



CREATING WORK-LIFE FLEXIBILITY:

A TOOLKIT FOR CHAIRS, DEANS, AND COMMITTEES
CHARGED WITH EVALUATING FACULTY

The Toolkit is a comprehensive package
of innovative work-life policies and programs
for tenured and tenure-track faculty
at Boise State University.

A silhouette of a person wearing glasses and a plaid shirt, sitting at a desk and looking at a wall of multiple computer monitors. The monitors display various images, including a starry night sky, a landscape with a bright sun or moon, and a close-up of a textured surface. The person's hands are on a keyboard and mouse.

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I. INTRODUCTION

INVESTING IN FACULTY IS A LONG-TERM PROPOSITION. It is likely that over the course of their careers nearly all faculty, regardless of family status, will at some point need the flexibility to adjust the balance between their academic and personal lives for the birth or adoption of a child, personal illness or disability, or illness of a spouse or partner, parent, or other relative.

The excellence of Boise State University depends on attracting and retaining the best and brightest scholars to its ranks. Creating work-life flexibility in all departments – by creating and implementing policies, resources, and cultural practices to assist faculty in integrating workplace and personal needs – is a crucial aspect of this process. It is a necessary response to the changing demographics of those who are now the majority of new doctoral recipients in the U.S. – women and men who want to have both a satisfying and successful work and a personal life.

A faculty member's relationship with his or her department chair or dean is significant when it comes to accessing the family accommodation policies for which they are eligible. As the front-line administrators for departments, it is the responsibility and obligation of all department chairs and deans to be knowledgeable about these policies and practices and to promote and support them. The use of many of Boise State University's family accommodation policies and laws is an entitlement for all eligible faculty men and women, not an area for negotiation.

Likewise, committees charged with evaluating faculty performance need a clear awareness of policies related to career flexibility and must fully support their use. Supporting faculty career flexibility does not require a lessening of expectations about faculty performance. Rather, it means enabling faculty to meet their full potential within a flexible framework that accommodates their personal lives.

II. CREATING WORK-LIFE FLEXIBILITY IN ACADEMIC DEPARTMENTS

Ten Essential Steps for Department Chairs

1. Make work-life flexibility a major priority and goal for your department. Departments are flexible when they offer and support policies, resources, and cultural practices that allow faculty to successfully integrate work and personal needs.
2. Review and assess your department's current practices and climate around work-life flexibility.
3. Become conscious about unconscious bias issues concerning care-giving and gender.
4. Know the family accommodation policies and laws that apply to your faculty – most faculty learn about them from their department chair.
5. Actively highlight, advertise and support your department's work-life flexibility policies and procedures for all faculty – this helps assure faculty that they won't be arbitrarily disadvantaged in promotion, advancement or compensation.
6. Make work-life flexibility accommodations the standard for conducting business in your department rather than viewing them as exceptions or "special privileges."
7. Maintain "zero tolerance" for discriminatory and disparaging comments and behaviors. Make it clear to all faculty that hostile comments and behaviors are unacceptable and violate the rules governing professional conduct. See BSU Policy Manual (1060 & 1070) (www.boisestate.edu/policy/I_governance_legal.shtml)
8. Be proactive about recruiting and hiring diverse faculty for your department, including those who have temporarily slowed down their career for family care-giving reasons.
9. Establish and maintain transparency in the promotion and tenure process, and advocate for your faculty who have used family accommodation policies through the promotion and tenure process, e.g., communicating with deans, personnel committees, and outside reviewers.

10. Implement small changes that can have a significant impact on the culture of your department, e.g., family friendly scheduling for meetings and teaching schedules, acknowledging the diversity of faculty needs.

Recruitment and Hiring

- Actively highlight your department's work-life flexibility policies, benefits, and resources for faculty recruits and new faculty.
- Provide or make use of dual career assistance, child care support, and relocation assistance when recruiting finalists.
- Communicate that your department is a place where faculty with current or potential care-giving responsibilities can thrive. Some things that may make the department more attractive in this way are:
 - » Clear, well-publicized policies and procedures for evaluation and promotion when accommodation or tenure clock extension policies are used
 - » Mentoring resources for faculty parents about combining work and family
- For full toolkits on recruitment and hiring for a diverse faculty, and a specific focus on gender issues, see the University of Washington's Faculty Recruitment Toolkit (www.washington.edu/diversity/avpfa/toolkit/index.shtml) and the University of Michigan's Faculty Recruitment Publications (http://sitemaker.umich.edu/advance/faculty_recruitment_publications).

