

**Enriching the Mix:
Responding to the Needs of Student Parents
at the University of Michigan**

**Final Report to the Provost
from the Student Parent Task Force Appointed by
The Center for the Education of Women and
The Rackham School of Graduate Studies**

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Section I: Executive Summary

**Enriching the Mix:
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Introduction

Why should the University be concerned about issues affecting student parents? Do student parents face particular kinds of problems? Should the University develop specific policies or programs to address the needs of student parents?

The answer to these questions - and the discussion of student parents in its entirety - needs to take place within the larger context of diversity. The University of Michigan has boldly articulated the value it places on having a diverse student population. Like other groups of historically underrepresented students on campus, student parents bring unique experiences and perspectives that serve to enrich and enliven our academic and cultural environments. The presence of student parents on this campus has important benefits to other students, as well as to faculty and staff.

Here are just a few examples of the ways in which student parents enhance the learning environment:

- Because of student parents' need to balance a greater number of important responsibilities, their time spent on academic work tends to be more organized and focused.
- Students with parenting responsibilities tend to have a clearer sense of "the big picture" and how completion of their degree will meet certain goals for their life and their family.
- Parent scholars serve as role models for fellow students as they balance family and academic responsibilities.

As the Student Parent Task Force examined ways to improve the University experience for student parents, we came to realize that many of our recommendations will also improve the lives of other students, faculty and staff--whether they have children or not. Numerous management theorists (e.g., Covey, Senge) and practitioners have documented the important benefits organizations accrue when they acknowledge and support the outside interests of their employees. By respecting the outside interests, priorities and responsibilities that students, faculty and staff have that lie beyond their University work, UM can expect to benefit from a less stressed, more creative, more productive and more committed community.

Implementation of additional family-friendly policies and programs can also be a highly effective recruitment tool in attracting the best students, staff, and faculty to the University.

Since family issues remain disproportionately the concern of women, these efforts will also be likely to lead to an increase in the number of women in the academy. Women continue to be underrepresented in the science and engineering fields as well as in the more senior ranks in nearly all schools and colleges. Male students are also likely to appreciate family support services given that increasing numbers of men are taking an active role in parenting.

Background to the Task Force

The idea for this project grew from conversations between the Center for the Education of Women (CEW) and the Rackham School of Graduate Studies (Rackham) who shared a concern about the academic, social and personal well-being of student parents. Both units had been hearing from graduate student parents that:

- They have dual roles as parent and student, but feel the University neither acknowledges nor supports their role as parent;
- Graduate education is built upon the outdated expectation that students do not have family responsibilities;
- Having children is interpreted by many peers and faculty to mean these students are not truly committed to academic pursuits;
- Having family responsibilities marginalizes students both academically and socially; and
- The University lacks spaces that accommodate the presence of young children.

In 1997, CEW and Rackham jointly submitted a proposal to study the graduate student experience for students with parenting responsibilities. The stated goal of this project was to understand what policies and procedures act as barriers to the academic success of graduate student parents and whether these barriers can be removed without sacrificing the quality of our graduate programs. Funding for this proposal was received in 1998 through the Office of the Provost. Provost Cantor requested the study focus on:

- Exploring the effects on students and programs of liberalizing part-time enrollment policies;
- Determining the feasibility of offering health insurance to students not currently eligible; and
- Determining the best ways to promote faculty support and awareness of student parents' needs for flexibility and their desire to be valued.

In the first phase of this project, CEW and Rackham met with graduate student parents, associate deans for graduate studies, graduate chairs, and various administrators in the schools and colleges of the University of Michigan. The result of these discussions was summarized in the October 2000 report entitled "Graduate Student Parents: Enriching the Mix."

Task Force Charge and Process

The Student Parent Task Force was formed in Fall 2000 and met over the course of the 2000-01 academic year to develop recommendations that would address the concerns raised by student parents, faculty and administrators. The scope of the discussions was enlarged at this time to include all University students -- graduate, professional and undergraduate. The Task Force, chaired by CEW Director Carol Hollenshead, included a cross-section of the University: graduate and professional student parents, deans, associate deans, assistant deans, program and graduate chairs, and faculty, as well as staff from Rackham, CEW, the Office of Financial Aid and the Family Care Resources Program.

