

To: Greg Crouch, Chair of Senate

From: Stephen Hines, Chair of the Faculty Affairs Committee

Date: February 27, 2020

RE: *Changes to the Faculty Manual – Sections III.C.6.j  
Tenure Clock Extensions (and family leave)*

On behalf of the FAC, I am writing to recommend Faculty Senate approval of the attached revisions to the Faculty Manual regarding Family Leave and the Tenure Clock. This proposal was initiated by Senator Heiko Jansen and further developed with assistance from FAC member Chelsea Leachman. FAC provided input as did a number other people and organizations, including the WSU Association for Faculty Women (AFW via Chelsea Leachman) and the [WSU Commission on the Status of Women](#) (via Dr. Claire Burbick). The rationale for the proposed changes are delineated below in text provided by Senator Jansen. FAC submits this proposal with unanimous and enthusiastic support.

**Rationale for proposing the automatic one-year extension of the tenure clock**

Young faculty, especially those hired into a tenure position, face tremendous pressure to succeed. This pressure takes the form of a tenure clock. While a newfound sense of stability usually accompanies this career transition, it is our contention that the tenure clocks should not be a factor in faculty family planning. Unfortunately, the stark reality is unless policies are in place to ensure a fair and equitable balance between academic and family life, it will continue negatively to impact faculty. Some new professors may feel uncomfortable asking their Chairs, Deans, Directors for a tenure extension as they are worried they will be perceived as receiving special treatment by their Department and University as a whole. Many Universities have now developed policies (many are gender neutral) to help mitigate the conflict between the tenure clock and family leave by allowing a one-year extension of the tenure clock to become a parent, either through childbirth, adoption, or fostering. Although the specific policies can vary, for example, some are not automatic (WSU is such an example), we propose that the automatic extension be made available to all tenure track faculty when balancing work and life. Moreover, this should not be a choice to opt in to, but rather a choice to opt out of. Revision of the faculty manual to include this new language would provide a great benefit to the talented faculty hired by WSU and, importantly, relieve them of some of the unnecessary pressure that is placed on them when balancing professional and personal life.

Submitted on behalf of:

Heiko T. Jansen, PhD, Professor IPN and Chelsea Leachman, WSU Libraries

**Please find attached**

1. Redline (tracked) version of Faculty Manual Sections *III.C.6.j*
2. Clean (untracked) version of targeted Section *III.C.6.j*