

Use of Modified Duties and Tenure Clock Stop Policies by Faculty at the University of Michigan
A Comparison of 1996 and 2010 Faculty Work-Life Study Data

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The University of California system and the University of Michigan were among the earliest institutions to implement family friendly policies addressing the unique needs and challenges of tenure-track faculty with dependent care responsibilities. In 1988, the University of California established a series of policies to address work and family issues for tenure-track faculty, including active service Modified Duties and Tenure Clock Stop policies.¹ Soon after, in January 1990, the University of Michigan (U-M) enacted its own Tenure Clock Stop policy and in mid-1992, enacted a Modified Duties policy. These policies, as acknowledged by then U-M Provost Gilbert Whitaker's words, are essential to "assisting [faculty] who wish to have children as well as academic careers to meet personal and professional needs."² Consequently, in the years since these major research universities initially adopted Tenure Clock Stop and Modified Duties policies, evidence shows significant policy diffusion throughout institutions of higher education in the United States.

Results of a 2005 survey from the University of Michigan's Center for the Education of Women (CEW) found that nearly 90% of research universities had adopted formal tenure-clock extension policies and approximately 30% had formal modified duties policies. A follow-up survey in 2007³ indicated that the presence of these two types of policies had increased slightly among research universities, which continue to outpace other institution types in adopting both policies. These trends highlight the increasing importance that family accommodation policies have in providing equitable and desirable benefits to both current and incoming tenure-track faculty. For these reasons, CEW presents the following report to emphasize the past and present usage of these policies at the University of Michigan.

1 Letter to the UC faculty from President Robert Dynes, February 8, 2006.

2 Letter to the U-M faculty from Provost Gilbert Whitaker, February 4, 1991

3 Family-Friendly Policies in Higher Education. A Five Year Report 2007. www.cew.umich.edu/research/pubs/hepubs/climate.

Background of the U-M Faculty Work Life Studies

In 1996, the Center for the Education of Women partnered with the Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education to create and conduct the Faculty Work-Life Study (FWLS), designed to help “determine what conditions lead to satisfactory careers for instructional faculty at the University of Michigan” (See Appendix A for study design details).

Later, in 2010, CEW administered an updated version of the FWLS. (See Appendix A for study design details). The 2010 survey had the same objective as the 1996 survey, but it differed in a number of ways. The 2010 FWLS:

- Allied itself with the Association of American Universities Data Exchange (AAUDE); and, in order to allow U-M to compare itself to peer and other institutions around the country, used a standardized set of AAUDE questions for most of the survey.
- Was conducted online with a web-based platform, not paper;
- Used a stratified sample instead of the whole U-M instructional faculty as the population;
- Incorporated some new areas of inquiry, in recognition of the ways in which the academic world has changed in the intervening 15 years;

In the vast majority of cases, the two FWL studies cover the same topics and issues but—because AAUDE-required wording varied slightly from our own 1996 questions—data are not directly comparable. Hence, in subsequent reports of various findings from these 2010 data, we will analyze and report on the 2010 survey responses only, with some consideration of possible trends based upon our two data points. Though reports from similar universities utilize actual policy usage data from an HR department, due to the decentralized nature of the University of Michigan no central database exists.

The questions related to these two policies were not identical in the 1996 and 2010 surveys, but enough similarities exist to make some basic comparisons. The primary caveat being that it is impossible to determine how much overlap there is among respondents who completed the 1996 survey and *also* completed the 2010 survey (See Appendix B for exact language).

Since the University of Michigan first enacted its Tenure Clock Stop (1990) and Modified Duties (1992) policies, faculty members have been using the two policies in increasing numbers. For example, in 1996 when the U-M’s first Faculty Work-Life Study queried U-M instructional faculty about a wide variety of climate and satisfaction issues, less than 4 percent of respondents reported having invoked either the Tenure Clock Stop or the Modified Duties policies. However, in 2010, data from the follow-up FWLS indicate that 10% of faculty report having used the Tenure Clock Stop policy, and 10.7% of faculty report having used the Modified Duties policy.

The following analyses of the data from both the 1996 and the 2010 Faculty Work-Life Studies provide information about tenured and tenure-track faculty who have used one or both of the policies and how usage has changed over the last 14 years.

MODIFIED DUTIES POLICY USE

Given that the Modified Duties policy was first adopted in 1992, it is not surprising that reported use was low when the first FWLS was conducted in 1996: Less than 4 percent of all faculty, excluding those in the Medical School,⁴ reported that they had used the policy in the 4 years since its enactment.