The Task Force began by reviewing past University studies and reports that focused on student parent issues. (See Attachment A.) In addition, various Task Force members attended a number of forums focusing on the needs of student parents. (See Attachment B.) The issues raised in these reports and student forums brought significant insights to the deliberations of the Task Force.

Task Force Recommendations

The Task Force recommendations listed below and detailed in Section II are organized thematically. Each recommendation described in Section II is supported with background information regarding the problem it seeks to address. If action has already been taken in response to a recommendation, the status of that effort is also noted. To the extent possible, approximate costs have been estimated for many of the recommendations.

In order to aid University leadership in reviewing the recommendations, the Task Force judged each recommendation on the basis of its potential impact on student parents, the urgency of need to which the recommendation responded, and the cost and relative ease with which the recommendation could be implemented. A list of prioritized groupings of Student Parent Task Force recommendations was developed from the results of this ranking exercise. This list is presented after the thematically organized list of recommendations.

The Task Force collected and reviewed a number of other worthwhile suggestions for improvements. Many of these ideas had merit, but for one reason or another did not seem to be as high in priority as the final recommendations described in Section II of the Task Force report. Because we believe there is value to senior leadership in seeing all items seriously considered for inclusion in the report, we have listed the remaining recommendations in Section III, "Other Issues for Consideration."

Thematic List of Student Parent Task Force Recommendations

1. Improve the Information We Collect and Distribute Regarding Student Parents

- 1A. Have a centralized means for obtaining, storing, and maintaining basic demographic information about students who have children so that the University can better direct information, programming, and other resources to these students.
- 1B. Develop and disseminate hard copy materials that can be used to educate the wider campus community about the needs of student parents and the resources that are available to assist them.
- 1C. Develop a student parent website to educate the campus community about resources that serve student parents.

2. Improve the Academic and Cultural Climate for Student Parents

- 2A. Develop a statement that puts the University on record as supporting family-friendly practices.
- 2B. Request that deans and department chairs engage in discussions with faculty about their attitudes toward and expectations of student parents as well as provide a summary report to the Provost of current policies and practices that affect the academic and cultural experience for their student parents
- 2C. Hold an annual ceremony that publicly recognizes and rewards units or individuals for successful programs they develop in support of families or work-life balance in general.

3. Increase the Flexibility of Academic Programs to Enable Student Parents to Meet their Academic and Family Needs

- 3A. Revise how the University defines “full-time” versus “part-time” enrollment so that students wanting to spread their course loads more evenly among the Fall, Winter and Spring/Summer terms are not disadvantaged.
- 3B. Encourage the development of part-time master’s programs in the various professional schools and colleges.
- 3C. Establish policies whereby graduate students can arrange with their department for short-term part-time study and/or extensions on the time limits to candidacy and degree for exceptional circumstances.

4. Increase the Availability of Quality Licensed Child Care in the Local and Campus Community

- 4A. Contract with the Child Care Network to increase the number of child care providers in the University area willing to care for infants and toddlers, as well as to provide evening care.

- 4B. Offer small start-up grants to new providers who commit to reserving spaces for the children of UM students, faculty, and staff.
 - 4C. Provide incentives for residents of Family Housing to become licensed child care providers.
 - 4D. Use all of the methods in Recommendations 4A-C to also increase the availability of evening child care, particularly during study periods and exam times.
 - 4E. Consider raising the salary levels of UM child care center teachers and directors in order to reduce high turnover and maintain quality child care capacity on campus.
 - 4F. Revise UM child care center wait list policy so that at least ten children of low-income students each year can gain access to UM center care.
- 5. Increase Funds to Help Students Pay for Child Care**
- 5A. Increase the amount of money directed to the Child Care Subsidy Program that is administered through the Office of Financial Aid.
 - 5B. Revise University travel reimbursement policy so that students, faculty, and staff can claim their additional child care fees as an allowable travel expense where this is compatible with federal, state, or private funding agency guidelines.
- 6. Encourage All Schools to Determine How to Best Address the Additional Financial Needs of Students Who Have High Monthly Expenses on a Regular Basis Due to Dependent Care or Other Unique Costs**
- 7. Expand and Improve Health Insurance Options and Information for Students and their Dependents.**
- 7A. Allow all University of Michigan students to purchase GradCare for themselves and their dependents.
 - 7B. Create the role of a student health insurance coordinator who has the responsibility and authority to coordinate all University- or UM student-sponsored insurance and health service offerings to students.
 - 7C. Allow the spouses/partners of current and recently graduated or disenrolled UM students to buy the UHS Prepaid Plan health insurance.
 - 7D. Review the copay structure for the three University-related clinics preferred under the domestic and international student insurance plans and lower instances of \$50 copays down to \$10.