Advancement and Tenure

- **Open communication:** The more information faculty who have used accommodation or tenure clock extension policies are given about their progress toward advancement or tenure, the greater the likelihood that they will perceive the environment as open and the chair as someone they can trust.
- **Transparency in the promotion and tenure process:** A common perception of the promotion and tenure process is that it is not transparent or consistent. To allay concerns about the process, departments should develop and maintain transparent and consistent criteria for granting tenure and promotions and inform their faculty of these expectations.

- **Information to review committees:** Review committees should be directed to focus on quality and total quantity of scholarly productivity rather than time since degree or job hire so that faculty who slow down due to personal obligations are not unduly penalized in the peer review process.

Best Practices

- **Departmental climate change** rests on wide-scale acknowledgement and acceptance of the diversity of faculty family structures, situations and needs. For example, dispelling myths about lack of seriousness among faculty who extend the clock to meet family needs, or nursing mothers who bring babies to conferences or presentations will go far in fostering a culture of work-life flexibility.
- **Scheduling for flexibility:** Scheduling of faculty meetings, classes, seminars, and social events should take into account the competing and often simultaneous demands of work and care-giving for faculty trying to excel in both realms. Whenever possible, departmental events should be scheduled between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. (during regular child care provider hours) to allow faculty parents to meet more easily the dual needs of work and family. A small change of this type can have a large impact on departmental culture, feelings of inclusion among faculty, and faculty success in the academic arena.
- **Mentoring faculty:** Early career faculty can benefit greatly from mentoring by department chairs or senior faculty about combining work and family. To counter feelings that work/life balance is a unique situation to be figured out alone, faculty need to hear from and see others who are able to successfully balance their professional and personal lives without negative repercussions.
- **Accommodations of pregnancy and nursing mothers:** During pregnancy many women may benefit from or need modifications to their position. In addition, a federal provision in the Fair Labor Standards Act allows new mothers "reasonable break times" to express milk during the workday for up to a year after her child's birth.

For more information about lactation rooms and breaks go to <http://hrs.boisestate.edu/pdfs/NursingMothersAmendmentSummary.pdf>

- **Accommodations following leave:** Chairs should work closely with faculty members to determine course and service assignments that may be more manageable during the semester of their return. Make use of the workload policy (Policy 4560) to offer flexibility regarding teaching, research, and service commitments.

For full policy details see: www.boisestate.edu/policy/policy_docs/4560_WorkloadForTenuredFaculty.pdf



III. WORK-LIFE FLEXIBILITY POLICIES AND LAWS

See Section V for best practice case examples.

Policies

SICK LEAVE (POLICY 7260)

Birth mothers and individuals with personal illness or injury may use paid sick leave. Full-time faculty have one day of sick leave per contract month credited for each full year of service to the university (e.g. faculty on a nine-month contract accrue nine days of sick leave per year). If accrued leave is exhausted, shared leave may also be requested for a personal health condition or for a family member's serious illness, disability, or death. For extended absences due to illness or injury, the employee may receive short-term or long-term disability income benefits.

For sick leave policy details, see: www.boisestate.edu/policy/policy_docs/7260_sick-leavefaculty.pdf

SHARED LEAVE POLICY (POLICY 7220)

An employee may receive up to 160 hours of donated leave per year in the event of absence due to their own serious health condition or for an immediate family member's illness, disability or death. These donations come from employees who have accrued vacation leave.

For shared leave policy details, see: www.boisestate.edu/policy/policy_docs/7220_sharedleave.pdf

LEAVE AFTER BIRTH, ADOPTION, OR FOSTER CARE PLACEMENT (POLICY 7230)

In addition to the paid leave for eligible state employees, Boise State University grants partial or full relief of duties for mothers and fathers after the birth, adoption, or foster care placement of a child. Under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) an employee may request paid or unpaid leave for up to 12 weeks during a 12-month

period. An employee taking leave need not take such leave continuously and may take it on an intermittent basis, or by reducing their scheduled work hours. Paid leave is used to cover the absence within the first 6 - 8 weeks after birth (depending on the type of birth) or as directed by the attending physician.