Interestingly, in the 2010 FWLS survey, nearly 10.7 percent of the faculty respondents reported having used the policy. Among that 10.7 percent, 8.8 percent had used the policy within the last 5 years (between 2005 and 2010), and 1.9 percent reported using the policy more than 5 years ago (though it's impossible to determine if they are referring to the same time period referenced by the 1996 respondents). Table 1 displays the distribution of policy use reported in the 1996 and 2010 surveys among those who used the policy within the past 4 (1996 survey) or 5 (2010 survey) years, respectively.

Table 1. Modified Duties Policy Use (within the past 4 or 5 years, respectively)

	1996	2010
Did not use	96.1%	71.1%
Used between 1992-1996 or 2005-2010	3.4%	8.8%

Note: Data weighted to adjust for sampling & response biases.

Descriptive Analysis: Modified Duties Policy Use

In 2005, the Provost's office amended the Modified Duties policy to "make faculty life more family-friendly." Though originally aimed at "pregnant faculty" members, the revision extended coverage to 1) "faculty members who adopt a child or children" and 2) "male faculty members who are parents of a newly born or adopted child...and who have at least co-equal care-giving responsibilities for the child."⁵ In the five years between the enactment of the more inclusive policy and the 2010 FWLS, 3.4% of white male respondents reported using the Modified Duties policy and a healthy 14.7% of non-white male respondents reported using the policy.

Table 2 displays Modified Duties policy use by gender and race. Given the original intent of the Modified Duties policy, it's not unusual that women are more likely than men to have used the policy, even now that it applies to parents of both sexes. Among faculty respondents in 1996, white women were most likely to use the Modified Duties policy, followed by women of color and white men (16.5%, 3.0%, and 0.2% respectively). Fast-forward to 2010 and the data show that women of color faculty have surpassed their white counterparts in utilizing the Modified Duties policy. Additionally, data confirm that policy usage is increasing among men as well, specifically men of color faculty as shown in Table 2.

These findings raise several speculations. While the data suggest women of color faculty were slow adopters on the use of the Modified Duties policy, other circumstances could be at work here (e.g., larger

⁴ For the purpose of both FWLS reports, Medical School faculty were analyzed separately because their workloads and work culture are too different from non-Medical School faculty for meaningful comparisons.

⁵ Memo from UM Graduate Dean Janet Weiss, 6/15/05.

numbers of women of color in their child bearing ages more recently recruited to the University; slower trickle down of information regarding the existence of this policy to faculty of color, etc.). Nevertheless, it is especially encouraging that use of the Modified Duties policy by women of color has increased substantially. Fortunately, men of color faculty are showing a similar trend of increased usage, possibly due to a newfound realization that it is safe for them to use the Modified Duties policy without serious career repercussions. Perhaps having increasing numbers of their white male counterparts take advantage of the policy has proven to be a safety net for the men of color faculty.

Table 2 also displays notable increases in the use of the Modified Duties policy by tenure status between 1996 and 2010. Not surprisingly, in 1996, more tenure-track faculty utilized the policy than tenured faculty (6.5% and 2.5%, respectively). Consistently, in 2010, tenure-track faculty (18.0%) took advantage of the policy in greater proportions compared to their tenured counterparts (6.2%). Given that this policy was established with tenure-track faculty in mind, as greater numbers of them are in their childbearing years of their lives, and at greater risk of not achieving tenure when giving birth or adopting during the tenure probationary period, it is actually a sign of success that more tenure-track faculty are using the policy than tenured faculty.

Chart 1 highlights changes in the Modified Duties policy use between 1996 and 2010. In the first FWLS, only 9.6% of faculty who used the policy had at least one child 4 years old or younger compared to 50.8% in the second FWLS. Noticeably, this is not only an indication of the need for adjusting a faculty member’s workload through modified duties when there is at least one young child in the family, but also a reflection of the increased usage among men.

Table 2. Comparative Modified Duty Policy Use		
	1996	2010
Race & Gender		
Women of color	3.0%	25.6%
Men of color	0.0%	14.7%
White women	16.5%	11.0%
White men	0.2%	3.4%
Tenure status		
Tenured	2.5%	6.2%
On track	6.5%	18.0%
Child(ren) care		
Have children ages 0-4	9.6%	50.8%

TENURE CLOCK STOP POLICY USE

In January 1990, the University of Michigan implemented a policy that allowed faculty, for the purpose of childbirth, to be granted an exclusion of one year from the countable years of service that constitute the tenure probationary period. Shortly after the policy was amended, it was expanded in 2006 for the additional purposes of dependent care of children, including newly adopted children; injured partners; or aging parents.

Table 3 displays use of the Tenure Clock Stop policy. There appears to be a trend showing increasing use of the policy between 1996 and 2010. In 1996, 3.4 percent of tenure-track or tenured faculty reported they had utilized the policy, whereas in 2010, a total of 7.5% of tenure-track or tenured faculty had taken advantage of it.