8. Modify Buildings Across Campus to Accommodate the Needs of Students, Faculty and Staff Who Have Children.

8A. Install diaper changing tables in at least two bathrooms (one for men, one for women) in existing major campus buildings, especially those used by the public. In all new buildings and renovations, install changing tables in at least two bathrooms.

8B. Increase the number of lactation rooms on campus and require all new buildings to have a lactation room.

9. Provide Electronic Data Ports to All Family Housing Residents.

10. Appoint a Small Committee To Solicit Input About these Recommendations, Monitor Implementation of Student Parent Task Force Recommendations, and Continue to Address the Needs of Student Parents.

Prioritized Groupings of Student Parent Task Force Recommendations

Recommendations Considered to Have Primarily High Impact, High Urgency as Well as Low to Moderate Cost and Relatively Easy Implementation:

- 1A. Have a centralized means for obtaining, storing, and maintaining basic demographic information about students who have children so that the University can better direct information, programming, and other resources to these students.
- 1B. Develop and disseminate hard copy materials that can be used to educate the wider campus community about the needs of student parents and the resources that are available to assist them.
- 1C. Develop a student parent website to educate the campus community about resources that serve student parents.
- 2A. Develop a statement that puts the University on record as supporting family-friendly practices.
- 2B. Request that deans and department chairs engage in discussions with faculty about their attitudes toward and expectations of student parents as well as provide a summary report to the Provost of current policies and practices that affect the academic and cultural experience for their student parents
- 3C. Establish policies whereby graduate students can arrange with their department for short-term part-time study and/or extensions on the time limits to candidacy and degree for exceptional circumstances.
- 4F. Revise UM child care center wait list policy so that at least ten children of low-income students each year can gain access to UM center care.
- 8A. Install diaper changing tables in at least two bathrooms (one for men, one for women) in existing major campus buildings, especially those used by the public. In all new buildings and renovations, install changing tables in at least two bathrooms.
- 8B. Increase the number of lactation rooms on campus and require all new buildings to have a lactation room.
9. Provide electronic data ports to all Family Housing residents.
10. Appoint a small committee to solicit input about the Student Parent Task Force recommendations, monitor implementation of recommendations, and continue to address the needs of student parents.

Recommendations Considered to Have High Impact, High Urgency With Moderate Cost and More Difficult Implementation:

- 3A. Revise how the University defines “full-time” versus “part-time” enrollment so that students wanting to spread their course loads more evenly among the Fall, Winter and Spring/Summer terms are not disadvantaged.
- 3B. Encourage the development of part-time master’s programs in the professional schools and colleges.
- 4A. Contract with the Child Care Network to increase the number of child care providers in the University area willing to care for infants and toddlers, as well as to provide evening care.
- 4B. Offer small start-up grants to new providers who commit to reserving spaces for the children of UM students, faculty, and staff.
- 4C. Provide incentives for residents of Family Housing to become licensed child care providers.
- 4D. Use all of the methods in Recommendations 4A-C to also increase the availability of evening child care, particularly during study periods and exam times.
- 4E. Consider raising the salary levels of UM child care center teachers and directors in order to reduce high turnover and maintain quality child care capacity on campus.
- 5A. Increase the amount of money directed to the Child Care Subsidy Program that is administered through the Office of Financial Aid.
- 6. Encourage all schools to determine how to best address the additional financial needs of students who have high monthly expenses on a regular basis due to dependent care or other unique costs.
- 7A. Allow all University of Michigan students to purchase GradCare for themselves and their dependents.
- 7B. Create the role of a student health insurance coordinator who has the responsibility and authority to coordinate all University- or UM student-sponsored insurance and health service offerings to students.
- 7C. Allow the spouses/partners of current and recently graduated or disenrolled UM students to buy the UHS Prepaid Plan health insurance.

Recommendations Considered to Have Lesser Impact and Urgency With Moderate Cost and Moderately Easy Implementation:

- 2C. Hold an annual ceremony that publicly recognizes and rewards units or individuals for successful programs they develop in support of families or work-life balance in general.
- 5B. Revise University travel reimbursement policy so that students, faculty, and staff can claim their additional child care fees as an allowable travel expense where this is compatible with federal, state, or private funding agency guidelines.
- 7D. Review the copay structure for the three University-related clinics preferred under the domestic and international student insurance plans and lower instances of \$50 copays down to \$10.

