

Statement from Joint Athena-Faculty Senate Sub-Committee on Paid Parental Leave

Dear UI Colleagues,

The Joint Athena-Faculty Senate Sub-Committee on Paid Parental Leave has developed and presented a White Paper on creating a paid parental leave policy at the University of Idaho. Currently, our university is the only public higher education institution in Idaho, and Northwest region, without paid parental leave. Wage replacement, using sick or annual leave, as well as short-term disability and shared leave (if eligible), is the only way to be paid while on leave for parental purposes. This has disadvantaged many of our coworkers over the years and has hindered our ability to recruit and retain staff and faculty.

Background on Initiative:

The Paid Parental Leave Policy Working Group is made up of interdisciplinary faculty and staff volunteers in pursuit of equitable, morale-lifting policy change that increases the recruitment and retention of productive and diverse employees. The Working Group started in 2019 and completed an environmental scan of parental leave policies nationwide of all land-grant higher education institutions. In the 2020-2021 academic year, the Working Group met consistently to discuss the recommendations addressed in the White Paper. Initially sponsored by Athena, the Working Group became an official Faculty Senate Sub-Committee in September 2021. The Paid Parental Leave Policy Athena Working Group and Faculty Senate Sub-Committee advocates for and proposes the immediate implementation of 12 weeks of paid leave for all benefits-eligible employees.

The Sub-Committee has received an endorsement of support for writing a paid parental leave policy by the following U of I entities: ASUI, the Department of Society, Culture and Justice, Faculty Senate, Faculty Affairs Committee, the Student Human Resources Management Club, Staff Council, Ubuntu, the Women's Center, and the Margaret Ritchie School of Family & Consumer Sciences.

Thank you for your time,

The Athena-Faculty Senate Sub-Committee on Paid Parental Leave

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