Table 3. Tenure clock stop policy use (within the past 6 or 5 years, respectively)

	1996	2010
Did not use	96.6%	92.5%
Used between 1990-1996 or 2005-2010	3.4%	7.5%

Note: Data weighted to adjust for sampling & response biases.

Descriptive Analysis: Tenure Clock Stop Policy Use

Just as faculty responded differently by gender and race regarding their use of the Modified Duties policy, the same is true for the use of the Tenure Clock Stop policy. In 1996, women of color faculty were most likely to use the Tenure Clock Stop policy (15.2%) compared to the three other race and gender groups (e.g., white women – 11.7%; men of color – 3.8%; and white men – 0%). Similarly, in 2010, women of color faculty took advantage of this policy most often, with 12.5% having used the policy within the past 5 years. Use among males—both men of color and white men— continues to increase (7.6% and 3.4% respectively in 2010). These findings are consistent with the pattern of use of the Tenure Clock Stop policy as was reported by men in 1996.

For women, an unexpected and unexplainable pattern emerges. In contrast to the reported experiences of male faculty, the proportion of women faculty who utilized the Tenure Clock Stop policy actually decreased over time—from 11.7% to 9.0% for white women and from 15.2% to 12.5% for women of color. Interestingly, both groups show a 2.7% decrease of Tenure Clock Stop policy usage within the last five years. The reduction in proportion of policy use for women of color faculty may be a byproduct of sampling differences between the FWLS1 and the FWLS2. The first FWLS sampled all minority faculty at U-M, whereas, the second FWLS used a stratified sample.

Significant associations exist between rank and Tenure Clock Stop policy use, both in 1996 and 2010. As expected, more faculty on tenure-track used the policy than did tenured faculty. In 1996, 9.6% of faculty on the tenure-track stopped their tenure clocks, but only 1.2% of faculty with tenure at the time of completing the survey reported doing so. Similarly, in 2010, 16.8% of tenure-track faculty reported using

the policy, whereas 3.1% of tenured faculty reported they had taken advantage of it, presumably during their tenure-track years. We can count this as a metric of success—increasing proportions of tenured faculty are reporting they used the Tenure Clock Stop policy and subsequently achieved tenure.

Chart 2 highlights associations between Tenure Clock Stop policy use and faculty who have at least one child under 4-years old in their care. In 2010, the relationship is particularly revealing: Among those who reported at least one child under 4-years old, 35.8 percent reported using the Tenure Clock Stop policy within the past 5 years, which suggests the strong need for the policy when raising a young child.

Table 4. Comparative Tenure Clock Stop Policy Use		
	1996	2010
Race & Gender		
Women of color	15.2%	12.5%
Men of color	3.8%	7.6%
White women	11.7%	9.0%
White men	0.0%	3.4%
Tenure status		
Tenured	1.2%	3.1%
On track	9.6%	16.8%
Child(ren)		
Have children ages 0-4	6.9%	35.7%
None or no response	2.4%	1.7%

In 2005, the University of Michigan’s Center for the Education of Women (CEW) surveyed 255 higher education institutions to measure the prevalence of work/life policies at different types of colleges and universities across the country.⁶ We found that nearly 90% of research universities had adopted formal tenure-clock extension policies and approximately 30% had formal Modified Duties policies. A 2007 follow-up study⁷ indicated that the presence of these two policies had increased slightly among research universities, which continue to outpace other institution types in adopting both policies.

These findings from the Family-Friendly Policies in Higher Education report suggest that administrators, at research universities in particular, recognize that “effective family accommodation policies for academic appointees are fundamental to an equitable and productive academic environment.”⁸

SUMMARY

Increased usage of these two family-friendly policies among University of Michigan faculty members is encouraging since, in the words of UM President Mary Sue Coleman, such policies “enable faculty to accomplish ambitious academic and professional goals, while also pursuing satisfying personal lives.”⁹

⁷ *Family-Friendly Policies in Higher Education. A Five Year Report 2007.* www.cew.umich.edu/research/pubs/hepubs/climate.

⁸ Dynes, February 8, 2006.

Unfortunately, enacting good family-friendly policies is not enough. A gap continues to exist to accommodate tenured faculty with caregiving responsibilities outside of parenting. Though the Tenure Clock Stop Policy is inclusive of extenuating circumstances such as parent and spousal care, there is currently no university wide policy available for tenured faculty who may need to take modified duties for illness of a partner, child, or parent. However, at the University of Michigan, academic units may define family friendly policies more broadly as needed. In the College of Engineering the Modified Duties Policy reads “A faculty member who becomes a parent or experiences the critical illness of his/her partner, child, or parent, is entitled, upon request, to a period of modified duties, without a reduction in salary.” The college of LSA also has a more flexible and expansive policy. Similar to findings in a March, 2004 report of the Subcommittee on Family Friendly Policies and Faculty Tracks, officially expanding the Modified Duties Policy may ultimately benefit the U-M by improving its ability to compete with other top research universities in the recruitment and retention of world-class faculty.

