

**NOTE: THE ATTACHED DOCUMENT WAS WRITTEN ON THE REQUEST OF THE DEAN OF SCIENCE AND CONTAINS A LIST OF RECOMMENDATIONS. THE DEAN AND HEADS ARE CURRENTLY CONSIDERING WHICH ACTIONS TO TAKE.**

**REPORT ON PARENTAL LEAVE POLICIES  
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA**

**A report of the *ad hoc* committee established by the Dean of the Faculty of Science**

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## I. OVERVIEW

The University of British Columbia has made a clear commitment to supporting teaching and research faculty that choose to have children. This commitment is reflected in a generous maternity and parental leave policy and in the provision of day care facilities on campus. Nevertheless, there are aspects of the current policy that should be improved. This report reflects our recommendations based on an examination of current policies, a survey of faculty parents who recently took maternity and/or parental leave, a survey of heads of departments within the Faculty of Science, and our personal experiences as parents and faculty.

In developing our recommendations, we considered two goals of family-oriented policies at UBC: (a) to minimize the impact on the careers of individuals who choose to have children, and (b) to maximize the benefits versus costs to the research and teaching environment at UBC. Many of our policy recommendations serve both goals and some can be easily accomplished. These policy recommendations should have the highest priority.

We begin this report with a description of the current policies affecting new parents who are faculty at UBC. The policy descriptions include information about how to take the steps involved in taking a maternity and/or parental leave. We then describe the survey of faculty parents and department heads. We use the results to highlight the weaknesses of current policies. We then make a series of recommendations aimed at achieving one or both of the above-stated goals. Finally, we assign priorities to the recommendations, according to their costs and benefits.

We have limited our purview to policies regarding faculty at UBC. Policies for ensuring the well-being of students, post-doctoral fellows, technicians and other staff that have children should also be considered in follow-up reports. That said, many of the policies described in the following section apply to some fixed-term employees (e.g., sessional lecturers and research associates) for the course of the term of employment.

## II. CURRENT POLICIES

### Maternity and parental leave

Faculty who have children (biological or adopted) are eligible for three types of leave: unpaid leave, leave with partial salary from Employment Insurance (EI), and leave with EI plus a UBC top-up. Here we describe the benefits available as of November 2004 for birth mothers, birth fathers, and adoptive parents. According to the *Employment Standards Act*, the same-sex partner of an adopting parent or birth mother is entitled to the benefits of an adopting parent:

<http://www.labour.gov.bc.ca/esb/igm/esa-part-6/igm-esa-s-51.htm>

**Unpaid leaves** – The right to take an unpaid leave related to the birth or adoption of a child is federally legislated. For unpaid leaves:

- A birth mother is entitled to 17 weeks of *maternity leave* and 35 weeks of *parental leave*. A birth mother who does not take maternity leave is entitled to 37 weeks of parental leave.
- A birth father is entitled to 37 weeks of parental leave.
- An adoptive parent or same-sex partner is entitled to 37 weeks of parental leave.

The above leaves are not shared; each parent is entitled to the leave. An employer cannot force a leave-taker to make up the work missed while on leave or in any way punish the employee for taking the leave.

If a child has a physical, psychological or emotional condition requiring a longer period of parental care, an employee is entitled to up to 5 additional weeks of unpaid leave beginning immediately after the end of the parental leave.

For regulations on unpaid leaves (including other provisions, e.g., for surrogate mothers), see the *Employment Standards Act*:

<http://www.labour.gov.bc.ca/esb/igm/esa-part-6/igm-esa-s-51.htm>

**Employment Insurance** – Employment Insurance (EI) provides partial salary replacement during an unpaid leave, provided the parent satisfies certain criteria. Most importantly, the claimant must have worked at least 600 insured hours over the last 52 weeks (or since the last claim if there has been another claim within the year). As of 2004, EI provides up to 55% of the average insured earnings up to a maximum amount of \$413 per week for the following time periods:

- A birth mother is entitled to 15 weeks of maternity leave, which can start up to 8 weeks before the due date and at latest during the week of the birth.
- The birth mother and/or partner (birth father or same-sex partner) are entitled to a total of 35 weeks of parental leave. The parental leave can be shared, taken sequentially, or taken concurrently, as long as the total leave taken by both parents sums to 35 weeks or less and is taken within a year of the birth (or longer if the child is hospitalized).
- An adoptive parent and/or partner are entitled to a total of 35 weeks of parental leave. The parental leave can be shared, taken sequentially, or taken concurrently, as long as the total leave taken by both parents sums to 35 weeks or less and is taken within a year of the placement (or longer if the child is hospitalized).
- If a pregnancy terminates, a woman is entitled to sick leave benefits (if before 20 weeks) or maternity leave benefits (if after 20 weeks).

Before EI benefits start, there is a two-week waiting period during which the leave-taker receives no EI benefits. This waiting period must be served once per claim (i.e., only one parent must serve this waiting period). The above benefits do not increase if there is more than one child born/adopted during the leave.

