Medical School Policy on Faculty Parental Leave

Effective date: July 1, 2009

I. Eligibility

This policy applies to all full-time benefits eligible faculty members at the School of Medicine.

II. Availability of Parental Leave

When an eligible faculty member, or that faculty member’s spouse or domestic partner, becomes the parent of a child, either by childbirth or by placement of a child for adoption or foster care, the faculty member may, upon written request to his or her Department Chair (or designee), be approved to take parental leave as provided below. The request should be made as soon as reasonably possible after the need for a leave becomes known in order to minimize the administrative burden of ensuring adequate coverage or adjustment.

In approving such request, the Department Chair may consider such factors as the timeliness of the request, the impact of absence on patient care, research and other departmental operations, and the overall productivity and contribution of the faculty member. At the discretion of the Department Chair, a plan may be established to ensure all responsibilities are fully discharged or covered upon the return of the faculty member.

If a faculty member and his or her spouse or domestic partner are both employees of the University and are otherwise both eligible for parental leave under this Policy, either one, but not both, may take the leave provided in Section IV.

Only one such parental leave may be taken in a fiscal year unless extenuating circumstances exist and the Department Chair determines it is in the best long-term interest of the department to approve additional time. Requests may be approved for prospective absences only. Unused time under this policy may not be carried forward from one fiscal year to the next and added to the period of time available each year under this policy.

III. Agreement

Any agreement for a parental leave under this Policy shall be in writing. The agreement shall include a certification by the faculty member that the purpose of the leave will be to serve as the primary caregiver for that child during the period of leave approved and be done in accordance with the process and provisions of the FMLA. “Primary caregiver” indicates one who has significant responsibility for the care of a child such that attempting to regularly fulfill those responsibilities will interfere substantially with properly carrying out one’s duties as a faculty member.

IV. Salary, Benefits and Responsibilities During Leave

A faculty member who takes parental leave under this Policy shall retain the same salary (base plus supplemental pay) and benefits status that he or she would have had if not on leave, and shall be relieved of his or her normal duties and responsibilities for teaching, research and
clinical activities during the period of leave as agreed to and approved by the Department Chair. Absences under this policy may affect the amount or timing of any incentive compensation provided under a departmental compensation plan.

Paid leave may be granted under this policy for up to three months, however the combined period of absence used under Salary Continuation and this policy may not exceed three months in any given fiscal year. Alternatively, an eligible faculty member may request a reduction in the academic workload at full pay for up to three months, subject to the WUSM Probationary Period Suspension Policy, Section C and Department Chair approval.

V. When Taken

At the option of the faculty member, the parental leave provided by this Policy may be requested immediately commencing with the birth, foster placement or adoption, or up to two months following the birth or adoption.

VI. Effect on Probationary Period

(a) Refer to the School of Medicine’s Suspension of the Probationary Period policy.

VII. Medical Incapacitation

Any parental leave taken under this Policy shall be in addition to any leave granted thru the Salary Continuation policy because of medical incapacitation.

VIII. FMLA

The benefits afforded faculty under this Policy are intended to be consistent and not in conflict with rights afforded under the FMLA. Any leave taken under this Policy, to the extent that it also qualifies for FMLA leave, is intended to count as FMLA leave, and the written agreement should clearly state that intention. If a faculty member elects to take parental leave pursuant to the FMLA, his or her Department Chair may require the faculty member to substitute the paid leave provided in the Policy during the period the faculty member has designated as FMLA leave, and this requirement should be confirmed in writing.

IX. Additional Leave

The parental leave provided under this Policy is intended to describe the minimum level of benefits available for faculty members to whom it applies. Nothing in this Policy shall be construed to prevent a Department Chair or Dean from extending leave or other benefits more generous than provided in the Policy in order to accommodate the family needs of an individual faculty member when deemed to be in the best interests of the Department.

X. Appeals Process

While the goal of this program is to align departmental and faculty member interests, it is possible that disagreements may occur. Individual faculty concerns will be presented in writing
to the Department Chair. Should individual faculty/department concerns continue, requests for review can be presented through the School of Medicine Faculty Compensation Plan Appeal Process.