For full policy details, see: www.boisestate.edu/policy/VII_personnel.shtml

TENURE CLOCK EXTENSION (POLICY 4370)

An extension to the tenure probationary period may be granted where a faculty member's progress toward achieving tenure is impeded by things such as responsibilities with respect to childbirth or adoption, significant responsibilities with respect to elder or dependent care obligations, disability or chronic illness, or circumstances beyond the control of the faculty member. Multiple extension requests may be granted. All requests for probationary period extensions must be made prior to commencing with a tenure or contract renewal review. If a probationary period extension is approved, a reduction in scholarly productivity during the period of time addressed in the request should not prejudice a subsequent contract renewal decision. Any faculty member in probationary status more than the standard four (4) or five (5) years because of extensions will be evaluated as if the faculty member had been on probationary status for the standard four (4) or five (5) years.

For full policy details, see: www.boisestate.edu/policy/policy_docs/4370_FacultyTenureProcedures.pdf

WORKLOAD FOR TENURE-TRACK AND TENURED FACULTY (POLICY 4560)

The regularly assigned duties of all members of the faculty consist of teaching, scholarship, and service each academic year. The distribution of effort among teaching, scholarship, and service may vary from faculty member to faculty member and from fall semester to spring semester. However, the distribution of effort should always balance the scholarly and service interests of individual faculty members with their responsibility to deliver academic programs of high quality. This variation in the distribution of faculty effort is desirable because it allows optimization of faculty contributions to professional and institutional goals.

For full policy details, see: www.boisestate.edu/policy/policy_docs/4560_WorkloadForTenuredFaculty.pdf

FACULTY DUAL CAREER PROGRAM (POLICY 4240)

Increasingly, applicants for faculty positions are members of dual career households. Further, both individuals are apt to be seeking professional positions in higher education. Thus, decisions to accept a University position are often made by couples based on the availability of employment for both individuals in areas related to their respective fields of expertise. Recognizing this changing recruitment pattern, Boise State University has developed these procedures to assist department chairs and administrators when the primary hire for a faculty position is contingent on identifying a faculty position for the partner.

For full policy details, see: www.boisestate.edu/policy/policy_docs/4240_FacultyDual-CareerProgram.pdf

FACULTY VOLUNTARY PHASED RETIREMENT PROGRAM (POLICY 4470)

Boise State University offers eligible faculty who plan to retire the option of phasing into complete retirement by various combinations of partial appointments that amount to less than half-time. A phased retirement appointment will be for a specific period of time not to exceed three academic years; however, individuals may negotiate an extension of the phased retirement agreement after satisfactory service during the previous period.

For full policy details, see: http://www.boisestate.edu/policy/dev/policy_docs/4470_FacultyVoluntaryPhasedRetirementProgram.pdf

Laws

FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE ACT OF 1993

The federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) entitles eligible employees to take up to twelve workweeks of unpaid leave in a 12-month period for the following family and medical reasons: (1) the birth and care of a new child; (2) the adoption of a child or for new foster care responsibilities; (3) to care for a spouse, child, parent or an employee's own serious health condition; and (4) any "qualifying exigency" arising out of the fact that the employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent is a covered military member on "covered active duty." Eligible employees are entitled to take up to twenty-six (26) workweeks of unpaid leave during a single 12-month period to care for

a covered service member with a serious injury or illness (“military caregiver leave”). An eligible employee may take leave on an intermittent or reduced schedule basis, within a 12-month period. The 12-month period is a “rolling” calendar year, except for military caregiver leave (the 12-month period begins on the first day the eligible employee takes FMLA leave for this reason). During a covered leave period, the University maintains its portion of group health insurance coverage.

For full details, see: www.dol.gov/compliance/laws/comp-fmla.htm



IV. WORK-LIFE FLEXIBILITY AND EVALUATION

Frequently Asked Questions

This section provides answers to questions important both to committees charged with evaluating performance, and to individuals whose performances are being evaluated.

