

CHARTER COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT TO THE SHARED GOVERNANCE COUNCIL

**Committee: Family Issues Charter Committee**

**Report Year: 2020-21**

<b>Committee Chair(s)</b>	Constance Wade & Elizabeth Faine
<b>Committee Members</b>	<p>Kelly Messingham, Kathy Schuh, Elana Buch, Elizabeth Faine, Wendy Loney, Maddie Hoberg, Jason Semprini, Jessica Cupps</p> <p><b>Administrative Liaisons/Non-Voting members:</b> Diana Kremzar (Family Services), Megan Hammes (University HR), Rhea Dryer (FSDS Manager)</p>
<b>Committee Charge</b>	<p>The Family Issues Charter Committee (FICC) reviews and makes recommendations on the development and implementation of programs, plans, and policies that promote a positive climate for families of faculty, staff, and students through the life span. The committee also reviews and makes recommendations about the implementation of University child or dependent care programs and plans.</p>
<b>Current Year Meeting Dates</b>	<p>09/25/20; 10/19/20; 11/20/20; 02/20/21; 03/22/21; 04/16/21 <i>Unable to meet quorum, meeting cancelled: 12/2020; 1/25/21</i></p>
<b>Please indicate the typical frequency of meetings (e.g., first Tuesday of month at 4 pm). If there are subcommittees, please indicate the frequency of those meetings, too.</b>	<p>The Committee meets once per month during the Academic year, on an alternating schedule Monday/Friday typically from 12PM-1PM and 2:30-3:30PM. Due to the ongoing pandemic, meetings were held using Zoom.</p>
<b>Current Year Activities</b>	<p><b>FY20 Plan:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Invited key stakeholders to discuss leave policies including staff from the University Employee and Labor Relations, Monica M. (champion for adoption leave policy change) to discuss policies and experiences. Welcomed R. Dryer as a liaison to the team to support relevant discussions.</li><li>FICC evaluated various options for parental leave, has prepared recommendations for 2020/2021, and identified areas of focus for the 2021/2022.</li></ul> <p><b>Year to Date Actions Completed:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Created three subgroups to manage the work of assessing and reviewing existing language and narrative in current leave policies to align with DEI initiatives.</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identified ideas for improving the employee experience when reading, interpreting, and requesting various leave policies.</li> <li>Explored methodologies that focus on the wellbeing of families and building a sense of community for UI employees.</li> </ul>
<b>Topics your committee anticipates addressing during the coming year</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue examining and speaking with key stakeholders regarding parental leave policy to build on current recommendations.</li> <li>FICC will review and evaluate next steps on parental leave policies within the scope of the committee.</li> <li>Identify future work for the committee stemming from the COVID 19 pandemic and the ongoing impact to families.</li> <li>Discuss methods for retaining student members and how to increase diversity within the committee.</li> </ul>
<b>Other issues of concern</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improve communication and feedback between shared governance council and charter committees, i.e. annual reports, committee recommendations, membership.</li> <li>Broadening the requirements to allow faculty committee members to serve as chair or co-chairs of the presidential charter committees.</li> <li>Family issues are diverse, and the makeup of the group should be reflective of the needs of students, staff, and faculty. We wish to be as inclusive as possible within the limitations of the current diversity, equity, and inclusion that may present. Persons of color have been notably missing in the group.</li> <li>UISG undergraduate student representatives have been absent throughout the term and have not engaged with the committee on behalf of their constituency.</li> </ul>
<b>What should we tell applicants for this committee regarding expectations of members (anticipated workload, existence of subcommittees, etc.)?</b>	The workload is relatively small, generally no more than an hour or two per month outside meetings. Three subcommittees were created to assist with identifying inclusive parental leave language and outline next steps for the committee.
<b>The Faculty Senate Office collects agendas and minutes from the charter committees to send to the university archives. Please let us know the best way to get that information from you (e.g., direct us to a website, put us on the committee's distribution list, etc.).</b>	Meeting minutes are collected and stored by committee liaison Diana Kremzar.
<b><i>Recommendations, if any, to the shared governance groups.</i></b>	<p>The Family Issues Charter Committee 2020/2021 has the following recommendations for the shared governance council.</p> <p><b>Recommendation 1</b> Extend student representation from the current one-year term to two-year terms.</p>

	<p><b>Recommendation 2</b></p> <p>Revise the language and narrative within the current UI parental leave policy to be more inclusive and easier for employees to interpret and make informed decisions.</p> <p>Provide language that supports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) surrogates and surrogacy</li> <li>b) bereavement leave to include death of an infant, miscarriage, stillbirth (stillborn).</li> <li>c) birth givers in place of birth mothers</li> </ul> <p><b>See Below for examples on language.</b></p>
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## Recommendation 1

To extend student representation from the current one-year term to two-year terms. The rationale is to increase the time on the committee for student representation to fully onboard and contribute to the committee's work. This would increase student involvement, participation and engagement while reducing the high turnover of student representation.

## Recommendation 2

FICC spent much of the year discussing and reviewing the current parental leave policy, including meeting with staff from the University Employee and Labor Relations to help inform the following recommendations. Recent DEI initiatives and an ongoing pandemic highlight the significance of this work and accelerated the necessity to address the parental leave policy in our efforts to be inclusive to all staff. FICC recognizes that changing the policy is not within the scope of this committee, however, our recommendations are asking for leaders to review and update existing language so that the policy includes a) surrogates and surrogacy and b) bereavement leave to include death of an infant, miscarriage, or stillbirth (stillborn). Other considerations.

- Offer robust pre-leave and re-entry programs.
- Identify connections/resources between UI and the community to educate and support the whole person/families.
- Important to consider students and envision how the University can support and assist in creating a network that encourages personal wellbeing and a student's ability to step away from their studies for the care of newborn or children.
- Promote equal sharing of care responsibilities.
- Revise assumptions on gender roles. For example:
  - Avoid gender-biased expressions or expressions that reinforce gender stereotypes.

The committee elected to take a tiered approach to our work and divided the group into 3 subcommittees with a goal of reviewing a broad spectrum of information. The data and information included reviewing current [UI Parental Leave policies](#), [Family and Medical Leave Act](#) (FMLA), existing statistics, [University of Iowa Parental Leave Survey Report 2017](#), [Ohio State University](#) revised parental leave policy, benchmarking from Big 10 schools and a recently modernized [US Air Force Military Parental Leave Program](#) (MPLP) policy. The goal was to compare and identify language that was clear, inclusive, and understandable for a broad audience and serve UI families.

Additionally, the committee heard testimonials from multiple University of Iowa (UI) employees about their personal experiences, challenges, and barriers to performance with the current leave policies. Existing policies are pragmatic, outdated, and not in alignment with the UI mission of creating a working environment that embraces equality, eradicates bias, and is inclusive for all staff. The pandemic has emphasized the need to revisit the conversation on parental leave and provides opportunities to begin this work with Faculty Senate, Staff Council, and other campus stakeholders.

Thank you for your consideration.

Elizabeth Faine, co-chair  
Constance Wade, co-chair