Memorandum
Academic Council Executive Committee
Fairfield University

TO: Academic Council

FROM: Irene Mulvey AC Executive Secretary and
Susan Rakowitz, General Faculty Secretary

DATE: May 9, 2014

RE: Language for maternity leave policy in documents

At the Council meeting on April 28, the Council discussed revisions to the language on the maternity leave policy. Since language appears in the Faculty Handbook, the Journal of Record and the Benefits Plan Overview, the Council asked the General Faculty Secretary and the AC Executive Secretary to carefully review all documents to make sure they clearly and consistently articulated the changes recommended by the Subcommittee on Maternity Leave Policy and reflected the current maternity leave policy, and that they did not include unnecessary redundancies. Our recommendations are below. Recall that the current policy provides a semester's leave from teaching, but indicates that once the recovery period mandated by the Pregnancy Disability Leave Act has passed, the faculty member will continue to fulfill her other responsibilities. The Subcommittee’s recommendation was to provide a semester without teaching and service.

RECOMMENDATION 1.

MOTION. The Council recommends that the General Faculty approve amending the Faculty Handbook [page X] as shown [deletions in strikethrough and additions in bold and underlined]:

“Faculty members who take Fairfield University’s maternity leave whose maternity disability leave occurs at a time during the semester that would interfere significantly with their teaching (normally considered to be a period of absence of three or more weeks) shall be released by the appropriate Dean from teaching and service responsibilities for the semester. During that time, full pay and benefits will be continued. Faculty will be expected to work on projects and to fulfill other responsibilities congruent with their role at the expiration of their maternity leave.”

Rationale. This change revised the text to be consistent with Fairfield’s current policy, In addition, release from service responsibilities is added as recommended by the subcommittee. Furthermore, this change makes the 04/27/1992 entry in the Journal of Record on Faculty Maternity Policy redundant and so this JoR entry should be removed (as the AC voted to do on 4/28/2014.)

RECOMMENDATION 2:
MOTION. The Council recommends the FSC work with the administration to revise the language in the Benefits Plan Overview as follows:
Fairfield University complies with all Federal and Connecticut State laws relating to pregnancy and leaves of absence for childbirth and adoption. In lieu of unpaid time off for pregnancy and childbirth outlined in the Family and Medical Leave Acts (FMLA), a faculty member may elect to take one semester of paid maternity leave from teaching and service responsibilities.

The specific semester of teaching and service release must be determined in consultation with the faculty member’s department chair and dean. In accordance with the Pregnancy Disability Leave Act, the normal recovery period following vaginal childbirth is presumed to be six weeks; following a caesarean section the normal recovery period is presumed to be eight weeks. Outside of the recovery period, faculty on maternity leave will be expected to fulfill their other academic responsibilities, again as determined in consultation with the faculty member’s chair and dean.