1. **Is a tenure clock extension always one year? May a faculty member request a one semester extension?**

Tenure clock extensions are always one year because tenure materials are reviewed annually.

2. **How many times may an individual faculty member request and receive a tenure clock extension?**

There is no limit to the number of times an extension may be requested.

3. **If a faculty member’s workload is negotiated to accommodate personal or professional needs, but no tenure clock extension is granted, what if any adjustments should committees make in evaluating performance?**

Workloads for all faculty are negotiated. When negotiating workloads, pre-tenure faculty members should be certain that their workloads allow for appropriate performance in the areas on which they will be evaluated. Evaluations are based on performance; an adjusted workload is not a consideration. Reduced workloads are addressed in the next question.

4. **Should the annual evaluation of a faculty member on a reduced workload mention the reduced workload and specify the workload without mentioning the reason for the adjustment?**

Annual evaluations should specify the faculty member’s workload. If the faculty member is on a reduced workload, the evaluation should note the adjustment in expectations. The reason for the reduced workload is not a consideration and should not be mentioned.

5. **If an applicant has accommodations for disability, what if any adjustments should committees make in evaluating performance?**

Qualified individuals with disabilities may receive reasonable accommodations that enable them to fulfill their essential job responsibilities. Once these accommodations are made, employees with accommodations should be held to the same performance standards as any other employee.

6. **If a faculty member who might be eligible for a tenure clock extension has not requested and received such an extension prior to the start of tenure review, should the tenure committee adjust its expectations about productivity?**

Expectations are not adjusted in such situations.

7. **May a pre-tenure or tenured faculty member request postponement of a regular annual evaluation?**

Annual evaluations are not postponed. They often vary in length and specificity depending on the faculty member's particular situation (on sabbatical, on a reduced workload, on FMLA, etc.).

8. **May a tenured faculty member request postponement of a Periodic Review of Tenured Faculty (BSU 4380)?**

Periodic Review of Tenured Faculty may be postponed. The faculty member should forward a written request for postponement to the department Chair (or assigned supervisor), specifying the extenuating circumstances that warrant a postponement. The Chair forwards the request, along with a recommendation, to the Dean. The Dean forwards the request, including recommendations from both Chair and Dean, to the Provost, who notifies the faculty member of the decision.

9. **If a pre-tenure faculty member is granted a leave for the terminal year of employment, is the tenure probationary period extended?**

There is no automatic extension of the tenure probationary period. BSU Policy 4370 governs decisions about an individual faculty member's tenure probationary period. That policy specifies that "All requests for probationary period extensions shall be made prior to commencing with a tenure or contract renewal review."

Language to Use in Situations Related to Faculty Career Flexibility

(adapted from University of California/Davis guidelines)

A. **Suggested language for use when either candidates or departments are soliciting letters of support for tenure or promotion:**

"A tenure/promotion action at this time is considered within normative time because s/he/I received approval to extend the tenure clock in accordance with Boise State University policy 4370. This policy requires that the dossiers of individuals who received such extensions be evaluated without prejudice, as if the faculty member had been on probationary status for the standard four (4) or five (5) years."

B. **Suggested language for department chairs and committees to use when a faculty member applies for tenure and promotion after receiving a tenure clock extension:**

"Professor _____ received approval for a tenure clock extension of ____ year(s), in accordance with Boise State University policy 4370. This policy requires that the dossiers of individuals who received such extensions be evaluated without prejudice, as if the faculty member had been on probationary status for the standard four (4) or five (5) years."

V. CASE EXAMPLES – BEST PRACTICES

Steven Forest, Assistant Professor, Childcare Provider

Dr. Forest is a second-year Assistant Professor. He is married and his wife also works full time. Dr. Forest tells the university that he and his wife are expecting a child in October, and wants to know what choices he has for leave when his son is born. The chair tells him about the family accommodation policies and laws, and assures Dr. Forest that the university is supportive of his desire to care for his son. He is entitled to make use of the policies he is eligible for, and will not be disadvantaged when his case is reviewed for tenure. Dr. Forest will equally share in the care of his son and is therefore entitled to request a one-year extension of the tenure clock with the presumption of approval. His tenure review will take place in year 6 instead of year 5, but his work will be evaluated as if he did not use an additional year, and his teaching as if he had taught a full load. Under the FMLA he is also eligible for up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job protected leave and his benefits are maintained.