It is important to plan ahead to receive EI benefits, as EI and UBC benefits do not start until the appropriate paperwork is filed and approved by EI. Before your leave, you should formally request a leave from your department head with tentative dates. This should be done as early as possible to facilitate planning for teaching replacement, etc. Legally, notice must be given in writing at least four weeks prior to the proposed leave for birth parents (not for adoptive parents, for whom the timing is more uncertain). To ensure that your leave is processed in a timely manner, you should request (in writing) a Record of Employment (ROE) from UBC Payroll at least two weeks prior to your last working day.

From experience, the best plan is to apply for EI at their office on the first day of your leave (or as soon as possible). You can apply either in-person or on-line. If you apply in person, the nearest office to UBC is located at:

Vancouver (10<sup>th</sup> Avenue) Human Resource Centre of Canada  
125 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue East  
Vancouver, British Columbia, V5T 1Z3

Take along a proof of employment (e.g., a recent pay stub). Your EI application will not be complete, however, until you submit your Record of Employment (ROE) from UBC Payroll, which is processed after the start of your leave. Once you receive the ROE, you must add it to your file at EI. Although your EI claim will not be processed until your ROE is in the file, the processing date will typically be earlier if you file first and add the ROE later. If you apply on-line, you will need to submit a paper ROE to the EI office. This form can be dropped off at the EI office without an appointment.

Note that you will not receive any EI or UBC benefits until the EI claim has been approved (waiting time is up to 28 days). You should contact payroll services within a week of the start of your leave to ensure that they are processing your ROE and to ask how to receive it. If you do not apply for EI within four weeks of the start of leave, you risk losing both your EI and UBC benefits. Once you receive confirmation of EI support, you must send a copy to UBC Payroll services (you can FAX or email a scanned copy).

While you are on maternity or parental leave, you are entitled to leave the country, but you should contact your local EI office when you do. If you wish to work part-time during *maternity leave*, your EI benefits will be deducted dollar for dollar. If you wish to work part-time during *parental leave*, you can earn a maximum of \$50 per week or 25% of salary (whichever is less) without deduction, after which your EI benefits will be deducted dollar for dollar.

For detailed information on EI benefits and how and when to receive them, see:

[http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/gateways/nav/top\\_nav/program/ei.shtml](http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/gateways/nav/top_nav/program/ei.shtml)

***UBC benefits*** – UBC provides partial salary support on top of EI benefits to faculty that give birth or adopt a child and take maternity and/or parental leave. The benefits provided by UBC are currently (November 2004):

- A birth mother receives a top-up to 95% of salary for the 15 weeks of maternity leave provided by EI.
- A birth mother, birth father, same-sex partner, or adoptive parent is *each* entitled to a top-up to 95% of salary for 10 weeks of parental leave.
- 95% of salary is also provided during the two-week waiting period (served once per claim). If both parents are faculty at UBC, only one parent receives this benefit. A UBC employee will not receive this benefit if the EI waiting period was served by their partner who is not a UBC employee.

If both parents are on faculty at UBC, each is entitled to their parental leave, receiving a UBC top-up for a maximum of 10 weeks per parent.

These leaves can be taken sequentially, or concurrently. For example, partners that are both UBC employees that give birth to a child receive a maximum of 37 weeks at 95% salary (15 weeks maternity leave to mother, 2 weeks waiting period typically served by mother, 10 weeks

parental leave to mother, and 10 weeks parental leave to father). A couple that are both UBC employees that adopt a child receive a maximum of 22 weeks at 95% salary (2 weeks waiting period served by one of the parents, 10 weeks parental leave to one adoptive parent, and 10 weeks parental leave to the other adoptive partner).

Currently, the benefits provided by UBC if you wish to work part-time are unclear.

The following web sites give more detailed information on the UBC leave policy:

<http://www.facultyrelations.ubc.ca/faculty/matleave.htm>

<http://www.facultyassociation.ubc.ca/agreemnt/ca3.htm>

If you are having difficulty resolving your entitlements, contact the Faculty Association, UBC Payroll Services, and/or the Senior Manager of Faculty Relations.

### **Other benefits**

**Medical and other benefits** – While on maternity/parental/adoption leave (paid or unpaid), UBC will continue to pay the employer portion of your benefits (medical, dental, etc.). The employee portions will continue to be deducted from your pay cheques as if your salary were still 100%. You can discontinue some benefits during your leave. Others, like CPP, must continue. After your request for a leave has been received by UBC payroll, you should receive a form from the Leave of Absence Desk asking which benefits you would like to continue. Make sure that you receive and return this form to ensure continued medical coverage.

See the Finance web site for detailed information:

<http://www.finance.ubc.ca/payroll/loa/facultymaternity.htm>

**Tenure and sabbatical clocks** – For tenure-track faculty who do not yet have tenure, the default is to have the tenure clock stopped for one year for each maternity and/or parental leave. This does not mean that you have to delay your tenure decision, however.

Currently, the sabbatical clock is stopped during the period of maternity and/or parental leave.

