

JANUARY 2004

## PARENTAL LEAVES

There have recently been a number of questions raised with regards to our Maternity/Paternity/ Unpaid leave policy. You can access our policies at <http://www.uoguelph.ca/HR/hrmanual/501.htm>.

For clarification, Brendan Soye, Human Resources, informed UGFA that the University terminology and EI's terminology conflict. For example, what the University refers to as "*unpaid parental leave*", EI calls "*parental leave*". So if we first clarify the differences in terminology, that may assist in understanding the policies.

a) Employment Insurance calls it "*Maternity benefits*", and only birth mothers and surrogate mothers are eligible. The University refers to this as "*Paid Parental Leave*" and all parents are eligible (birth mother; adoptive mother; biological and adoptive father).

b) Employment Insurance calls it "*Parental benefits*", and biological and adoptive parents are eligible to receive. The University refers to this as "*Unpaid Parental Leave*" and biological and adoptive parents are eligible.

c) Employment Insurance provides "*Maternity benefits*" to birth mothers for 15 weeks (2 week waiting period). The University provides "*Paid Parental leave*" to all parents for 17 weeks, during the 2 week waiting period we provide 95% of normal weekly earnings and top up EI benefits to 95% of normal weekly earnings for the remaining 15 weeks. Evidence of EI application and receipt of benefits must be provided in order for the "top-up" to be provided.

d) Although "fathers" at the University are eligible to receive the above 17 weeks of "*Paid Parental Leave*", they must commence the paid parental leave within the 17 week period that includes the date of birth or adoption. Therefore, for fathers, if it is their intent to utilize the University's paid parental leave provisions, they must do so within the initial 17 weeks.

e) What does a birth mother receive? As a University employee, a birth mother is no different than any other parent - although EI differentiates, the University does not. But if we try to work through the different groups of "parents", the following would apply:

*Birth Mother*: is entitled to be off work for a total of 52 weeks during which time the following is provided: for the first 17 weeks, she receives 95% of her normal earnings during the 2 week EI waiting period, and then for the remaining 15 weeks of EI "Maternity benefits", receives top-up to 95% of her normal salary from the University (referred to as our "*Paid Parental leave*"). At the end of the 17 weeks, the mother has the right to commence an "*unpaid parental leave*" (*Univ.term*) and receive an additional 35 weeks of EI benefits (no University top-up to 95% of salary is provided during this period. However, in the case of Faculty/Librarians, the University will provide a supplement equal to 25% of the weekly EI benefit for up to 33 weeks for "birth mothers" and 16 weeks (33 weeks less the 17 weeks of previously received EI/Univ. benefits, for all other parents).

e) What does a birth father receive? As a University employee, a birth father is no different than an adoptive parent. Although EI differentiates, the University does not.

Adoptive parents and biological fathers are entitled to the following:

The University provides the same "*Paid Parental Leave*" as outlined above for birth mothers. However EI benefits are not provided for the same amount of time, therefore the amount of top-up provided by the University increases as follows:

a) EI will only provide "*Parental benefits*" to *adoptive parents and biological fathers* for a period of 35 weeks (includes 2 week waiting period). If an adoptive mother at the University commences her "*Paid Parental Leave*" (*our term*) upon receipt of the child, then the 2 week waiting period is at 95% of her normal salary as with a birth mother; the remaining 15 weeks would be topped up to 95% of her normal salary, however the 15 weeks would be deducted from the 35 weeks of "*parental benefits*" (*EI's term*) she is entitled to receive. Therefore she would only receive another 20 weeks of EI benefits during her University "Unpaid parental Leave ". As per the UGFA negotiated settlement, an individual will receive from the University a supplement equal to 25% of the weekly EI benefit for up to 20 weeks.

b) for birth/adoptive fathers the same applies as outlined for adoptive mothers. The University's "top-up" provision must commence in the 17 week period that includes the date of birth or adoption.

## **FACULTY REFERENDUM ON STUDENT RATINGS**

In December, faculty were asked to vote on whether student ratings should be posted on the web. Sixty percent of the faculty who voted were against the proposal. This result is a solid indication that our members do not support posting student ratings on the web. These results have been shared with CSA President, David Hornsby.