

## **Policies for Family Care for Faculty**

(Approved by the Academic Council on December 11, 2001)  
(revised and approved, May 9, 2006)

The goal of these policies is to help MIT faculty have productive careers and still meet their family responsibilities. Since family care takes different forms at different ages and different family constellations, the policies take these differences into account.

### **I - Parental Support Policy**

Note: This policy makes consistent across the Institute elements of the parental support policies that already exist within each School.

**Preamble:** The goal of this policy is to provide release time from some academic responsibilities to allow a parent to spend significant time, energy, and focus on the care of and responsibility for a child during the first year of its arrival in the family. This means spending a majority of the time one would normally spend on academic work with the child.

Therefore:

Using this release time for other purposes, such as to start a business or for extensive professional travel or other increased outside professional activities does not meet this goal.

Faculty requesting parental support under this policy will be asked to signify that they believe in the goal of the policy and will abide by it.

**Policy:** Faculty members, regardless of gender, who wish to spend the majority of their academic time on the care of and responsibility for a newborn child or a child newly placed with them for adoption or foster care will be released from teaching and administrative duties for one semester at full pay, but they will continue to be expected to fulfill their thesis-advising responsibilities and sustain their research program.

Institute rules on outside professional activities for full-time faculty will remain in force for those on such release. Also, it is expected that, normally, they will not increase their usual outside professional activities.

Faculty members can take advantage of this policy in any term they choose within one year after the arrival of a child. Those seeking such release should notify their department heads in writing that they will spend the majority of their academic time on the care of the child over the period of the release. Such notification must be made as far in advance of the leave as possible (normally one semester's notification is required) so that steps can be taken to cover the faculty member's teaching obligations.

For policies on tenure and family-care issues, see 3.2.1 Extension of Tenure Clock for Childbearing and 3.2.2 Part-Time Appointment with Tenure for Family Care. For

information on unpaid leaves associated with family or medical situations, see Section 7.5.6 Parental Leaves of Absence Without Pay and the *MIT Personnel Policy Manual* Section 4.5 Leaves Provided under the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993.

## **II - Extension of Tenure Clock for Childbearing**

**Preamble:** The goal of this policy is to take away the career disadvantage that women currently face from pregnancy, childbearing, and nursing an infant. For example, travel is restricted by all of these aspects of a woman's biological role just at the time that attendance at conferences may be particularly important. Or, another example, women who work in areas near hazardous material may be hampered in carrying out their research.

**Rationale:** The problem that this policy is meant to address is the following:

In the year in which this policy was adopted (2001), 52% of women in the School of Engineering had children: 58% of the tenured women and 42% of untenured women. In the Sloan School, 29% of the women had children: 50% of the tenured women and 9% of the untenured.

Nationally, 82.5% (US Census Bureau, 1997) of women aged 40-44 have borne a child. The final Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on Family and Work, 1990, showed that 82% of male faculty have children compared to 53% of female faculty who responded to the survey.

Together, these statistics suggest that women faculty at MIT face more constraints than male faculty on the choice to have children. One such constraint is the biological demands of childbearing, as noted above. Because the biological clock and the tenure clock often run in synchrony, a particular constraint on women is to meet the joint requirements of these clocks. The proposed goal of the policy is to make it more possible for a woman faculty member to bear a child without losing the opportunity for tenure.

The Institute has always allowed faculty to request from the Provost an extension of the tenure clock for compelling circumstances. This policy allows adoptive parents, if warranted by the circumstances, to make such a request. It also recognizes that there may be occasions when a faculty member whose partner has borne a child is faced with such circumstances.

The present policy, however, is meant to acknowledge the biological role of women and is not meant to lead to "clock creep": a slow extension of the tenure clock to 9 years.

**Policy:** In recognition of the effects that pregnancy and childbirth can have on a woman's ability to perform all the tasks necessary and expected to achieve tenure, a woman who bears a child during her tenure probationary period will have that period automatically extended by one year. A second one-year extension for the birth of any additional child (or children) will be granted by the Provost upon request. As in all tenure cases, a tenure review can take place prior to the end of the probationary period and that possibility should be assessed annually.

In addition, in recognition of the time and energy that a child newly placed for adoption or foster care can take, parents, regardless of gender, may request such an extension from the Provost, who will grant the extension if special circumstances warrant it.

Normally, a faculty member whose partner has borne a child may request such an extension from the Provost, who will grant the extension if special circumstances warrant it.

In all cases, two years is the maximum extension allowed by this policy.

This policy will be carefully monitored and will be evaluated and reviewed at the end of a five-year period [2011].

See also Sections 3.2.2 Part-Time Appointment with Tenure for Family Care and 7.5.3 Faculty Teaching Relief.

### **III - Part-Time Appointment with Tenure for Family Care**

**Policy:** Normally, tenured faculty members, regardless of gender, who need time for family care (children, partners, elders) may request a reduced-time (but not below 50-percent time), reduced-pay appointment for one or more semesters up to five years, with possible renewal. Details of the arrangement must be made with the department head and require the approval of the dean of the School. Faculty will be asked to specify the nature of the family care that is needed.

Faculty who take advantage of this policy will reduce their outside professional activities proportionately.

This arrangement is limited to family care and does not apply to any other reason for requesting a part-time appointment.

See also Sections 3.2.1 Extension of Tenure Clock for Childbearing and 7.5.3 Faculty Teaching Relief.

### **Implementation and Oversight**

The Chairs of the Gender Equity Committees in each of the Schools will oversee the implementation of these policies. In connection with these policies, they will have two primary responsibilities:

1. To educate the relevant people in their Schools about the existence of these policies and ensure that new faculty and new department heads receive this information.
2. To gather information on how these policies are working so as to monitor and evaluate their effectiveness. Particular attention will be paid to the policy extending the tenure clock for childbearing.

The Chairs will report annually to the Diversity Council, the Faculty Policy Committee, and the Academic Council.