Section II: Task Force Recommendations

**Enriching the Mix:
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Recommendation 1:

Improve the Information We Collect and Distribute Regarding Student Parents

1A. Have a centralized means for obtaining, storing, and maintaining basic demographic information about students who have children so that the University can better direct information, programming, and other resources to these students.

Background:

The University lacks an ongoing system for comprehensively collecting information about all students who have children. What data has been collected has been obtained through targeted and often informal methods such as email solicitation, attendance at events aimed at student parents, or focus groups. Information about an array of unique student parent needs has been culled from these methods of data collection, but a more comprehensive system of data collection would greatly improve the UM's ability to direct appropriate programs, information, and other resources toward student parents.

The lack of complete and centralized data has not only made it difficult for UM to know the size of the student parent population, but also how to prioritize responses to their needs. Furthermore, it has been extremely difficult for many units who are currently offering services and programs to student parents (Family Care Resources, Center for the Education of Women, Rackham Graduate School, and Financial Aid, among others) to get information directly into the hands of these students. As a result, there are a number of student parents who are unaware of the Family Care Resources Program, the Child Care Subsidy Program, as well as the growing number of social and support activities taking place on campus. Enhancing the University's analysis of student demographics to accommodate data on student parents would also enhance its ability to identify those problems most pressing for the greatest number of student parents.

Status:

Given delays in earlier attempts to collect student parent data at the University level, the Rackham Graduate School agreed to develop a campus-wide, web-based survey of student parents. An email message with a link to the web survey was sent in April 2001 to all graduate and professional students, asking student parents to voluntarily respond. At the time this report was written, Rackham had heard back from 890 graduate and professional student parents, 375 of whom noted their interest in receiving email notification of student parent services and events. The Task Force commends Rackham for undertaking this effort.

Because of the size of the undergraduate student population, it was decided not to send them an email about this survey. Instead, the Office of Financial Aid (OFA) provided Rackham with

information about the number of students who applied to their office for aid and indicated that they have dependents. OFA numbers indicate that there were 160 undergraduate student parents who applied for financial aid as of Winter term 2001.

The Task Force recommends that information such as that collected by Rackham's survey be collected each year for new students and a database maintained so that University units serving student parents can better direct information, programming, and other resources to those students.

1B. Develop and disseminate hard copy materials that can be used to educate the wider campus community about the needs of student parents and the resources that are available to assist them.

Background:

Due to the size and highly decentralized nature of the University, it is necessary to develop a coordinated effort for informing faculty, staff and students about the issues confronting student parents as well as the various resources available to assist them. Without an educational/marketing component, student parents - and those seeking to help them - will struggle in their search to find the resources and the networks that exist in various places around the University.

As part of this effort, the Task Force recommends that hard copy information be sent to all school, college, and departmental student support staff across the campus as well as to department chairs, graduate chairs, and faculty. Schools, colleges, and departments should be provided additional sets of materials that can be made available to their students. Estimated printing cost for 1,500 copies of a four page, double-sided package of materials is \$670 through a local printing company.

This information should be referred to in all orientation programs held across the campus. A comprehensive pamphlet of information entitled "UM Resources for Students with Parenting Responsibilities" was developed by the Rackham Graduate School, Family Care Resource Program, and the Center for the Education of Women two years ago. This can be used as a starting point, but be expanded to note some of the community and governmental resources available to students as well.

Currently when a Rackham graduate student requests an applicant packet, the materials include mention of the Rackham webpage that lists resources at UM for student parents. Each school

should review its application materials to reference that information as well. In addition, any undergraduate or professional student indicating on a financial aid form (for the first time) that they have dependents should be given this information as well.

1C. Develop a student parent website to educate the campus community about resources that serve student parents.

The Task Force recommends that a central web page be developed on the University's website that specifically lists the resources available to student parents. In addition, a list of frequently asked questions (FAQ) should be developed and included on this page. The answers to each FAQ should include the names and phone numbers of offices where additional information and assistance can be obtained.

Status:

Two student parents eager to have a student parent website began creating a student-run website during Winter 2001. Any University website aimed toward student parents should have links to this type of student-run effort.

