



Davis Division Academic Senate

Request for Consultation Responses

DRAFT Graduate Studies Policy - Leave Accommodation for Graduate Students

March 2, 2015

The Office of Graduate Studies has produced a draft policy to guide leave accommodation for Graduate Students. The draft policy is provided for campus review and discusses process and funding issues. Please note: The Academic Senate Chair has notified the Office of Graduate Studies that divisional review requires a minimum of six weeks. Please submit your responses through the request for consultation system. A related matter to the draft policy is the "Principles for Instituting Parental and Family Leave for Graduate Students and Postdoctoral Scholars: Recommendations for General Parental and Family Medical Leave Accommodation Principles." The principles were developed by Graduate Council and endorsed by the Executive Council. During discussion of the principles, Executive Council had questions about the details of the funding mechanism. The draft policy proposal from Dean Gibeling provides information on the funding mechanism and process for implementing Graduate Council's guidelines.

Council of School & College Faculty Chairs (AGRICULTURE)

March 9, 2015 8:53 AM

The CAES FEC is strongly supportive of appropriate leave policy for GSRs. This is a needed and welcome policy. However some concerns were expressed over funding and logistics.

One concern is that smaller individual grants (i.e. commodity, NSF or USDA) do not provide the resources to accommodate loss of a student for a significant length of time without significant harm to the overall project. One solution is to rethink this policy so all GSRs come from the Leave Accommodation Fund perhaps funded by an increase in benefit rates.

Another concern is that many graduate groups have “50%” GSRs funded at a lesser % but at a higher pay step. Per this policy, these GSRs are simply at a disadvantage because of a previous choice of the grad group to pay X% at Y step, even though this may be an equivalent pay to a 50% GSR at a lower step. Either the graduate groups need to normalize to all have a 50% GSR level or this policy needs to follow \$'s instead of %GSR.

Another concern is with the Additional Unpaid Leave for Serious Illness or Baby Bonding. The policy states the leave must be taken continuously, however many couples share infant care and this policy would not allow for split responsibility of baby bonding.

Council of School & College Faculty Chairs (BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES)

February 27, 2015 11:17 AM

The CBS FEC is concerned with the impact on small research programs in the event of multiple pregnancies in the same lab (which has happened). We suggest that there be more options for socializing costs to defray the impact of multiple pregnancies on a research program that has limited grant funding.

Council of School & College Faculty Chairs (ENGINEERING)

February 13, 2015 9:57 PM

Response continued on next page.

Thursday, February 12, 2015

To: Andre Knoesen, Chair
Davis Division of the Academic Senate

From: College of Engineering Faculty Executive Committee

SUBJECT: Draft Graduate Studies Policy - Leave Accommodation for Graduate Students

The Executive Committee is overall supportive of the direction taken by the proposed policy. One point of disagreement is the implied burden on individual PI projects that support students that are in need of leave accommodation — see fifth bullet in Policy Highlights. Regardless of the financial expense being allowed by the funding agency, the cost of the leave to the research project must be considered significant for most grants; especially given that the project deliverables and overall research goals are not likely to change due to the circumstances. It therefore is better practice to always charge paid leave to a centralized campus account, which can be funded from, e.g., indirect costs. Such distributed cost model will make individual research projects and PIs less sensitive to the accommodation of paid leave.

Council of School & College Faculty Chairs (LS: MATH/PHY SCI)

February 9, 2015 3:26 PM

The Letters & Science executive Committee discussed this proposal in our February meeting. We have three brief comments:

1. It was not clear whether graduate students would be expected to continue to pay tuition during a leave. We felt strongly that they should not.
2. We would like to understand in more detail where, under the New Budget model, the money for TAs on leave would come from. How much of this would be centrally provided, how much would come from the colleges' budgets, and how much, if any, would come from departments? For example, if a TA took a four week leave for childcare or a six week leave for child-bearing, who would bear the expense of a replacement TA during that period?
3. A minor point: the cover letter says that "This policy was developed to meet three goals," but then proceeds to list four items.

Council of School & College Faculty Chairs (MANAGEMENT)

February 27, 2015 11:45 AM

The policy seems reasonable. We have a few questions that you might want to address before proceeding.

1. What is the expected cost of the proposal? Perhaps this is irrelevant if the accommodation is required by law. However, it would be useful to identify accommodations that are legally required.
2. The proposal reads as though that costs of the leave accommodation will be borne by the unit where the leave request emanates (unless funding sources do not allow this). Do funding sources typically preclude funding leaves (would seem odd if the leave is required by law)? In practice, how will the costs be split between unit and central funding?
3. Will the proposal have unintended consequences? The proposal effectively increases the cost of hiring grad students with a higher probability of needing a leave accommodation. Will these grad students who might need leave accommodation be materially less likely to secure employment? Perhaps this is an issue that should be monitored at implementation, but this would require careful tracking of hiring practices before and after implementation of the proposal.

Council of School & College Faculty Chairs (MEDICINE)

February 26, 2015 4:53 PM

The SOM Faculty Executive Committee concurs with these policies.

Graduate Council

March 3, 2015 8:35 AM

Response continued on next page.

March 2, 2015

RFC: DRAFT Graduate Studies Policy – Leave Accommodation for Graduate Students

Graduate Council met on February 6, 2015 and considered the aforementioned Draft Graduate Studies Policy – Leave Accommodation for Graduate Students.

Following discussion, by formal vote, Graduate Council unanimously supported the proposed draft policy for Leave Accommodations for Graduate Students.

GC recognized and supports the need for more comprehensive leave accommodations to not just TA's but also GSRs and IAs. GC concurred that the initial draft of the policy looks satisfactory, for the first iteration draft.

At the same time, GC voted to request that the university administration consider the creation of a centralized funding mechanism to cover all GSR leaves described in the policy, irrespective of whether extramural GSR funding sources allowed these paid leaves. Some members of GC noted that students might be hesitant to ask for paid leaves if their PI's grants were being charged when no work was being committed towards the grant's objectives, even if the funding agency allowed for the paid leave. One possibility that GC discussed was increasing the GSR benefit rates for extramural funding to contribute to this centralized fund.

GC also endorses, as appropriate, an academic policy it drafted in June 2014, concerning "Stop the Clock" for the purpose of assisting graduate students, who have extraordinary parenting or familial responsibilities, with maintaining "continuing student status" and facilitating a return to full participation in course work, research and training. This could include extending benchmark deadlines for such events as preliminary and qualifying exams, thesis submission, etc. These "Stop the Clock" provisions should be extended and made available by academic policy to all graduate students.

Sincerely,



Kyaw Tha Paw U, Chair
Graduate Council

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C: Gina Anderson, Academic Senate Executive Director

Planning & Budget

March 4, 2015 11:05 AM

CPB reviewed and discussed the DRAFT Leave Accommodation for Graduate Students policy. The committee supports having a policy, but is concerned that the proposed implementation strategy is not well thought out and in fact, may be potentially harmful to graduate students seeking family leave.

First, CPB notes that student benefits for graduate students on federal grants have already been paid for by the PI. Second, CPB notes that the policy as proposed can lead to bias; some faculty may not want to hire a graduate student that is expecting a child. This identifies the importance of and need for centralized funding. Finally, the proposed policy conflates academic considerations (advancement to candidacy) with administrative considerations (payment of benefits).

CPB would like clarification regarding (1) who pays for TAs when they need to be replaced due to leave since they are hired quarter by quarter; (2) how many graduate students request leave each year; and (3) how much will this new policy cost faculty and their grants. CPB notes that the Graduate Council policy was not included with this new draft policy.