**Grant information from NSERC and CIHR** – If you have a research grant at the time of maternity/parental leave, you can request that the grant be extended at the current level for a period of up to 6 months (CIHR) or two years (NSERC). Alternatively, you can delay payments while you are on leave or leave your grant payments unchanged. To apply for an extension to an NSERC grant, you must supply to your program officer:

- a letter from you and endorsed by the University of British Columbia (Research Services), specifying your request and the year(s) to be extended
- a budget (justification for the amount requested) endorsed by the University of British Columbia

Further information is available at:

[http://www.nserc.gc.ca/professors\\_e.asp?nav=profnav&lbi=f5](http://www.nserc.gc.ca/professors_e.asp?nav=profnav&lbi=f5)

If you need advice or assistance, contact the coordinator for your grant council at UBC:

<http://www.research.ubc.ca/contacts/people.htm>

***Child care provisions during meetings*** – Grant funds from NSERC, CIHR and SSHRC can be used to cover the costs of child care or babysitting while a nursing mother or single parent is travelling.

Further information is available at:

[http://www.nserc.ca/professors\\_e.asp?nav=profnav&lbi=f3](http://www.nserc.ca/professors_e.asp?nav=profnav&lbi=f3)

<http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/22632.html>

***On campus day-care facilities*** – UBC Child Care Services provides on-campus day care for approximately 332 children aged 4 months to 12 years. The majority of families using these services have at least one parent on staff or faculty. UBC subsidizes this day care by providing the land and physical facilities, amounting to a subsidy of approximately \$1300 per child per year. Nevertheless, the costs of daycare at UBC are substantial. Annual day care costs per child range from \$12,000 at the infant stage to \$7,800 for 3-5 year olds. These costs are offset to some extent by tax deductions for child care.

It is critical that you apply as early as possible for UBC day care (e.g., as soon as you learn that you are pregnant or apply for an adoption). The waiting list is very long, and there is no guarantee that your child will obtain a spot even if they have been on the waiting list for over a year. It is worth stating that you will accept a full- or part-time slot, as children who are within the system part-time have first priority once a full-time position becomes available.

Further information, including other childcare options, is available at:

<http://www.childcare.ubc.ca/>

Tax information regarding child-care deductions is available at:

<http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tax/individuals/resourcekit2003/fs-care-e.html>

<http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/E/pbg/tf/t778/README.html>

### **III. SURVEY OF FACULTY WHO HAVE RECENTLY TAKEN LEAVE**

We conducted an email survey of the 17 faculty (tenure-track) who had taken maternity/parental leave since 1999 within the Faculty of Science. The following information was requested:

Hi,

Were you entirely satisfied with your maternity and/or parental leave(s)?

We are members of an ad-hoc committee in the Faculty of Science charged with making recommendations about how to better support faculty who become parents. We need your feedback to understand what is working well and what needs to work better.

Below, you'll find a short survey. As parents ourselves, we know you are busy, but please try to find a few minutes to provide us feedback. We would like to receive your feedback by Tuesday October 19.

Comments will be used anonymously in any reporting.

Thanks for your time!

Mark Greenstreet, Nancy Heckman, Gail Murphy, and Sally Otto (Chair)

----- Survey on Parental Leave -----

1. What were the start and end dates of your parental and/or maternity leaves?
2. What were the birth/adoption dates related to those leaves?
3. Please describe your teaching load during the year on which you were on leave relative to your normal teaching load.
4. Please describe any issues that arose when you requested/negotiated your leave.
5. Did your department provide any support during your leave? (i.e., research support, etc.) What types of support did you receive? Were those types of support helpful? What other types of support would have been helpful?
6. Did you have any difficulty finding out information about how parental and/or maternity leaves works? Please describe any difficulties encountered.
7. Did you experience any problems with UBC about your leaves? (e.g., pay) Please describe any problems encountered.
8. Is your partner on faculty or staff at UBC? Did your partner take leave? If so, can you provide their name so we can ensure we have followed up with this survey? If not, why not?
9. Did you experience any difficulties transitioning back to full-time work after your leave? (e.g., daycare) Please describe any problems you encountered.
10. Any other comments?

Fourteen responses were received, including a response from a person that had taken an earlier leave and had been forwarded the survey. The comments and recommendations are incorporated below.

#### IV. SURVEY OF DEPARTMENT HEADS

We conducted an email survey of nine heads of departments within the Faculty of Science. The following information was requested:

Dear department heads,

John Hepburn asked the four of us to form an ad-hoc committee to report on how maternity and parental leaves are working within faculty of science and make recommendations for possible policy changes. We have contacted all faculty who have taken such leaves recently and asked for their input. We are now contacting you as department heads to request your feedback as well.

The Dean has requested that we prepare a report by mid-November. If you could respond to the short survey below by Nov. 1, that will be very helpful. We understand that all department heads are very busy. If you are not able to respond within a week, if you could let us know when you plan to reply, that will help us in our planning.

All feedback will be used anonymously in any reporting unless a particular individual makes a specific request for their input to be treated otherwise.

Thanks in advance for your comments,  
Mark Greenstreet, Nancy Heckman, Gail Murphy, Sarah Otto (chair)  
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1. What expectations do you have of a faculty member who is going to take maternity/parental leave?
2. Do you have a policy on maternity/parental leaves in your department (formal or informal)? If so, can you describe the policy?
3. How is teaching negotiated for a faculty member going on maternity/parental leave?
4. Do you negotiate with the faculty member to use salary replacement funds to help the faculty member continue research obligations while on leave? If so, can you characterize the kinds of deals that have been struck. If not, why not?
5. What issues do you face when a faculty member goes on maternity/parental leave?
6. Do you have suggestions as to how maternity/parental leave could be improved for the faculty member and for the department?