Recommendation 2:
Improve the Academic and Cultural Climate for Student Parents

Background:

Graduate students have told of a number of instances in which faculty were very supportive of their dual role as student and parent. However, from focus groups and interviews of UM students and faculty, it is clear that not all UM faculty support a student's choice to combine scholarship with raising a family. We have heard about individual faculty, and even entire departments, who share a negative perception of student parents. Within these departments, faculty (either intentionally or not) perpetuate a culture that questions anyone who commits time to anything other than academics. In fact, several graduate students even indicated that they have not shared with anyone in their department that they have a child(ren) for fear they would be perceived as having a lesser commitment to their studies.

By failing to acknowledge and support the existence of student parents on campus, the University adds an additional psychic burden to these already overworked students. Because of the current culture, student parents often feel isolated and invisible in their dual role as parent and scholar. As one student wrote:

“The whole (University) system is set up in a way that assumes the normal grad student doesn't have kids. I then internalize this and feel bizarre that what is quite normal (being a 37-year old married woman with a kid) feels abnormal in this context.”

Changing academic cultures and climate is a very difficult endeavor. If this effort is to succeed, it will require a clear message from top University officers about the need to support student parents. The Task Force recommends the following actions to improve the University climate:

2A. Develop a statement that puts the University on record as supporting family-friendly practices.

We recommend the Provost send this statement to all faculty, students and staff detailing ways they can be flexible to help student parents meet their educational goals. (See examples below.) In order to demonstrate university-wide commitment to this, each of the deans should also be asked to add his or her signature. This statement could be distributed annually to faculty and staff and referenced in student orientation materials and the Standard Practice Guide.

2B. Request that deans and department chairs engage in discussions with faculty about their attitudes toward and expectations of student parents as well as provide a summary report to the Provost on current policies and practices that affect the academic and cultural experience for student parents.

Deans and department chairs play an important role in managing the culture of an academic unit. By reviewing the ways in which departmental policies and practices impact student parents, units can gain a clearer picture as to the ways in which the academic and cultural environment might be improved. Anonymous student surveys could be part of the review and improvement effort. Information on best practices could be culled from summary reports submitted to the Provost and then shared across units in order to improve the culture across campus.

Examples of ways faculty, staff, students and University administration can be supportive of student parents:

- Make accommodations for students who occasionally have to miss class due to an ill child.
- Allow greater flexibility in the way students can meet certain academic milestones (e.g., sequencing of courses, course load, scheduling of preliminary exams).
- Encourage faculty, students and staff in the departments to schedule student meetings, lectures, and social events at times that respect students' family and other non-academic commitments.
- Program family-friendly social events (such as picnics) at orientation and throughout the year.
- At special ceremonies (e.g., graduation), publicly acknowledge the important role that families play in supporting student parents.
- Have a toy box of new or gently used toys, books and crayons for children to use when they accompany their parents to a meeting or other obligation in the department.
- Offer departmental resources (space or funds) so that student parents can develop support networks (e.g., the Significant Others and Spouses club in the Business School, BioBabies in Biology).
- Continue to coordinate University breaks with those of the local public schools.
- Establish more curb-side library book drop boxes so that student parents can return books without having to bring their child(ren) into the library. A curb-side box already exists at the Graduate Library and boxes used to exist at the Business, Medical, and old Social Work schools until they were eliminated due to construction.

2C. Hold an annual ceremony that publicly recognizes and rewards units or individuals for successful programs they develop in support of families or work-life balance in general.

By recognizing efforts to improve the climate for student parents, the University can demonstrate institutional support of those efforts. Details of these programs could be shared across the University so that others benefit from learning about innovations elsewhere on campus. Exemplary units and individuals could be identified through a process of nominations made to the offices of the Provost and the Vice President for Student Affairs.

Status:

Some units are already working to build a more supportive climate on campus for student parents. Family Housing and the Family Care Resources Program (FCRP) administer key services to this population of students. The Center for the Education of Women (CEW), FCRP, and the Rackham Graduate School sponsored a number of formal and informal meetings where student parents could meet each other, share information about resources, and begin to develop a community of support for each other. (See Attachment B.) The Rackham Graduate School, Rackham Student Government, the student group Advocates for Student Parents, and CEW collaborated to promote University-wide social networking activities for student parents. As of May 2001, student parents had organized a trip to the Exhibit Museum and a May Day celebration. An email group for student parents was established and the Student Parents Group is in the process of becoming an official MSA student group.

