Chemistry & Biochemistry, Spring 2013-2014 (completing Burge term)

II. Meetings

The Faculty Welfare Committee met four times in the Fall 2012 semester and three times in the Spring 2013 semester (including a meeting with the Provost, detailed below), as well as electronically exchanging documents under development throughout the year.

III. Issues

At the beginning of the 2012-2013 academic year, the Faculty Welfare Committee identified a number of prior issues to be pursued as well as new issues for our agenda. Ultimately, the following issues became our priorities and the primary foci of our efforts over the course of the year:

1. The promotion of faculty health & wellness through the development or improvement of or access to:
 - a. walking paths
 - b. exercise facilities
 - c. promotion of bicycle commuting
2. The development of a campus-wide family leave policy

IV. Actions

- A. The first issue on which we acted was a resolution to promote walking and biking to campus by making available one-time use parking permits. The following resolution was submitted to the Faculty Senate:

TOPIC: TEMPORARY PARKING PERMITS

SUBMITTED BY: FACULTY WELFARE COMMITTEE, 2012-13

DATE: October 15, 2012

- WHEREAS, There continues to be a shortage of parking on campus; and
- WHEREAS, Vehicle congestion poses transportation, safety, and health problems for the campus community; and
- WHEREAS, The University wishes to encourage healthy behaviors on the part of faculty, staff, and students; and
- WHEREAS, Bicycling, walking, and other self-propelled modes of transportation to campus relieves the pressures on parking and traffic, while engaging in aerobic exercise; and
- WHEREAS, Many faculty and staff live in the vicinity of campus; and
- WHEREAS, There are very few days out of every year on which it is unsafe or impossible to bicycle or walk, making a year-round parking permit unnecessary; and
- WHEREAS, Faculty and staff occasionally have need for a car on campus in order to conduct University business (i.e., transporting job candidates and other visiting scholars); and
- WHEREAS, Faculty and staff from the Tulsa and HSC campuses occasionally need to come to the Norman campus; and
- WHEREAS, Faculty and staff with spouses on campus are not always able to coordinate schedules to avoid bringing two cars; it is
- RESOLVED, That the Parking Office shall make available to faculty and staff single-use, one-day parking permits, available for purchase individually or up to ten at a time in advance, to encourage alternate modes of transportation for the benefit of individual wellbeing and that of the campus community, while providing flexibility; and be it
- RESOLVED, The Parking Office shall set the price of such temporary permits so that they will not be used as a cheaper alternative to purchasing a year-round pass or be substituted for daily visitor passes.

The Resolution was discussed by the Faculty Senate Executive Committee and discussed at the November meeting of the Faculty Senate, and then voted on and passed by the Faculty Senate at the December meeting. Simultaneously, the suggestion was taken up by Parking Services and implemented. As of January 2013, single-day parking permits are available for purchase at the Parking Office for \$3 each, individually or in multiples. Faculty/Staff permits may be used in designated Faculty/Staff parking lots, while Student permits may be used in student lots. They have been priced so that they are not a less-expensive alternative to the purchase of an annual pass. Faculty/Staff permits may not be purchased online because the University has not (yet) made arrangements for pre-tax deductions.

- B. The second issue that we addressed was the drafting of a proposal for a campus-wide family leave policy. Drawing on existing policies in two departments on campus (Health and Exercise Sciences & Modern Languages, Literatures, and Linguistics), examples of family leave policies implemented at other universities, documents compiled by the College of Arts and Sciences Dean's Advisory Committee on Women's Issues (including the current state of such policies within the CAS), and scholarly articles about the effects of the lack of such policies, or inadequate policies, on academic work-life balance, the FWC drafted a proposed policy. In drafting the policy, we followed a set of ranked goals that emerged during our discussions:
- a. Given that no University Policy currently exists, and that considerable differences in treatment have been experienced by faculty with similar family driven needs, our top priority was to create a University-wide policy covering all but the most uncommon instances of Family leave.
 - b. To ensure all faculty members have the opportunity to benefit from increased attention to fairness across campus in terms of work/family balance issues, we resolved to address both parental leave situations and cases where a faculty member is the primary caregiver for a sick/injured/recovering dependent family member.
 - c. The policy should reduce the teaching duties of an affected faculty member in the term following the qualifying event. Encouragement to continue research and activities related to graduate student advising should accompany the description of reduced teaching responsibilities. Our proposal uses the wording "modified teaching duties" with the understanding that departments still carry a reasonable degree of flexibility in determining the specific nature of this reduction. All courses released under the policy would not be made up during subsequent semesters.
 - d. The policy should respect the particular vulnerability of junior faculty affected by either situation, as they are within their probationary period and carry the responsibility of producing clear evidence of excellence in the areas of research and teaching during a condensed period of time. As such, a one-year extension of the tenure clock was envisioned as the default when the policy is utilized, with an easy opt-out for any faculty member wishing to forgo the extension and be considered for tenure/promotion at the end of their original probationary period. The current University limitation of no more than two years of extended time on a probationary window would remain unaffected.
 - e. The wording of the policy should be gender-neutral, recognizing that male or female faculty may experience situations where they would be the primary caregiver for a dependent child, parent, or other family member. Whether a faculty member is or is not a "primary caregiver" would be determined by the faculty member, who obviously carries the best information regarding their situation. However, faculty members should apply typical professional and ethical judgment when deciding to use the policy. In cases where two faculty members are affected by the same event, they should jointly determine who will receive the "primary" designation and associated reduction in teaching responsibilities.
 - f. Again, in specific regards to junior faculty – but also extending to tenured faculty members - the policy should encourage other faculty evaluating performance to respect the following ideas:

- I. Annual Teaching Evaluations should not suffer simply because a faculty member had modified teaching responsibilities during the year in question.
- II. It should be acknowledged that junior faculty using this policy would still teach as many courses during their probationary period as other cases, providing the same opportunity to gather evidence of effective performance in the classroom.
- III. Even with modified teaching duties during the semester following/concurrent with the family leave related event, there are still considerable difficulties carrying out research. However, the goal of this policy is to create as level a playing field as possible for all candidates for tenure, regardless of their family situation. As such, faculty using the policy should be expected to have no more, as well as no less, tangible research productivity by the end of their probationary period than faculty who did not.

The policy was modified through input from both the Faculty Welfare Committee and from the Faculty Senate Executive Committee. The final draft bears the title “Family Fairness Policy” in order to make clear that the proposal is not for a “leave” (though this is the language used nationally for such policies), but instead describes modified duties, allowing a faculty member to focus for a short period on the intensive care of a child or other family member, without a disruption to her or his classroom or committee responsibilities. Faculty responsibilities to students and to research extend far beyond the classroom and the particular time-frame of the semester, and these do not stop, so faculty are not able to take a full leave of responsibilities. Additionally, the revised title is meant to emphasize that the structure of the 16-week semester does not correspond to the 12-week time frame of the national FMLA. Finally, the emphasis on “fairness” is intended to draw attention to the fact that a lack of such a policy creates multiple situations of inequality directly related to the academic career path, while the uneven application of similar policies and practices across campus sets up other forms of inequalities among faculty working in different colleges and different departments. As such, while attempting to preserve some measure of flexibility according to departmental needs, it is hoped that the following policy, if not adopted for the entire University, can stand as a model for departments to implement clear and just policies that promote a healthy work-life balance and create a supportive and collegial atmosphere.

Family Fairness Policy
Faculty Welfare Committee

Fall 2012

In considering the needs of faculty members and the University community, the University recognizes that faculty members may face situations in which their family obligations limit their ability to maintain all of their varied obligations and duties in the areas of research, teaching, and service. The work demands on faculty members involve duties outside of the academic calendar, alongside the obligations incurred during the 16-week semester. In the interest of attracting the best candidates to join our University community, and in order to retain and care for faculty who represent a major investment of the University's resources, the University seeks to create a cooperative work environment, supporting not only faculty research endeavors but also the achievement of a sustainable and healthy work-life balance. Further, the University recognizes that major life events, such as the birth or adoption of a child, or the need for intensive care of another family member, do not necessarily conform to the academic calendar.

Therefore, in order to enable faculty to meet their ongoing research and service demands, and avoid disruption to students during the semester, we recommend that The University of Oklahoma Norman Campus formally adopt the following policy, which operates within the spirit of existing University of Oklahoma policies, including OU's Family and Medical Leave Policy. If, for any reason, an individual academic unit is unable to conform to this policy, they must draft an alternate policy that details the accommodations to be granted faculty under circumstances that require such consideration such as those specified below.

This policy provides for the automatic extension of the tenure clock for tenure-track faculty, and allows for one semester of modified teaching and relief from very demanding service duties if a tenure-track, tenured, or renewable term faculty member is a primary caregiver: (1) following the birth or adoption of a child; or (2) for an individual who has a serious health condition (as defined by OU policy).

A tenure-track faculty member who is a primary caregiver of a newborn or newly adopted child or a seriously ill family member will qualify for a one-year extension of the probationary period, unless s/he requests a waiver of the extension. This extension may be waived by eligible faculty members, if s/he so requests, before s/he goes up for tenure. Furthermore, if after consultation with her/his department chair and Committee A the faculty member wishes to go up for tenure at the time when s/he would have done so without the previously granted extension of the probationary period, it would not be considered an "early tenure" process. There is a maximum possible extension of two years due to multiple births, adoptions, or caretaking situations. The request to activate the extension of the probationary period must be made within 12 months of the qualifying event. The request must be submitted to the department chair and Committee A, who will forward the request along with a letter confirming the faculty member's eligibility to the Dean, who will in turn forward the request to the Provost. It should be noted that any tenure-track faculty member – including those who are expecting the birth of a child or are adopting a child but are not the designated primary caregiver, as well as those experiencing hardship not related to this leave policy - can apply to extend her/his probationary period at any time.

