West Virginia University is committed to helping its employees achieve an appropriate work-life balance. The often conflicting demands between meeting one’s professional responsibilities and childbirth recovery, caring for, and bonding with a newly born child, an adopted child, or a child placed in guardianship are recognized as a challenge. This recommendation will provide consistency throughout the University community in addressing this matter by granting workload options to meet parental needs.

The work-life balance we seek for all members of the university community is principally found in, and inextricably linked to, the historically cherished and vibrant concept of collegiality: free thinking, hard working, and intellectually keen people existing in the academic environment together in a holistic and cooperative spirit. Collegiality is fundamentally irreplaceable. Successful implementation of this recommendation will always lie squarely upon the shoulders of those members of the faculty, staff, and administration who honor and work within the notions of collegiality.

SCOPE
For purposes of this document, it is recognized that within the university community there are at least four distinct constituency groups, each of which may require specific attention to address the issue at hand: full-time faculty with 12-month contracts, who accrue medical and annual leave; full-time faculty with contracts of less than twelve months, who accrue neither medical leave nor annual leave; staff (classified and non-classified), who accrue medical and annual leave; and faculty at the WVU Tech and Potomac State campuses, who have different expectations than faculty on the WVU Morgantown campus. The focus of the present recommendation, as the second of several phases, is to provide paid Parental Work Assignments for full-time non-tenurable faculty who do not accrue medical or annual leave (including Term ["Teaching"] faculty on nine-month contracts). Adoption of the recommendation will allow release from certain traditional teaching responsibilities for such faculty members following the birth of a child or the placement of a child through adoption or in guardianship with the faculty member. As recommendations are approved, plans for subsequent phases will be developed for full-time twelve-month faculty and staff who accrue medical and annual leave, other employees who do not, and faculty who are at the divisions.

DEFINITIONS
“Parent” is defined as a person or persons assuming responsibility for the new child, normally a biological parent, an adoptive parent, or a guardian. “First parent” is normally the parent that either gives birth to the child or who takes primary responsibility for the child shortly after birth or in the event of an adoption. For a parent who is not the birth mother, appropriate evidence of status as “first” or “second” parent would be expected. Such evidence could take a variety of forms.
"Parental Work Assignment" is defined as the period of time, normally within the basic contract period, during which an employee's traditional assignment may be changed without salary modification to accommodate new parental responsibilities. The Parental Work Assignment will often result in a release from traditional teaching duties for a specified period of time. A Parental Work Assignment, if requested, will be granted upon the birth of a child or the adoption or guardianship of a child. Both male and female faculty members are eligible to request such an assignment. A faculty member with a Parental Work Assignment will be expected to complete her/his assignment during the contract period.

DURATION OF A PARENTAL WORK ASSIGNMENT
During the second phase, the duration of a Parental Work Assignment available to non-tenurable faculty members who do not accrue leave may be dependent upon a variety of factors, many of which are referenced below. This document states the minimum length of the Parental Work Assignment available to the faculty member following the birth, adoption, or assumption of guardianship of a child in order to support the family needs of the faculty member. It is understood that a faculty member may wish to request a Parental Work Assignment less than the minimum for which she or he is eligible.

Parental Work Assignment Due to the Birth of a Child
Upon request, a Parental Work Assignment shall be granted in recognition of the birth of a child. During such part of the contract period, adjustment of one's assignment shall include release from traditional teaching responsibilities for a specified period of time:

- Normally, the release from the faculty member's traditional teaching duties will occur in the semester in which the birth occurs, and is expected to be for a minimum of 6 weeks (30 working days) for a vaginal child birth or 8 weeks (40 working days) for a c-section, immediately following the birth of the child. In special circumstances, including but not limited to the timing of the birth, the semester in which the release is provided might follow the one in which the actual birth occurs.

- Normally, the release from traditional teaching for a faculty member who is the second parent will be for 2 weeks (10 working days) or the equivalent, within three months of the birth of the child.

- Situations that require such extended release are to be handled in the current collegial manner, by discussion and arrangement with the faculty member's supervisor.