Recommendation 3:
***Increase the Flexibility of Academic Programs to Enable
Student Parents to Meet their Academic and Family Needs***

3A: Revise how the University defines “full-time” versus “part-time” enrollment so that students wanting to spread their course loads more evenly among the Fall, Winter, and Spring/Summer terms are not disadvantaged.

Background:

Currently, the University defines full-time versus part-time students based on the number of credit hours a student enrolls per semester. For undergraduate students, full-time enrollment begins with 12 credit hours per semester. For graduate pre-candidate students, full time begins with 9 credit hours per semester and, for candidates, full time begins with 8 credits. In many undergraduate and graduate programs, students are not required, or even expected, to enroll during the Spring/Summer term.

Being considered a full-time student is critical for many students. In the case of graduate students, most graduate programs only accept students who can enroll on a full-time basis. In order for graduate students to be eligible for most fellowships, they must also be full-time students. In addition, any graduate student wishing to defer repayment of federally funded undergraduate student loans must be enrolled at least half-time. International graduate students have the additional need to document their full-time status in order to retain their student visas.

The penalties do not stop there, however, since the current tuition structure makes it significantly more expensive for a student to spread his/her credit hours over a twelve month period rather than doing all coursework during the Fall and Winter semesters. In one analysis of five different schools at the University in which there are significant proportions of part-time students (Architecture; Engineering; Nursing; Literature, Science and the Arts; and Rackham’s Interdepartmental Programs), part-time graduate students were paying between \$1,000 to \$1,600 more in tuition than their full-time counterparts for the same number of credit hours. For undergraduate students, the price differential using the same assumptions was even greater -- part-time undergraduate students in these programs pay between \$1,900 and \$2,300 more per year than full-time undergraduate students. (See Figure 1.)

**Figure 1: Examples of Tuition Rates Charged to Michigan Residents Based on the Number of Credit Hours Taken Per Term
UM Ann Arbor Campus, 2000-2001 Academic Year**

School/College	Undergraduate Program			Graduate or Professional Degrees		
	Three Term	Two Term	Additional Costs for Three Term Enrollment	Three Term	Two Term	Additional Costs for Three Term Enrollment
Architecture (Graduate and Professional and degrees)	\$9,021	\$7,090	\$1,931	\$11,835	\$10,738	\$1,097
Engineering (professional degrees only)	\$11,031	\$8,690	\$2,341	\$14,091	\$12,458	\$1,633
Nursing (Graduate and Professional degrees)	\$9,021	\$7,090	\$1,931	\$12,291	\$10,846	\$1,445
LSA Undergrad/ Rackham Graduate Interdepartmental Programs	\$9,111	\$7,154	\$1,957	\$12,051	\$10,636	\$1,415

Note:

UM Registrar considers undergraduates as attending full-time if they enroll for 12 or more credits per term. UM Registrar considers graduates at the pre-candidacy level to be full-time if they are enrolled for 9 or more credits per term. Candidates are considered full-time if enrolled for 8 or more credits.

Assumptions:

1. Undergraduate student is in the upper division and is taking 30 credits between September and August. Full-time student takes 15 credits in each of two terms. Part-time student takes 11 credits in each of two terms and 8 credits in a third term.
2. Graduate student is a pre-candidate taking 20 credits between September and August. Full-time student takes 10 credits in each of two terms. Part-time student takes 7 credits in each of two terms and 6 credits in a third term. Within our current structure it is therefore possible for two students to take an equal number of credit hours between September and August, yet for only one to be considered a full-time student. For instance, if Graduate Student A takes 10 credits in the Fall term and 10 in the Winter term, while Graduate Student B elects to take 7 credits in the Fall, 7 in the Winter, and 6 during the Spring/Summer term, only Graduate Student A is considered a full-time student. In addition, because Graduate Student B is defined to be a part-time student, s/he will pay more for the same number of credit hours than will Graduate Student A. This price difference is not solely attributable to the additional term's worth of maintenance fees, which amounts to only \$185.

Other analyses using different assumptions about the number of credit hours taken by full- and part-time students did result in narrower margins of tuition price difference. But even in those situations where full-time students were not taking advantage of the “free” credits hours that could be taken beyond the full-time credit threshold (e.g., an undergraduate student took only 12 credits when he/she could have taken 15 credits for the same price), part-time students still faced higher tuition costs than their full-time colleagues who were taking the same number of credits over two semesters, rather than three.