Eight responses were received. The comments and recommendations are incorporated below.

## V. WEAKNESSES OF THE CURRENT POLICIES

***Maternity and parental leave*** – Information received by prospective parents about maternity/parental leave policies is often inaccurate or obsolete. Three sources of misinformation are (i) outdated web-sites, (ii) inaccurate advice among faculty, and (iii) different interpretations of current policy among staff. Parents that we surveyed were unaware of the 2002 change in UBC policy that entitled both birth parents and their partners to separate 10-week parental leaves. This information gap has led faculty to lose benefits to which they were entitled.

Another obstacle arises when applying for EI and obtaining an ROE from UBC. The recommended time-line described above (section II) should minimize the chance of losing benefits and reduce the waiting time until the first pay cheque arrives. In the past, a parent lost benefits because they did not apply for EI until after they had received their ROE, which was weeks after the birth of their child.

However, even under the best circumstances, there is a one-month delay before a faculty member receives their salary benefits because of the processing time of claims at EI.

A gap in the current policy has been felt by adopting parents, who are entitled to a maximum of 12 weeks of leave, compared to the 27 weeks provided to birth mothers. Given the critical importance of early bonding between parents and their adopted children, the emotional needs of many adopted children, and the complex process of adoption, it is the opinion of this committee that the current policy is inequitable towards adopted children (see letter in Appendix).

***Teaching and administrative load after maternity/parental leave*** – There is currently no policy guiding department heads and faculty on appropriate teaching loads after a maternity/parental leave. It is inappropriate and potentially illegal (<http://www.labour.gov.bc.ca/esb/igm/esa-part-6/igm-esa-s-51.htm>) to ask a faculty member to teach the courses that they would have taught while on leave in addition to their normal post-leave teaching load. Unfortunately, this has happened in the past. Furthermore, in the absence of a clear recommendation, the teaching and administrative loads assigned to parents have depended on exactly when a child was born.

While many department heads have negotiated fairly and in good faith with respect to teaching and administrative loads, guidelines and a recommended policy are clearly needed.

***Research support during and after maternity/parental leave*** – In reality, most faculty parents continue to perform some research and teaching duties while on leave, including submitting grant proposals, reading student papers and theses, meeting with graduate students and technicians, and attending key meetings (e.g. Ph.D. and M.Sc. exams). Neglecting these duties, even for a few months, can have a long-term negative impact on the research careers of faculty, their students and post-docs, and their colleagues. Faculty parents do not want their careers to grind to a halt.

Many department heads have committed research support to faculty on maternity/paternity leave to ensure the functioning of the faculty's research group/lab. As one head put it, the "fields and

competitors do not remain static while they are on leave, one wants to make sure they do not lose research momentum.” Just under 30% of the respondents had requested and received research support; approximately 15% of the respondents said that they could have used support but did not request it. Although the amount of support provided was variable, in every case it amounted to a small fraction (roughly 1/3) of the 100% salary replacement received by the department. The funds were used to support graduate students and towards the salary of a technician or post-doctoral fellow, ensuring that research labs ran smoothly in the absence of the faculty and that students were well supervised. The research support has been greatly appreciated by the recipients.

Unfortunately, research support is negotiated on an *ad hoc* basis (if at all), with no clear guidelines.

***On campus day-care facilities*** – The most pressing problem facing UBC parents is that the day-care facilities at UBC are not sufficient to fulfill the need. Currently, there are only ten infant spots for the entire faculty, staff, and student body of UBC. Thus, it has become nearly impossible to get care for an infant by 6 months, the point at which UBC parental care benefits end. This problem is exacerbated for families with twins and for families that arrive at UBC with immediate day-care needs. The difficulty of getting children into UBC day care adds stress and worry to faculty with young children. Problems accessing convenient day-care facilities and the costs associated with childcare reduce the attractiveness of UBC to potential employees and create faculty retention issues. Access to day-care was the number one cited concern of the parents surveyed.

## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

### *Maternity and parental leave* –

⇒ Recommendation 1: Clarify the benefits currently available to faculty
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There is substantial misinformation about what maternity/parental leave benefits are currently available. We recommend that:

- UBC web sites be scoured for obsolete web-pages detailing maternity/parental leave benefits.
- Policies regarding couples who both work at UBC be made explicit.
- Policies regarding same-sex couples be made explicit.
- Policies regarding sabbatical leave be made explicit.
- Clear statements should be made about who to consult in case of an ambiguity in the policy.
- This document (or a modified version) should be produced and approved by Faculty Relations for widespread distribution. The document should be placed on the web-site of the Faculty of Science, distributed to all department heads and human resources staff at UBC. Each head of department should share the document with any faculty member who announces a pregnancy or adoption.
- In no case should a department head or other UBC employee suggest that maternity/parental leave is inappropriate or inconvenient.

We recommend only two substantive changes to the maternity/parental leave package granted to faculty by UBC:

⇒ Recommendation 2: Lobby for the establishment of a new *adoption leave* policy.

