



TO: Sue Buckley

FROM: Nancy Williams  
Jennifer Modestou  
Jane Holland

RE: Adoption Leave

Date: February 1, 2002

Members of the Family Issues Charter Committee and UI Staff Council received requests from adoptive parents to explore the feasibility of increasing the amount of adoption leave currently available. As a result of those requests, we examined the benefit and the financial cost of expanding adoption leave from 5 days to 10 days per adoption occurrence. This letter addresses our recommendation.

**Recommendation:**

We recommend that adoption leave be increased from 5 days per occurrence to 10 days. The leave would be paid out of personal sick leave.

If both spouses/partners are employed at the UI, they would together receive a total of 15 days, not 20 days. One of the parents would be able to access the additional 5 days of adoption leave.

**Data to substantiate the recommendation:**

**Financial cost:**

From July 1, 1999 to January 1, 2001, a total of 18 individuals used adoption leave. Ten of the 18 individuals used their full amount of adoption leave plus supplemented the 40 hours with another form of UI leave. Of those 10 individuals, 1 is a faculty member, 5 are professional-scientific and 4 are merit employees. Added together, one week of adoption leave for all 10 individuals totaled \$6,658 over an 18-month period.

We also gathered data January 1, 2001 through September 30, 2001. Eleven employees thus far this year have taken adoption leave. Of the eleven, 3 are faculty, 6 are professional-scientific and 2 are merit employees. Added together, one week of adoption leave for all 11 individuals totals \$13,634.

From year to year, numbers of employees, types of employees, and salary of the employees using adoption leave will fluctuate. For example, the salaries for the first group were lower than the most recent group, and there was more faculty in the most recent group taking adoption leave than in the first group. However, it does appear that numbers of staff taking adoption leave are low overall. If we consider the most recent year only, permitting 10 days for adoption leave, the cost for the 11 employees would be \$27,268.

Replacement costs have not been factored into either of the costs identified above.

**Family need:**

When an individual or couple adopt, they may or may not know the date of the adoption, the child's approximate age or the child's sex. International adoptions pose further challenges since many parents travel to the child's country of origin to "pick up" the child and to sign documents.

Adoptive parents have told us that the child must build trust, deal with separation and attachment, re-establish routines and accept his/her new home. While the child may not be medically ill, adjusting to a new home, new people and possibly a new culture does affect the well being and health of the child.

Parents adopting are often physically exhausted, especially those involved with international adoptions. Travelling to pick up the child, bringing the child home and preparing the home are physically draining and demanding, especially if there are time zone changes.

In summary, we believe that the following factors make it feasible and appropriate to increase adoption leave. One, the cost is relatively inexpensive. Two, adoption has very specific characteristics that make planning and preparation for a new child complex. Three, many adoptive children are adjusting to a new set of parents, a second home and possibly a new culture. And finally, adoptive parents experience stress and exhaustion as a result of the adoptive process.

This recommendation has the support of the Family Issues Charter Committee, UI Staff Council and the Family Services Office. Lee Anna Clark will be presenting this recommendation to the Faculty Senate.