

Proposed UC Policy on Child Care

University Committee on Faculty Welfare

June, 1999

The University Committee on Faculty Welfare strongly believes that the provision of adequate, affordable, quality child care on or near campus is an important goal for the University of California.¹ Seven of our eight comparison institutions provide this for their faculty, staff and students and all subsidize the care at least by providing the use of the buildings.

We believe that child care will play an increasingly important role in recruitment and retention of faculty in future years. Just as the University has come to realize that it must help faculty meet their housing needs through mortgage assistance programs, so too must it help faculty meet their needs in the area of child care. We believe that child care should be thought of as an essential service the University must make available. Maintaining the excellence of the University requires that we successfully recruit the most promising young faculty, that we provide them with a work environment that allows them to fulfill their potential, and that we compete successfully with attractive offers from other universities, offers that are increasingly likely to include guaranteed places in campus child care facilities and other family oriented benefits.

The need is particularly great in the case of women faculty. In spite of profound social changes, women still shoulder a disproportionate share of child care responsibilities; yet all demographic projections indicate that women will become an increasing proportion of the work force. We believe that programs that enable people to meet their child care obligations will be a crucial tool in recruiting and retaining the most promising young women (and men) in what is likely to be a highly competitive market. Such a competitive edge will be particularly essential when trying to recruit people from small pools, such as women in the physical sciences and faculty of color.

The UCFW believes the provision of on-site care for infants and toddlers is especially crucial. In most communities there is an undersupply of care for children of this age. Particularly for campuses in dense urban areas where real estate prices are high and parking and traffic problems acute, nearby family day care either does not exist or is not feasible to travel to during the course of a day in order to nurse an infant. Thus although we believe that adequate care for all children is essential, we highlight the need for infant and toddler care.

On- or near-site childcare can also play a significant role in creating a work environment in which faculty can be most productive. Child care needs can be a major source of stress and disruption in the work day of faculty members with young children. The case of nursing mothers who often must travel significant distances to nurse their babies during the course of the day is only the most obvious example. For many, time is lost in complex commutes between home, child care and work. On- or near-site care can enable faculty with late afternoon or early evening commitments to pick up their children and if necessary, return to campus. A survey conducted on the Berkeley campus in the late 1980s found that 63% of the faculty with children under twelve experienced reduced effectiveness due to child care problems and 72% reported increased stress. 36% reported that they missed at least three days of work per year as a result of child care problems. Although quality on- or near-site care will not totally eliminate these problems, a growing number of employers have turned to this solution as a way of creating a more productive work place.

All campuses currently provide some on- or near-site care, none provides enough to meet current demand. All campus programs report having faculty parents on their waiting list (ranging from five faculty families to 131 faculty families) during the 1997-98 academic year; all report being unable to serve all faculty parents who apply. Moreover, the number of faculty families on waiting lists undoubtedly underestimates unmet need for at least two reasons. First, child care is not a discretionary matter for working parents. If a campus program is unable to accept a child, most parents must make arrangement elsewhere and, once

made, may be very reluctant to move that child. Second, at least some campus programs serve only a limited age range. The Berkeley faculty and staff program, for example, which reported the shortest faculty waiting list, has no program for infants and toddlers and thus the waiting list does not reflect a considerable portion of the unmet need.

Although this committee's focus is on the faculty, we believe access to affordable, quality child care to be equally important for staff and for students. Thus we urge the Office of the President to coordinate with the campuses the development of solutions to the child care shortage for faculty in the context of a comprehensive strategy that also addresses the needs of students and staff. We urge that the following principles be adopted as the basis for developing such a policy:

1. It is the policy of the University of California that all faculty have access to affordable, quality child care on or near campus.
 - That each location work speedily to ensure that this policy is achieved.
 - That in order to meet the affordability policy, campuses subsidize the cost of care, at least through the provision of facilities and maintenance expenses.
 - That in these efforts, particular attention be given to the need for infant and toddler care.
2. It is the policy of the University of California that if a campus's child care needs are neither currently being met nor will be met through other facilities under construction or in the immediate planning stage, then plans for new construction or significant modification of existing buildings shall include provision of facilities for child care in that construction/building or elsewhere. Funding for these child care facilities should be included in the capital plan for each campus.
3. It is the policy of the University of California that child care facilities be included in the plans for UC Merced in much the same way as the needs for parking and food service facilities are and that funding for adequate child care facilities be included in the capital plans for the campus.
4. It is the policy of the University of California that campuses be required to report annually on their progress on meeting these policies to the Office of the president and that a Child Care Task Force be created to monitor these reports and to set guidelines, including outcome measurement plans for meeting the policies. This Task Force would be a joint Senate-administrative committee composed of members of the University Committee on Faculty Welfare and staff from the University of California Office of the President. This Task Force also would be charged with coordinating the efforts for faculty with those undertaken to ensure that adequate child care is provided for staff and students.

¹ For the purposes of this policy, child care refers to care for children from infancy to the age when they begin school. It can, but does not necessarily, include care for mildly ill children and after school care for school-age children.