Some departments are finding creative ways to accommodate students by working around existing University policies. For instance, they allow students to enroll for a class in the Fall or Winter without expecting that student to actually take the class at that point in time. At the end of the semester, the student takes a grade of “incomplete” and completes the course work over the Spring/Summer, at which time a final grade is given. This strategy, however, comes at some cost to the student since the “incomplete” grade remains on the student’s permanent record even after the final grade is determined.

A few schools have regular part-time master’s programs in place. The Business School’s Evening MBA program revised student tuition charges in order to eliminate the price disadvantage to these part-time students.

Many students who are raising children - or have other responsibilities outside of academia - find it exceedingly difficult to balance their academic, family, and work demands within this current configuration. A number of student parents told us that they would prefer to spread their required credit hours over the Fall, Winter and Spring/Summer terms. This modification, they feel, enables them to better meet the multiple demands on their time. Yet currently they do not have this option unless they are willing and can afford to be defined as a part-time student, thereby losing the benefits mentioned above that come with being a full-time student.

We recommend, therefore, that the definition of full time student be determined on the basis of a twelve month year (September to August) rather than on a semester basis in order to achieve greater comparability between the rates charged to full- and part-time students. Because this recommendation would involve financial restructuring of the tuition rates, this Task Force suggests that a small working group of representatives from the schools and colleges, in conjunction with the Registrar’s Office and University finance experts, determine how to implement this change.

3B: Encourage the development of part-time master's programs in the various professional schools and colleges.

Historically, graduate and professional programs were designed for students interested in pursuing academic studies before entering their careers. As we witness an increasing number of adults choosing to return to school for advanced degrees in order to further their careers or change career tracks, it is clear that part-time graduate and professional programs play an increasingly important role in society. The demand by prospective students for part-time programs has already led Business, Engineering, and Public Health to develop specifically designed part-time master's degree programs.

While the University may plan on creating distributive education programs to address the needs of certain students, it is important to note that distributive education alone will not meet the needs of students seeking part-time campus-based educational opportunities.

This Task Force recommends further exploration and development of part-time master's degree programs. If this is not undertaken, some schools and colleges may well risk their ability to attract the brightest and most qualified students to their master's programs.

3C. Establish policies whereby graduate students can arrange with their department for short-term part-time study and/or extensions on the time limits to candidacy and degree for exceptional circumstances.

While the Task Force did not recommend the development of standard part-time Ph.D. programs, it did see the need for departmental flexibility with regard to students with unique short-term needs for part-time study. (Most undergraduate programs allow students to enroll part-time.) The Rackham Graduate School already has a policy that allows students to petition the relevant department/program chair and dean in order to receive a one year extension if child bearing or other forms of dependent care (e.g., injured spouse, aging parents) seriously affect a student's period of study. Other schools and colleges also arrange for flexibility in this regard, but on a much more informal and less well advertised basis. Academic flexibility in exceptional circumstances should be made policy for all the schools and colleges so that all students (not just student parents) are afforded the additional time they need to balance their academic responsibilities with any extraordinary family responsibilities that might arise.

The Task Force recommends that policies be established whereby graduate students can arrange for short-term part-time study and/or extensions on time limits to candidacy and degree when faced with exceptional circumstances.

Recommendation 4:
***Increase the Availability of Licensed Quality Child Care
in the Local and Campus Community***

Background:

Although the Task Force was not asked to focus specifically on student parents' need for child care, we include it in our report because of the frequency with which student parents cited this among their top concerns. At every student parent forum held this year and in past years, the lack of affordable child care – especially for infants and toddlers - quickly surfaced. Although these same frustrations are shared by the vast majority of working parents throughout the United States, including faculty and staff at the University, our student parents are in the position of being among those who are least able to afford quality care. One other gap in child care is the lack of evening care, which is needed by students particularly at the times they need to prepare for midterms and finals.

While several student parents expressed a desire to have their children enrolled in one of the four University child care programs that accept children of students, the high costs of center-based care, along with the long waiting lists at these centers, preclude this from being a viable option for many student parents. The centers themselves estimate that 29% (73 children) of the 248 full time equivalent children enrolled are the children of graduate students, roughly another third are the children of faculty, and another third that of staff. Only two children of undergraduate student parents were enrolled in any of the four University centers at the time this report was written.