Finally, research findings indicate that institutions must also ensure that the faculty are aware of the policies’ existence and control factors that discourage their use.¹⁰ Doing so will enhance faculty members’ satisfaction with their careers at the University of Michigan. Future reports from the 2010 FWLS will explore other findings about aspects of career satisfaction among UM faculty.

What faculty are saying:

“We really benefitted from the liberal stopping-the-tenure-clock and modified duty policy at UM when our kids were born. We both took advantage of it and really felt that it helped us balancing family and work without compromising either of our academic careers. This was a BIG reason to turn down a very generous offer to both of us from another Big Ten university.”

“I have had two children in the last five years, took modified duties each time, but there were also additional informal arrangements by the department, both times, which were equally helpful.”

“I felt very lucky to have learned about modified duties program (only with my second child).”

“The modified duties policy for childbirth is a great thing and I salute the University for instituting it.”

“Since I arrived in 1999, there has been positive change as my units have become more family friendly, in large part because of the modified duties policy.”

“I believe that my dean supports the tenure clock stopping policy, [but] there are too many others who still think that taking time off is a sign of weakness.”

⁹ Felde, M. (2005, December 6). University leaders pledge to help women in academia. Retrieved March 20, 2006 from the University of California at Berkeley website: http://www.berkeley.edu/news/media/releases/2005/12/06_pledge.shtml

¹⁰ .Waltman, J. & August, L. (2005). Tenure-clock, modified duties, and sick leave policies: Creating “A network of support and understanding” for University of Michigan faculty women during pregnancy and childbirth. [insert web address]

APPENDIX A – Background of the U-M Faculty Work-Life Study

The 2010 U-M Faculty Work-Life Study was conducted by the Center for the Education of Women (CEW), with support from the Office of the Provost, and was based on an Association of American Universities Data Exchange (AAUDE) survey instrument. The 1996 Study was directed by the Center for the Study of Higher and Postsecondary Education (CSHPE) and CEW, with support from the Office of the Provost.

Questionnaires for the 1996 U-M Faculty Work-Life Study were mailed to all Ann Arbor faculty who held at least half-time appointments, had been at U-M for at least a year, and were in tenured, tenure track, clinical II, or lecturer positions. There was a return rate of 44% or 1,167 individuals. For other demographic information, please see University of Michigan Faculty Work-Life Study Report (November 1999).

For the 2010 study, CEW conducted a four-stage sampling process of all active Ann Arbor campus faculty who were classified as lecturers, clinical instructors, or professors, who had a 0.5 FTE appointment for at least nine months prior. The full population of non-white faculty was sampled, and a simple, random sample was conducted of the remaining white faculty, stratified by job classification and gender. There was a 33% response rate to the online survey, or 806 respondents. A third (34%) of respondents are in the Medical School, 12% are from non-medical biological and health science fields, 13% are in the physical sciences or engineering, 19% in the social sciences, and 21% in the humanities and fine arts (Center for Research on Learning and Teaching (CRLT) [Occasional Paper No. 28](#), 2010).

APPENDIX B – 1996 and 2010 Tenure Clock Stop and Modified Duties Questions

The Modified Duties (SPG# 201.93) and Tenure Clock Stop (SPG#201.92) policies were enacted at the University of Michigan to help faculty members balance their career and family lives. The FWLS surveys defined the policies, and asked about them, with the following questions:

In 1990, U-M adopted a policy which permits faculty members to stop the tenure clock for one year for reasons related to childbirth or dependent care.

Have you attempted to utilize this provision?	Yes	No
Was your request granted?	Yes	No

In 1992, U-M adopted a Modified Duty policy which permits a faculty member who gives birth to take one term off from classroom teaching.

Have you attempted to utilize this provision?	Yes	No
Was your request granted?	Yes	No

In 1990, U-M adopted a “Tenure Clock Stop” policy (SPG 201.92 revised in 2006)

1) At any time since you started working at UM, have you had your tenure clock slowed or stopped for personal reasons including care giving for a child or parent, your own health concerns, or a family crisis?

Yes, within the past year
Yes, more than a year ago but within the past five years
Yes, more than five years ago
No

2) At any time since you started working at UM, have you received relief from teaching or other workload duties for personal reasons, including care giving for a child or parent, your own health concerns, or a family crisis?

Yes, within the past year
Yes, more than a year ago but within the past five years
Yes, more than five years ago
No

You indicated that you have received relief from teaching or other workload duties... How did you receive that relief?

Use of Modified Duties policy
By informal arrangement with your department/unit

Appendix C: Charts