Because of the time that it takes to go through adoption procedures and because of the special needs of children who are adopted, we recommend that a special leave (akin to maternity leave) be established and called an “adoption leave.” A faculty member who is the primary caregiver for a newly adopted child would be eligible for adoption leave. This leave would top-up EI benefits to 95% salary and would be in addition to the ten weeks of parental leave currently available to each adoptive parent as well as the two week paid waiting period. A similar adoption leave policy is in place at the University of Toronto:

[http://www.provost.utoronto.ca/English/page\\_6\\_5649\\_1.html](http://www.provost.utoronto.ca/English/page_6_5649_1.html)

⇒ Recommendation 3: Lobby to amend the maternity/parental leave policy to allow for part-time leaves.

Part-time leave would be ideally suited for many faculty, as it would acknowledge and allow for the many aspects of a research career that cannot be put on hold. While seemingly an obvious recommendation to put in place, part-time work would, in most cases, eliminate EI support, which is currently a precondition for receiving UBC benefits. Nevertheless, part-time work is likely to be in the best interests of many faculty, because it would allow them to stretch out their leave over a longer period of time. Furthermore, there is an advantage to UBC in allowing part-time leaves because such leaves formally allow faculty members to continue managing their labs and guiding their graduate students. We thus recommend that UBC consider allowing part-time leaves.

Initial discussions with Tammy Brimmer, Senior Manager, Faculty Relations suggest that allowing part-time leaves might well be possible, as long as the faculty member is willing to forfeit the EI benefits that are not received when taking a part-time leave rather than a full-time leave. One possibility would be to use research support funds from the Department (Recommendation 5) towards EI replacement in those cases where a faculty member would prefer a part-time leave. These possibilities should be pursued further with Faculty Relations and the Faculty Association.

Addressing recommendations 1 – 3 will ensure that everybody has equal knowledge of their benefits and will reduce the stresses currently faced by adopting parents.

#### ***Teaching and administrative load after maternity/parental leave –***

⇒ Recommendation 4: Establish a policy that the annual teaching and administrative loads should be reduced in proportion to the period of maternity/parental leave.

According to the *Employment Standards Act*, employers are required to provide a parent returning from leave with a “comparable position” in terms of both job duties and status (<http://www.labour.gov.bc.ca/esb/igm/esa-part-6/igm-esa-s-54.htm>). We interpret this Act to mean that the balance of duties of a faculty member should not change following

maternity/parental leave. Thus, we recommend that the total time spent teaching and performing administrative tasks per year be reduced in proportion to the amount of leave taken.

For example, if a faculty member normally teaches two courses in the spring and none in the fall, but takes a six-month maternity/parental leave from January to June, the faculty member should expect to receive teaching release from one course. The Department Head and the faculty member would then have to negotiate how the course load for the second course would be handled. This might entail switching the term of a course, offering a summer course, or using the time for professional development.

As another example, if a faculty member normally teaches two courses in the fall (their total course load) and takes 10 weeks of paid parental leave followed by 4 weeks of unpaid parental leave from June through August, the teaching load of the faculty member should be reduced by 14/52.

How and when these teaching releases are taken should be negotiated with the department head (or their appointed representative). Note that research support (see Recommendation 5) could be used towards additional teaching release in cases where this is desirable.

***Research support during and after maternity/parental leave –***

⇒ Recommendation 5: For faculty on maternity/parental leave, we recommend that 2/3 of their remaining salary after teaching buy-outs be allocated to supporting the research of that faculty member.

One of the biggest concerns of this committee, as well as of the Heads and parents surveyed, is to ensure that the research career of a faculty parent is not unduly harmed by a maternity/parental leave. Although faculty cannot be expected to perform research during their leave, this does not mean that their research program must stop while on maternity/parental leave. We recommend that departments provide financial support to faculty members to facilitate their research and graduate training activities while they are caring for their new child. For example, in cases where the faculty performs lab and/or field work, hiring a post-doctoral fellow or research associate to continue his/her research during the leave would reduce the disruption to their careers. Similarly, hiring a post-doctoral fellow or research fellow to ensure that graduate students get proper guidance and training will reduce the disruption to graduate training while a research supervisor is on leave. Financial support will reduce the disruption to the research program of faculty parents and will allow smoother transitions onto and off of the leave, thus reducing the risk that a faculty member loses their competitive edge because he/she has a child.

Currently, a department receives 100% of the salary of a regular faculty member on maternity/parental leave. This money is used to hire sessionals to teach the courses that would otherwise be taught by the person on leave (approximately \$10,000 per course). We recommend that 2/3 of the remaining salary accrued by the department be funnelled back to support the graduate training and research performed by the faculty member. Our survey of Department Heads suggests that there is widespread support for this notion, with only one dissenting opinion (who was concerned about the negative impact on the department's budget, which is kept afloat by salary replacement).

There are a number of possible uses of research funds that merit consideration. Support of graduate teaching could come in the form of a post-doctoral fellow or research fellow to provide guidance and technical advice. Support could also come in the form of a graduate research assistantship. An RAship paid by the department would allow a graduate student to catch up on critical one-on-one time with their supervisor before or after the leave. Support could also be used to buy out more teaching, especially in those cases where leaves span two semesters or where the leave only entitles teaching release from a fraction of a course. Additional teaching release will help faculty get their research back on track after a maternity/parental leave and will also allow them more one-on-one time with their graduate students. The funds could also be used towards teaching and professional development (e.g., for instructors). Another possibility is to use these funds to compensate the lost EI payments if a faculty member wishes to take part-time leave (see Recommendation 3).

