

FA FRIDAY FACULTY FOCUS – May 12, 2023

The Lingering Inequality of our Profession – Pregnancy and Birth Leave

When I was pregnant and gave birth to my daughters in the early 2000s I experienced the clashes of having natural physiological events (births) run up against the rigidity of contractual work (“the semester”). Both births created complications for myself, my students, my dean, and ultimately my Vice President of Academic Affairs. I was unable to plan my pregnancies to coincide with the summer break (a challenge common with “geriatric” mothers like myself), so the decisions of when to leave, how to leave, who would replace me, when I would come back, and how/ if I would get paid all had to be made collectively.

In some ways our current pregnant faculty have it slightly easier than I did. In other ways, their experience is worse. What is inarguable is that in a society that does not provide guaranteed paid pregnancy and birth leave*, those employees who contribute to the continuation of our species often need to decide exactly how financially they want to take their “because I’m the one with a uterus” penalty. Even though pregnant people in the United States do have some limited protections, for most women in other countries our policies appear downright barbaric.

I was fortunate that I got pregnant after 1993 when my place of employment and the longevity of my employment qualified me for The Family and Medical Leave Act, which meant that I could take a leave and still have employment to come back to. California’s Paid Family Leave enacted in 2002 extended Disability Insurance to cover pregnancy-related “disabilities” and reasonable accommodations upon return (this extension came too late for me). This essentially broadened the ADA to include covering challenges in working due to size (e.g. late stages of pregnancy) and birth recovery. It was a solution of sorts - however, identifying every pregnant person as disabled, even temporarily, is problematic.

My first birth took place in April of 2001. Because I was relatively new, and because I had exhausted my sick leave with an earlier pregnancy-related illness, I was looking at entering parenthood without an income. Don Milanese, the current VPAS, called me excitedly several weeks before my due date with “a plan” – they would simply take out of my wages what it cost them to pay part time faculty to take over my courses (since I was already teaching online, the assumption was that I could continue to teach those courses so my replacements would be limited to my face to face classes). “Don’s Plan” has now been codified into California law – in 2019 AB2012 required districts to provide up to 50% of “differential pay” for parental leave. This allows for pregnant employees (this includes both full time and part time faculty) to have some predictable income during their leave. The Faculty Contract outlines this in Article 11E.

The limited financial security, while welcome compared to unpaid leave, still discriminates against pregnant people in multiple ways. Firstly, it requires the exhaustion of sick leave (when the pregnant person is arguably “not sick” but engaging in a natural biological act). This leads to two disadvantages a) not having enough leave for future illnesses - giving birth doesn’t protect you from COVID, the flu, cancer, etc., (nor does it protect your offspring from illnesses that you must care for) and b) it affects the amassing of sick days

towards retirement. Sperm contributors in our employ do not face a financial penalty for their participation in the continuity of the species.

Secondly, there is a retirement penalty for differential pay – it impacts the accrual of service credit with CalSTRS or CalPERS. I did not experience this penalty under “Don’s Plan”, so my service record actually reflects no absences from employment (no parental leave at all).

These laws reflect deeply held cultural beliefs based on the erroneous assumptions that women are dependents, not wage earners. That women are the secondary income earners, not the primary. That all women are attached to men who out-earn them. In an institution which embraces equity, diversity, and indeed gender equality – we know these sexist assumptions are deeply embedded in the institution of male dominance. Giving any credibility to them is unacceptable.

We have achieved almost perfect gender ratios – 51% of our full-time faculty identify as female (Fall 22 CCCCO Datamart), 51% of our part-time faculty identify as male. We should not stand for this form of gender discrimination that so disproportionately affects our employee base. We should push our country, our state, and our district to do better.

(For those who would argue that reproduction is a personal choice, you are right. Not all employees choose to reproduce. However, it is inarguable that we all benefit from those who reproduce and give life to our future oncologists, pilots, elder care attendants, etc. To embrace punitive policies on those who do reproduce is therefore harmful not only to those who are pregnant, but to our society as a whole)

* “71 countries provide less than 3 weeks of leave, 6 have 3–13.9 weeks, 5 have 14–25.9 weeks, and 41 offer 26 or more weeks of leave”

<https://www.axios.com/2023/02/28/majority-of-countries-guarantee-paid-paternity-leave-but-not-the-us>



Scholarships for the Great Teachers Seminars

FACCC is excited to offer 12 scholarships for new (*full-and part-time faculty teaching less than five years*) and all part-time faculty currently teaching in California Community Colleges to attend [the California Great Teachers Seminar](#). The scholarship will cover the cost of the following: seminar registration, program materials, four-night double occupancy accommodations, all meals, and travel.

Reading for the Week: And Over at the UCs.... “Report: Applications for UC System Fall 2023 Saw General Declines”

<https://www.diverseeducation.com/student-issues/article/15352083/report-applications-for-uc-system-fall-2023-saw-general-declines>



Commonly Used Forms:

Most of our useful forms can be found at the District website found either under HR:

<http://districtazure.clpccd.org/hr/faculty.php>

Or under Business Services/Payroll:

<http://districtazure.clpccd.org/business/guide/forms.php>

Commonly used forms in the latter area include Direct Deposit Change request, W4 update, faculty service reports, absence report, leave request, etc. The list goes on.

**Meet your Faculty Association President, Dave Fouquet,
Mathematics, Chabot College**



I graduated from UCLA in 1984 with a BA in mathematics and went on to earn my MA at UC Santa Cruz in 1986. From there I served a four-year stint as a commissioned officer in the US Navy, which included three years on the guided missile frigate USS Gary (FFG-51)— a tour which included two deployments to the Persian Gulf. [*Side note: On April 18, 1988, I was stationed on the bridge during Operation Praying Mantis, which was a retaliatory strike against Iran for its mining attack on sister frigate USS Samuel B. Roberts (FFG-58). You can read about Operation Praying Mantis in Wikipedia.*]

After the Navy, I got back to teaching by working as a part-timer at Cañada College in 1991-92. I was hired Full-time at Chabot in 1992. In 2000, Charlotte Lofft (our previous FA President) recruited me to join the FA's Negotiations Team, to perform crucial pay comparisons and budgetary analysis during a contentious bargaining cycle. One of my proudest moments from that 2002 contract was when Tom de Wit and I demonstrated to the Fact Finder how the District could (and would) implement pro-rata pay for Part-time faculty. I became the FA's Vice President, at Chabot, in 2001. Since that time, I've participated in the negotiation of six contracts, the last two as FA President.

When not running the FA, I love reading and writing. Since the early '90's, I've also been the primary musician for a Morris dance side (Deer Creek Morris). For those uninitiated, Morris is a ritual English folk-dance tradition that involves brightly clad dancers with bells on their shins, vigorously capering about waiving hankies, clashing sticks, etc. The accompanying photo was taken during our recent Mother's Day appearance at Ardenwood.

See past Faculty Focus Newsletters www.clpcfca.com

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