In the event of these major family events, tenure-track, tenured, or renewable term faculty members may request modified duties. Faculty on modified-duties status will be relieved of direct teaching responsibilities and very demanding service requirements (e.g., Committee A), but will be expected to fulfill their other professional responsibilities (e.g., other departmental committee assignments, preparation of course materials, research and preparation of research proposals and publications, and supervision of graduate students). The faculty member will not be expected to make up the modified duties in a subsequent semester. Faculty will not be permitted to teach overload courses during the period of modified duties. The teaching component of the annual evaluation will make allowances for the period of modified duties. The annual evaluation rating and associated salary increases shall not be negatively affected by the period of absence. The maximum period for which modified duties will be assigned is one semester (i.e., Spring or Fall) per academic year. In the event of a birth or adoption of a child, the semester of modified duties should be completed within 12 months following the birth or adoption.

Faculty members requesting modified duties for one semester must inform the department chair as early as possible to allow time to process the request, identify, and secure alternative teaching staff, if necessary. For requests related to birth or adoption, modified duties should be made no later than three months after the event. All requests for modified duties should be submitted in writing to the department Chair, who together with Committee A, will evaluate the request and write a letter detailing how the accommodation would be made within the department, which will be forwarded along with the request to the Dean. After approval by the Dean, copies of the approval shall be sent to the faculty member and the department chair.

The above policy was approved by both the Faculty Welfare and the Faculty Senate Executive Committees. We have had several discussions with the Provost about the proposed policy and she has asked that we refrain from bringing it before the full Faculty Senate until she has had a chance to work with Legal Counsel and present a version that can be supported by the Administration. In order to advance this process, the FWC, along with members of the FSEC met with Provost Mergler on April 1, 2013, to discuss the goals and language of the proposal. In attendance were:

Provost Nancy Mergler
Greg Heiser – Legal Counsel
Misha Klein - Faculty Welfare Committee (Chair)
Greg Burge - Faculty Welfare Committee (co-Chair, Fall 2012)
Jerry Weber - Faculty Welfare Committee member
Al Schwarzkopf - Faculty Welfare Committee member
Deborah Trytten - Faculty Welfare Committee member
Donna Nelson - Faculty Welfare Committee member (as of Spring 2013)
Mike Bemben - Faculty Senate Executive Committee (Chair)
Ed O’Rear - Faculty Senate Executive Committee (in-coming Chair)
Andy Fagg - Faculty Senate Executive Committee member
Laura Palk - University Institutional Equity/Title IX/Office for Equal Opportunity

The following issues were discussed at the meeting:

- The federal FMLA policy does not conform to the 16-week semester schedule at OU, causing disruptions because of changes in teaching personnel

- The proposed policy is for modified duties, not a full leave, because faculty cannot take a leave from their research endeavors
- Release from teaching and major service would allow faculty under the circumstances described in the document to focus their scholarly efforts on research
- OU supports faculty research in the form of grants, and this policy can be considered part of this larger effort
- The policy would help to create a supportive campus environment that recognizes faculty family responsibilities alongside their scholarly ones
- The policy would help to attract highly qualified candidates and maintain faculty in whom the University has invested valuable resources
- The policy would be an important step towards gender equity, in recognition of the disproportionate burden of family care that falls on female faculty in general, while keeping the policy gender neutral in recognition of the social changes of the current generation
- Universities across the country are adopting similar policies, especially given recent research showing the loss of female researchers/faculty, especially in the STEM fields
- Because of the time involved in achieving a doctorate, and the common delay in childbearing among scholars, these circumstances weigh most heavily on junior faculty, who are also the most vulnerable (politically, professionally, and financially)
- The lack of a campus-wide policy, and the inconsistency in accommodations made across campus, is unfair, creates an atmosphere of distrust, and may leave the University vulnerable to legal action

Provost Mergler was generally supportive of the issues, and concerned with the inequities across campus, as exemplified in the anecdotes about junior female faculty member about to give birth being advised by senior faculty not to take an extension because it would look like she was not serious about her career, and another about a faculty member obliged to make up a course from a previous semester that did not make during the semester she was due to give birth, thus compounding the problems for students, and disrupting three course, rather than two (or fewer). Provost Mergler also expressed concern about the burden that an across-the-board modified-duties (teaching release) policy would place on smaller units. There remain pragmatic issues to be addressed, and Misha Klein (FWC chair) and Ed O'Rear (Faculty Senate chair) will be discussing these with the Provost over the summer. It is our hope that we will be able to present a policy to the Faculty Senate at the beginning of the next academic year.