The form, amount, and timing of research support should be negotiated with the department head (or their appointed representative). In those rare cases where a faculty member receives funding from sources external to the department, we recommend that the support be provided directly by the Dean of Science.

While the above provides a guideline, further support might be needed in certain cases. In particular, the above policy might not be sufficient to cover the teaching duties of instructors when maternity/parental leave straddles the semester boundaries. Additionally, until an adoption leave policy is put in place (Recommendation 2), heads should keep in mind that parents who have recently adopted get relatively little leave and might need more teaching and research support following the adoption. In these cases, heads of department should consider allocating 100% of the remaining salary towards support of the faculty member on leave.

One issue with this recommended policy is that the benefits are proportional to a faculty member's salary. Salary levels are highly variable among departments, but the need for research support during parental and maternity leave is not necessarily correlated. Furthermore, those faculty who arguably need the most support (i.e., recently hired faculty) have lower salaries, on average, and would gain less from this policy. The Dean and Heads should consider whether research support could be averaged across those individuals taking maternity and/or parental leaves within the Faculty of Science.

***Dispute Resolution –***

⇒ Recommendation 6: Establish a mentor and ombudsperson within the Faculty of Science to advise and guide faculty who are planning to take maternity/paternity leaves and to help resolve any disputes that arise.
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We recommend that a faculty member who is familiar with the maternity/parental leave policies and who has taken such leave in the past be appointed as a Faculty of Science mentor/ombudsperson. Such a person would guide faculty about to take leave through the paperwork and policies associated with maternity/parental leave. Furthermore, the mentor/ombudsperson would help resolve any disputes that arise in negotiations between the faculty member and their head of department. Currently, if a dispute arises regarding

maternity/parental leave, there is no clear recourse for the faculty member. We believe that a mechanism in place for resolving disputes will reduce disparities and increase the feeling of good-will and equity in the Faculty of Science.

The mentor/ombudsperson could also work with staff of the Faculty of Science to ensure that Recommendation 1 (Clarify benefits) be put in place and that information (especially web-pages) be updated as appropriate.

### ***Sabbatical clock –***

⇒ Recommendation 7: The sabbatical clock should not be stopped during maternity/parental leave.

Sabbaticals ensure that faculty keep up with changing information and technologies in their field. Parents are no different in their need to update their skills and knowledge. The release from teaching and administrative duties provided by a sabbatical are, arguably, even more important to the careers of faculty who have recently had children. The long-term research success of faculty parents would be strongly aided by allowing parents to accrue time towards a sabbatical while on maternity/parental leave.

The sabbatical clock is not stopped at several comparable Universities, including:

- University of Toronto ([http://www.provost.utoronto.ca/English/page\\_6\\_5649\\_1.html](http://www.provost.utoronto.ca/English/page_6_5649_1.html))
- University of Waterloo (<http://www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy14.htm>)
- University of Alberta (<http://www.ualberta.ca/~aasua/agreements/Agr/Art24.htm>)
- Dalhousie University (<http://www.dfa.ns.ca/CA30047.html>)

### ***On campus day-care facilities –***

⇒ Recommendation 8: Lobby for more day-care slots on campus so that any faculty or staff who wishes to place their child at UBC day care can do so.

This was the number one recommendation made by the parents surveyed. On campus day-care facilities provide the following benefits:

- Enabling mothers to breastfeed their infant after returning to work.
- Reducing travel time by ensuring that children are near parents' place of work.
- Reducing parental stress levels, allowing parents to reach their children easily in case of emergency.
- Building a sense of community among UBC employees.

These benefits greatly aid in the transition back to work following maternity/parental leave.

⇒ Recommendation 9: Lobby the Faculty Association so that child-care benefits become a priority in negotiations with the administration of UBC.

Members of the Faculty Association might be willing to bear a small cost to ensure that faculty members with young children have access to free (or highly subsidized) child-care. If faculty are

not willing to bear such a cost, there might be creative ways to offer long-term low-interest loans so that parents can spread out child-care payments over the course of their employment.

Subsidized child-care provides the following benefits:

- Increasing the attractiveness of employment at UBC.
- Improving the ability to retain faculty at UBC who might otherwise be unable to make ends meet.

These benefits increase the ability of UBC to attract and retain the best possible faculty.

## **VII. PRIORITIES**

Of the nine recommendations made above, five must be dealt with at a higher administrative level than the Faculty of Science (Recommendations 2, 3, 7, 8 and 9). In these cases, we suggest that Dean of Science and/or this committee lobby the appropriate parties (see sample letters in the Appendix; further letters can be developed upon request). Of the remaining four policies, we rank the recommendations in the following order, from highest to lowest priority:

- Recommendation 1: Clarify benefits
- Recommendations 4 and 5: Establish guidelines for teaching release and research support
- Recommendation 6: Establish a Faculty of Science mentor/ombudsperson who specializes in maternity/parental leave policies

Following these recommendations would minimize the stress and negative impact of maternity/parental leave on the careers of faculty members and on the graduate training conducted within the Faculty of Science.