Parental Work Assignment Following the Adoption of a Child or Assumption of the Guardianship of a Child
Upon request, a Parental Work Assignment shall be granted following the placement of a child with the faculty member for adoption or the assumption of the guardianship of a child. Such assignment during the contract period may include release from traditional teaching responsibilities:
• Normally, the release from traditional teaching duties will occur during the semester in which the placement of the child with the faculty member occurs, although such release is expected to be for a minimum of 6 weeks (30 working days) immediately following such placement. In special circumstances, including but not limited to the timing of the placement of the child, the semester in which such release is provided might follow the one in which the placement of the child occurs.

• Normally, such release from traditional teaching for a faculty member who is the second parent will normally be for 2 weeks (10 working days) or the equivalent within three months of the placement of the child.

**Expectations**

Full-time non-tenurable faculty members who receive a Parental Work Assignment are expected to be responsible for the courses assigned, and to monitor the personnel covering or assisting with the courses (except during the initial 6 or 8 weeks following the birth or placement of a child); to engage in non-teaching instructional activity if assigned; to maintain currency in their subject matter; and/or to engage in other instructional or service activity, including departmental and University service, as appropriate and in keeping with reasonable expectations for flexibility, for the period of the semester in which they were given a release from traditional teaching. Addressing the teaching needs of the department is the responsibility of the department chair or equivalent academic administrator.

The University and its colleges and schools expect that faculty members eligible for a Parental Work Assignment will routinely use this benefit. Such use shall not adversely affect the faculty member’s standing or salary in any manner. A release from a portion of one’s traditional teaching assignment is not meant to be made up at a later date. Likewise, a faculty member is not expected to engage in more activities than are assigned during the contract period. The funding for the teaching coverage is provided by the college.

**PROCEDURE**

Any Parental Work Assignment must allow for flexibility in its implementation. Department chairs or the equivalent should be mindful of this when working out individual arrangements and should consult with their deans as appropriate. They must be familiar with the policies and options for faculty requesting a Parental Work Assignment and need to ensure that this information is provided to all faculty members in the department.

The faculty member should make her or his request for a Parental Work Assignment as soon as possible after the date of the anticipated birth or other action is known.

Arrangements for a Parental Work Assignment are to be made between a faculty member and her or his unit supervisor and reported simultaneously to the Dean. If the faculty member and the administrative head cannot reach a mutually satisfactory agreement regarding a Parental Work Assignment, the advice and guidance of the Provost, Chancellor or his/her designee should be sought.
The supervisor of the unit involved should consult with members of the unit as soon as possible about coverage of duties during the period of a Parental Work Assignment if such duties are to be distributed among others in the unit. While a Parental Work Assignment for faculty is not identical to sabbatical leave, the manner in which coverage of duties is distributed can be drawn from sabbatical leave examples. Creative solutions may be called for in small departments or when a very specialized course needs to be taught.

Further useful information may be found in “Family Friendly Practices for Faculty Members,” available at http://provost.wvu.edu/r/download/35947.

SOME GUIDING PRINCIPLES
Each individual situation will be unique, and each department will face specific challenges placed on it by a faculty member’s absence; therefore flexibility is needed in order to exercise appropriate professional judgment. A number of guiding principles can expedite the process and assist the faculty member and the department in addressing the conditions of the Parental Work Assignment. These might include, but are not limited to, the following assumptions:

1. The faculty member will agree to a modified assignment in which she/he continues to help the department with certain duties that are feasible, given the particular needs of the assignment.

2. Department chairs will treat pregnancy, childbirth, and reasonable recovery/parenting/bonding time as they might treat a short-term reassignment for other purposes.

3. Faculty members will address likely arrangements for a Parental Work Assignment well in advance of the assignment, to the extent possible, in order to arrive at generally accepted practices to help address the assignment.

4. A Parental Work Assignment should be fair to the faculty member and to the department without undue pressure being placed on either party (e.g., the faculty member should not have to “pay back” the assignment with extra teaching; on the other hand, depending on the circumstances, the faculty member should not expect a release from traditional teaching for a specified period of time without other departmental duty).

RESPONSIBILITY FOR IMPLEMENTATION
The Provost’s Office will provide guidance about faculty assignments, including those in which traditional teaching is not present.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR INTERPRETATION
The responsibility for interpretation of this document rests with the Provost at West Virginia University.

Approved, Faculty Welfare Committee, 12/14/11
Endorsed, Faculty Senate Executive Committee, 01/23/12
Accepted by the Provost, 01/26/12