- C. The third and final substantive issue addressed by the Faculty Welfare Committee this year is a perennial concern: the promotion of faculty wellness and healthy practices for faculty, and the state and availability of facilities. The concerns can be grouped into the following issues:
1. the deplorable condition of the Houston-Huffman (men's) locker room
 2. the lack of a separate facility for faculty
 3. the inadequate publicity for alternative facilities that may be accessed by faculty
 4. the need for the planned walking path on campus

Construction is about to begin on the Scholar's Walk walking path during the summer of 2013, along with other modifications on campus that will facilitate bicycle use. The latter is being addressed by a separate committee specifically dedicated to promoting bicycling and bicycle safety on and in the vicinity of campus. Other changes are being made to existing facilities. However, the lack of a separate facility for faculty remains a problem. Many members of the faculty, especially women, do not feel comfortable using the same exercise facilities as students, so the lack of a separate facility discourages faculty

exercise, in spite of reduced cost. The health insurance company contracted by OU, Blue Cross Blue Shield, has a program that for \$25/month allows members access to any of their contracted facilities (some 7000 across the country, which is particularly interesting for faculty who must travel for research but do not want to lose their exercise regime). However, the facilities in Norman are few, and there are no facilities on the east side of town. We have asked Breion Rollins to approach BCBS about extending the program to a few other facilities in Norman to provide greater regional coverage. We have also asked Breion Rollins to work on further publicizing the program to encourage faculty participation, as very few members of the faculty appear to be aware of this benefit.

It must be noted that this is an inadequate alternative to the availability of a separate faculty facility on campus. Faculty exercise must be encouraged and promoted in every way possible, for the wellbeing of the individuals, and for the financial wellbeing of the University, as there is a direct and demonstrable relationship between healthy practices and reduced use of medical benefits, and therefore reduced costs for the faculty and the institution. Additionally, there is no guarantee that in the future OU will continue to contract with BSBS, and faculty could easily lose access to this benefit, and therefore lose affordable access to exercise facilities off campus. Finally, the development of an exercise facility for faculty on campus could productively partner with the Health and Exercise Science program in providing training and a pool of potential research subjects for their students, as well as personal trainers for faculty to enhance their health practices. This is an opportunity on campus that is currently being squandered.

Jerry Weber has drafted a document that the Faculty Welfare Committee will continue to develop in the coming year, as we pursue these issues. What follows is his draft:

Faculty Welfare Committee Recommendations for Promoting Faculty Exercise and Wellbeing

Whether one considers the faculty the head of the university, or its heart, every observer recognizes that it is the faculty that is responsible for producing the basic product of the modern American university; the creation and dissemination of knowledge. In addition, in parlous economic times such as we are experiencing today, it is ever more incumbent among higher education institutions to do everything in their power to maintain the well-being of the faculty. Modern medicine and science tell us with clarity and conviction that encouraging, and creating the supportive environment for, physical activity is an important mechanism to support this objective.

At The University of Oklahoma, unfortunately, the physical facilities available for the support of physical activity for the faculty are sadly lacking. The Faculty Welfare Committee recognizes that some of the recommendations we offer may be, for the time being at least, financially unrealistic. However, we also proffer the observation that it is incumbent on the institution to make every effort to enhance the physical environment available for physical conditioning, as well as to create the psychological environment that encourages participation.

In addition to physical improvements suggested, we also offer the observation that a lack of facilities available only for faculty markedly diminishes the probability that faculty members will utilize the existing facilities. This refers both to workout and locker room facilities. Having looked at the overall existing facilities, we strongly support the following recommendations, offered in order of preference.

- 1) Building a new faculty-only facility to contain both men's and women's locker and workout facilities.

- 2) Offering cooperative participation with existing health facilities in Norman and surrounding cities. Specifically, reference is made to the Blue Cross/Blue Shield “Silver Sneakers” program.
- 3) Improve existing facilities. The locker rooms are dated. They are fundamentally unchanged since the building was constructed in 1981. Further, the locker rooms do not support modesty. The showers are not private and the dressing area is open. Faculty members often complain that they will not exercise at the Huston Huffman Fitness Center because of the locker rooms and the lack of privacy. The locker spaces could be friendlier to members utilizing wheelchairs. In addition, hot water is often an issue due to an old system. Facilities Management must continuously service the system. Equipment used in strength training is sometimes patched with tape as opposed to being properly repaired. In addition to discouraging use by faculty, the Huffman Center does not contribute to making OU an attractive site to potential students and parents who visit.