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## **PROFS Statement on University of Wisconsin Paid Parental Leave**

PROFS commends Chancellor Mnookin, President Rothman, and the Regents for moving forward with a paid parental leave benefit. This is a very important step towards remaining competitive with other major research universities. PROFS has long made paid parental and family leave a priority. We are delighted that progress is finally being made.

PROFS is further pleased that the benefit will be given to academic staff, postdoctoral fellows, and others, in addition to faculty. And we are happy that other UW universities will also get the benefit. They too deserve and need it.

At the same time, we believe this needs to be a first step, not the final step. More needs to be done to ensure faculty and staff, along with other workers in the state, have strong paid family leave, not just parental leave. Employing the expertise of the UW-Madison faculty on this topic, PROFS will continue to make this case at the state and federal levels.

UW-Madison is well behind other universities when it comes to providing paid leave. For example, nine of 10 of UW-Madison's Association of American Universities Data Exchange (AAUDE) peer universities do not require the use of sick leave for parental leave, as UW-Madison currently does.

The UW-Madison Ad Hoc Working Group on Paid Leave was an example of shared governance working effectively to identify needs and propose solutions. Highlights of the report's recommendations were:

- 1) UW-Madison should advocate at the federal and state levels for paid family leave for all employees in the nation and state, and the university should employ its expertise in this area as part of its advocacy;
- 2) UW-Madison should use the HR flexibility it was given by state government to create a paid parental leave benefit for six weeks of fully paid leave after a birth, adoption, or foster placement.

Since the report was released in 2022, PROFS has been working to put these recommendations into action. Specifically, PROFS has been monitoring development of a paid parental leave plan at UW-Madison, discussing options for other UW universities to also receive paid parental leave, and communicating with policymakers at the State Capitol and at the federal level on its support for paid leave.

PROFS strongly supported Governor Evers's proposal in the 2023-25 state budget that would have provided both public and private sector employees (who work for employers with at least 50 employees), with 12 weeks of paid family leave. Unfortunately, the Legislative removed the proposal from the budget. Nevertheless, PROFS is continuing to support efforts to provide paid family leave and will keep using faculty expertise to make the case for such changes.

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