The committee suggests that these recommendations be acted upon by April 1, 2005, and that this committee revisits the progress made and problems remaining one year after the date of this report.

## APPENDIX

In the following, we provide draft letters to be sent, upon approval, by the Dean of Science or the sub-committee (as appropriate) to address recommendations 2, 8 and 9.

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### Recommendations 2: Adoption leave policy

Dear Dr. Martha Piper (or other senior administrator, as appropriate),

We are writing as members of the Faculty of Science *ad hoc* committee to address policies concerning maternity/parental leave at UBC. UBC provides a generous maternity/parental leave package that is greatly appreciated by the faculty. However, in reviewing the current policies, we identified issues surrounding the adoption leave benefits to which we wish to draw your attention. We are writing to you as President of the University of British Columbia in the hopes that the policies could be officially amended.

Faculty members at UBC who adopt do not enjoy the same leave benefits as those who give birth. Currently, a birth mother can receive up to 27 weeks of leave at 95% salary, while an adoptive mother or father receives a maximum of 12 weeks<sup>1</sup>. The transitions involved in an adoption are substantial for all involved. In many cases, the adopted child has substantial emotional needs. The freedom to nurture the child and to establish strong family ties early on following adoption is critical.

Parental leave benefits to birth families have increased at UBC over the last five years, but they have gotten worse for adopting families. The reason is an historical oddity. UBC maternity and parental leave benefits are tied to the benefits provided by Employment Insurance (EI) of British Columbia. Prior to 2001, EI provided only 10 weeks of parental leave at partial pay, but EI also recognized the special needs associated with adoptions and granted adopting families an additional 5 weeks of leave. For adoptive families, UBC matched the 5 weeks of additional leave, the 10 weeks of parental leave, and paid for EI's 2 week waiting period, ensuring that adoptive families had access to 17 weeks of leave at 95% pay. In 2001, EI benefits improved substantially, with 35 weeks of parental leave at partial pay to be split within a family. At this point, EI equalized the parental leave benefits to birth and adoptive families; everybody had access to the full 35 weeks, and there was no longer an additional 5 week leave. At this point, UBC eliminated its top-up for the 5-week period, dropping its benefits to adopting families from a maximum of 17 weeks at 95% salary to 12 weeks.

As faculty representatives, we are concerned with the inequities between the benefits provided to birth families and those provided to adoptive families. We recommend that UBC institute a new "adoption leave" akin to a maternity leave for any faculty member who is the primary care giver of a newly adopted child. This adoption leave policy should be similar to the

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<sup>1</sup> UBC tops-up 10 weeks of parental leave and pays 95% of a faculty's salary during the 2-week "waiting period" mandated by Employment Insurance (EI).

current maternity leave. Such adoption leave policies are already in place at comparable Universities in Canada<sup>2</sup>.

The federal government is changing laws to ensure that Canadians treat adopted children the same as they do birth children. As soon as the law recognizes that a person has been legally adopted, there can thereafter be no distinction between that person and one who was not adopted. At present, the law in all provinces and territories of Canada is very simple and humane: adopted children are identical to birth children in the eyes of the law. Thus, if a biological child has access to their parent for a period of leave, so too should an adopted child. Currently, this is not true at UBC. For example, a woman on faculty who gives birth to a child can take 27 weeks of leave at 95% salary, while the same woman who adopts a newborn can take only 12 weeks.

We urge UBC to develop and recognize an adoptive leave policy. The costs should be minor, as relatively few faculty adopt children. However, the policy would make a clear statement that UBC is committed to family-friendly policies for its faculty and in equitable treatment for all children.

As members of the Faculty of Science ad hoc committee, we would be happy to help provide more information if it would be of any assistance.

Sincerely,

Dr. Sarah Otto, Chair (Department of Zoology)  
Dr. Nancy Heckman (Department of Statistics)  
Dr. Mark Greenstreet (Department of Computer Science)  
Dr. Gail Murphy (Department of Computer Science)  
?? Dean John Hepburn (Faculty of Science)

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<sup>2</sup> University of Toronto: [http://www.provost.utoronto.ca/English/page\\_6\\_5649\\_1.html](http://www.provost.utoronto.ca/English/page_6_5649_1.html)  
University of Calgary: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/UofC/departments/HR/academic/leaves.html>

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## Recommendations 8 and 9: Child-care opportunities and benefits

Dear Dr. Martha Piper (or other senior administrator, as appropriate),

We are writing as members of the Faculty of Science *ad hoc* committee to address policies concerning maternity/parental leave at UBC. We surveyed faculty members within the sciences who had recently taken leave and discovered that their number one concern was child-care upon returning to work. We are writing to you as President of the University of British Columbia to encourage you to improve child-care opportunities at UBC.

Currently, UBC Child Care Services provides on-campus day care for approximately 332 children aged 4 months to 12 years. The majority of families using these services have at least one parent on faculty. The University subsidizes this day care by providing the land and physical facilities, amounting to a subsidy of approximately \$1300 per child per year. The vast majority of the day care costs are borne, however, by the families themselves. Annual day care costs per child range from \$12,000 at the infant stage to \$7,800 for 3-5 year olds (<http://www.childcare.ubc.ca/>).