Maria Garcia, Assistant Professor, Adoptive Parent

Dr. Garcia is a fourth-year Assistant Professor. Her husband is a professor in another department on campus. Dr. Garcia and her husband are adopting a three-year-old child and expect to bring her home in March. Dr. Garcia meets with her departmental chair in December to plan for the arrival of her child and to consider her options for family accommodations. The chair tells her that there are several options available and she is welcome to use any of them freely. She will be eligible for a one-year extension of her tenure clock. She is also eligible to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave in a 12-month period. If her husband is also caring for the child and wishes to take FMLA leave, she and her husband must split the 12 weeks of leave between them. Another option is for her to request an intermittent or reduced schedule.



Sam Summers, Professor, Caregiver for Parents

Dr. Summers, a full professor, has been employed at Boise State University for 17 years. He spent his last sabbatical in Palestine, researching the region's conflicts and economic challenges. Last year his mother developed Alzheimer's disease and his father underwent chemotherapy. In order to care for them, he requested and received a one year leave of absence without pay, including up to 12 weeks of FMLA, and with assurance that he could return to his position at the end of that time. He had the full support of his department. By the end of that year, his father was in complete remission and able to care for his mother, who now resides in an assisted living facility. Dr. Summers applies for another sabbatical, proposing a return to Palestine and counting the year he was on unpaid leave as one of the required "six additional full-years of service" that must be rendered between sabbaticals. Dr. Summers' year on unpaid leave is not a full year of service, however, and may not be counted toward sabbatical.

Janet Johnson, Assistant Professor, Birth Mother

In her third year as a Boise State University tenure track employee, Dr. Johnson informed her department that she was expecting a child in late July. Dr. Johnson received 12 weeks of FMLA leave at the start of the fall semester and negotiated a full workload that included reduced teaching responsibilities throughout the rest of the semester. She did not request the tenure clock extension that her chair had recommended. In her fifth year, she applies for tenure and promotion. Her department indicates some concern about her productivity, but Dr. Johnson reminds them that she has had heavy family responsibilities. Because she has no tenure clock extension, promotion

and tenure committees must evaluate her materials in the same way they evaluate the materials of other candidates. Her teaching will be evaluated as though it were a full load, but if the department committee finds her productivity less than it should be, they could recommend that she withdraw her application and take the sixth year the policy allows to strengthen her application before it goes forward to the college committee.

Lee Lanscombe, Associate Professor, Recovering from Injury

Dr. Lanscombe has been employed at Boise State University for 6 years. Mid-way through spring semester, she is severely injured in a car accident and uses her accrued sick leave, disability benefits, and FMLA for the remainder of the semester for recovery. She continues to require extensive physical therapy throughout the summer and is diagnosed with depression related to the accident's aftermath. In early August, she comes to her departmental chair to express her doubts about being able to handle coming back full-time in the fall semester. After assuring her that her restoration to good health is of the utmost importance, you explore the option of reducing her appointment to .6 FTE for the fall semester. Together, you negotiate what her reduced workload will look like, including teaching, research, and service assignments. Once they have reached an agreement, obtained the necessary approvals, and made arrangements to ensure that departmental commitments are covered, the chair communicates to the rest of the department what will happen and convey your full support for Lee's plan to return to full-time status according to the agreement.



VI. MAKING FLEXIBLE ARRANGEMENTS AT BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY

Tenure Clock Extension

Individuals requesting a tenure clock extension should submit a written request directly to the Provost. See Policy 4370, Faculty Tenure Procedures, VIII.B.

Other Arrangements

For flexible arrangements (for example, arranging a parental leave or requesting a temporary reduction in duties), follow these guidelines in accordance with your Department and College practices:

- Step 1. The individual makes a request to the department chair for a flexible work arrangement. The Department Chair might recommend that the individual consult with the Benefits Manager in Human Resource Services to find out how various arrangements might impact benefits, pay, etc. before meeting to discuss potential plans.
- Step 2. The Department Chair meets with the individual to fully understand the circumstances and need for flexibility, to provide information about options, and to formulate possible arrangements.
- Step 3. The Department Chair develops a written proposal describing the desired arrangements and submits the plan to the Benefits Manager in Human Resource Services for review. The Department Chair may want to consult with the Dean prior to writing and submitting the proposal.
- Step 4. The HRS Benefits Manager works with both the Department Chair and the individual to provide relevant information about policies and the impact of the desired arrangements on the individual's benefits, pay, etc. The Benefits Manager may suggest alternative arrangements based on the individual's circumstances.

- Step 5. After HRS review, the Department Chair submits a written plan (possibly revised after HRS review and further discussion with the individual) to the Dean for approval.
- Step 6. The Dean approves (or disapproves) and submits the plan to the Provost for approval.
- Step 7. The Provost approves (or disapproves) the plan and communicates the decision to the Dean and Department Chair.
- Step 8. The Department Chair communicates appropriate, public elements of the plan to department faculty and staff to inform those who need to know and to indicate support for the individual.

Phased Retirement Arrangements

Follow these guidelines in accordance with your Department and College practices:

- Step 1: The individual makes a request to the Department Chair to consider possible phased retirement arrangements. (When the individual is the Department Chair, he/she would make a request to the Dean to consider possible phased retirement arrangements.) The Department Chair might recommend or require that the individual first consult with HRS Benefits Administration to discuss guidelines for specific retirement plans (PERSI, TIAA-CREF, VALIC) and to find out the impacts of various options on retirement and insurance benefits.
- Step 2: The Department Chair meets with the individual to review the Faculty Voluntary Phased Retirement Program Policy (BSU 4470), discuss the needs and preferences of the individual and Department, and formulate an agreement. A department is under no obligation to grant a phased retirement that is not compatible with its needs.
- Step 3: If the individual has not already done so, the individual meets with HRS Benefits Administration to ensure that the formulated agreement meets the requirements of the individual's specific retirement plan. HRS may suggest alternative arrangements based on the individual's circumstances.

- Step 4: The individual submits the Faculty Voluntary Phased Retirement Agreement for Department Chair signature. The Department Chair may want to consult with the Dean prior to submitting the Agreement for further approval, especially regarding budget and workspace.
- Step 5: The Department Chair submits the agreement (possibly revised after HRS review and further discussion with the individual) to the Dean for approval.
- Step 6: The Dean approves (or disapproves) and submits the plan to the Provost for approval.
- Step 7: The Provost approves (or disapproves) and communicates the decision to the Dean and Department Chair.
- Step 8: The Department Chair communicates appropriate elements of the plan to department faculty and staff to inform colleagues and to indicate support for the individual.



VII. RESOURCES

Online Resources for Chairs - Boise State University

University Policies – www.boisestate.edu/policy/index.shtml

Resources for Department Chairs – www.boisestate.edu/deptchairs

Faculty Handbook – <http://academics.boisestate.edu/facultyhandbook>

Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action – <http://hrs.boisestate.edu/eoaa/taking.shtml>

The Faculty Ombuds Office – <http://academics.boisestate.edu/facultyombuds>

Recruiting and Hiring – <http://hrs.boisestate.edu/employmentservices/facultypro.shtml>

Online Resources for Chairs – National

National Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) – www.dol.gov/compliance/laws/comp-fmla.htm

Pregnancy Discrimination Act – www.eeoc.gov/laws/types/pregnancy.cfm

AAUP Statement of Principles on Family Responsibilities and Academic Work – www.aaup.org/AAUP/pubsres/policydocs/contents/workfam-stmt.htm

ACE Department Chair Online Resource Center – www.acenet.edu/resources/chairs

Online Resources for Chairs – Other Universities

UC Faculty Family Friendly Edge – <http://ucfamilyedge.berkeley.edu>

University of Washington Faculty Retention Toolkit – <http://advance.washington.edu/resources/facretention.html>

University of Michigan Dean and Department Chair Toolkit – http://sitemaker.umich.edu/advance/_toolkit_

University of Michigan Faculty Recruitment Handbook – http://sitemaker.umich.edu/advance/faculty_recruitment_publications





BOISE STATE UNIVERSITY

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