As the demography of UBC faculty has changed, so too has the need for childcare services. A large fraction of newly hired faculty are women. Plus it is becoming increasingly rare for a faculty member (male or female) to have a partner who stays at home full-time with children. The University needs to rise to the challenge of this changing demographic and create a work-place environment that is family-friendly.

Day care opportunities are sorely lacking. This is an odd omission for the following reasons:

- Providing day care at UBC enables young mothers to continue to breast feed their infant after returning to work.
- Providing day care at UBC reduces travel time by ensuring that children are near parents' place of work.
- Providing day care at UBC reduces parental stress levels, allowing parents to reach their children easily in case of emergency.

The number of day care slots at UBC is so limited that it is nearly impossible to get care for an infant by 6 months, the point at which UBC parental care benefits end. Indeed, there are only ten infant spots for the entire faculty, staff, and student body of UBC. The difficulty of getting children into UBC day care is a well-known headache for faculty with young children. Problems getting access to convenient day-care facilities reduces the attractiveness of UBC to potential employees and creates faculty retention issues. Finally, the costs of childcare are so large that it is simply difficult for some faculty to make ends meet in Vancouver.

The most pressing problem is that the day-care facilities at UBC are not sufficient to fulfill the need. The University to ensure that enough day-care slots are available so that any faculty who wishes to have their child at UBC day care can do so.

As members of the Faculty of Science ad hoc committee, we would be happy to help provide more information if it would be of any assistance.

Sincerely,

Dr. Sarah Otto, Chair (Department of Zoology)  
Dr. Nancy Heckman (Department of Statistics)  
Dr. Mark Greenstreet (Department of Computer Science)  
Dr. Gail Murphy (Department of Computer Science)  
?? Dean John Hepburn (Faculty of Science)

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## Recommendations 8 and 9: Child-care opportunities and benefits

Dear Dr. Elliott Burnell,

We are writing as members of the Faculty of Science *ad hoc* committee to address policies concerning maternity/parental leave at UBC. We surveyed faculty members within the sciences who had recently taken leave and discovered that their number one concern was child-care upon returning to work. We are writing to you as President of the Faculty Association to urge the Faculty Association to negotiate for improved child-care opportunities at the University of British Columbia.

Currently, UBC Child Care Services provides on-campus day care for approximately 332 children aged 4 months to 12 years. The majority of families using these services have at least one parent on faculty. The University subsidizes this day care by providing the land and physical facilities, amounting to a subsidy of approximately \$1300 per child per year. The vast majority of the day care costs are borne, however, by the families themselves. Annual day care costs per child range from \$12,000 at the infant stage to \$7,800 for 3-5 year olds (<http://www.childcare.ubc.ca/>).

As the demography of UBC faculty has changed, so too has the need for childcare services. A large fraction of newly hired faculty are women. Plus it is becoming increasingly rare for a faculty member (male or female) to have a partner who stays at home full-time with children. The Faculty Association needs to rise to the challenge of this changing demographic and negotiate with the University to create a work-place environment that is family-friendly.

While the Faculty Association has done an admirable job negotiating family-friendly policies, day care benefits are sorely lacking. This is an odd omission for the following reasons:

- Providing day care at UBC enables young mothers to continue to breast feed their infant after returning to work.
- Providing day care at UBC reduces travel time by ensuring that children are near parents' place of work.
- Providing day care at UBC reduces parental stress levels, allowing parents to reach their children easily in case of emergency.

Furthermore, there are many possible bargaining points. The number of day care slots at UBC is so limited that it is nearly impossible to get care for an infant by 6 months, the point at which UBC parental care benefits end. Indeed, there are only ten infant spots for the entire faculty, staff, and student body of UBC. The difficulty of getting children into UBC day care is a well-known headache for faculty with young children. Problems getting access to convenient day-care facilities reduces the attractiveness of UBC to potential employees and creates faculty retention issues. Finally, the costs of childcare are so large that it is simply difficult for some faculty to make ends meet in Vancouver.

The most pressing problem is that the day-care facilities at UBC are not sufficient to fulfill the need. The Faculty Association should bargain with the University to ensure that

enough day-care slots are available so that any faculty who wishes to have their child at UBC day care can do so.

The faculty should also be surveyed for ways to ease the financial burden on families with young children. Members of the faculty association may be willing to bear a small cost to ensure that faculty members with young children have access to free (or highly subsidized) child-care. If so, the Faculty Association should make child-care benefits a priority in negotiations with the administration of UBC. If the members are not willing to bear such a cost, there might be creative ways to offer long-term low-interest loans so that parents can spread out their day-care payments over decades of employment.

As members of the Faculty of Science ad hoc committee, we would be happy to help provide more information if it would be of any assistance. We look forward to working with the Faculty Association to ensure that the faculty of UBC are best able to meet all of their obligations – to their employer and to their families.

Sincerely,

Dr. Sarah Otto, Chair (Department of Zoology)  
Dr. Nancy Heckman (Department of Statistics)  
Dr. Mark Greenstreet (Department of Computer Science)  
Dr. Gail Murphy (Department of Computer Science)  
?? Dean John Hepburn (Faculty of Science)