As noted above, care for infants and toddlers is in especially short supply. Only one center affiliated with the University, the UM Hospital Child Care Center, accepts infants and toddlers, but this center is largely available to the children of UM Health system faculty and staff. Of the four centers open to students' children, only one takes children as young as 21 months and the other three only enroll children age 2 1/2 years or older.

Although a number of members of this Task Force initially advocated for the University to build more child care centers, we came to a common conclusion that this is not the best approach. Data from nearly five years ago showed that at that time, it would have cost at least \$750,000 to construct an additional 12 infant spaces at the Family Housing Center. In addition, it cost approximately \$3 million in 1991 for the UM Hospital to build its child care center which has a licensed capacity for 156 children. These figures do not include the costs of staffing or maintaining these centers. They also do not reflect the costs of regularly appraising the

architectural soundness of the facilities and redesigning them when needed. Given the high costs associated with building even one center, coupled with the fact that only a small number of families would be served while a large number of student parents would still have unmet child care needs, we felt that money could be better spent looking at other solutions.

Given this, the following are the Task Force's recommendations for increasing the availability of child care:

4A. Contract with the Child Care Network to increase the number of licensed child care providers in the University area willing to care for infants and toddlers, as well as to provide evening care.

Child Care Network is a community resource for child care information, advocacy, and training. We already have a working relationship with them within UM's Family Care Resources Program. We would like to see the University establish a contract with this organization in which they would be paid to find new providers in the University area willing to become licensed to care for the children (especially infants and toddlers) of UM students, faculty and staff. Some of these new providers might be people who are currently caring for children in their homes, yet doing so without a license. Other providers may be currently caring for only older children, not infants and toddlers. Child Care Network could train these providers on the skills needed to care for children under the age of 2 1/2. Training would focus on quality components such as child development and age appropriate toys and activities, with the end results of improving the quality of care and becoming licensed.

4B. Offer small start-up grants to new providers who commit to reserving spaces for the children of UM students, faculty, and staff.

The University could offer small start-up grants (up to a certain dollar amount) to new child care providers who commit to reserving a certain number of their child care spaces for the children (particularly infants and toddlers) of UM-affiliated individuals. Funds could be used for expenses such as the purchase of cribs, high chairs, and minor renovations in order to meet licensing regulations. In return, these new providers would be expected to reserve spaces for the children of UM students, staff, or faculty, with priority enrollment going to students' children.

4C. Provide incentives for residents of Family Housing to become licensed child care providers.

Subsidize the rental cost of two units in North Campus Family Housing for families willing to provide licensed care in the unit for the children of UM students, faculty and staff, with priority enrollment going to the children of students. This program could be launched initially as a pilot project and later funded as an ongoing program if its success was established.

Status:

Task Force discussions and meetings with student parents on the topic of child care encouraged the Family Care Resources Program to submit a grant proposal to the Department of Education's "Child Care Access Means Parents In School" program. Notification to grant recipients is expected by mid-summer 2001. Grant recipients are expected to leverage local resources to expand access to child care for Pell eligible undergraduate student parents.

Recommendations 4A, 4B, and 4C above have already received senior leadership approval, are included in the grant proposal, and commit the University to significant cost sharing on the project. Cost projections noted in the grant (shared and non-shared expenses) include:

- Child Care Network contract: \$28,500 in first grant year and \$23,400 in second year. This contract includes money for \$300 start-up grants for up to 25 new providers.
- Family Housing rental subsidies: \$12,084 in second grant year, \$12,700 in third year, \$13,300 in fourth year, and continuing on in subsequent years.
- Personnel costs for a graduate student intern to assist in administration of these efforts: \$9,216, \$9,678, \$10,162, and \$10,674 in the four respective grant years.

Should the grant fail to receive federal funding, the Task Force recommends that the University commit to fully funding these initiatives using University monies.

4D. Use all of the methods in Recommendations 4A-C to also increase the availability of evening child care, particularly during study periods and exam times.

4E. Consider raising the salary levels of UM child care center teachers and directors in order to reduce high turnover and maintain quality child care capacity on campus.

A critical part of the overall strategy of expanding access to quality child care relies on continuous efforts to maintain and improve the quality of existing child care services on campus. Children's sense of trust, ability to bond and form healthy relationships, and their intellectual development are all impacted by a center's ability to recruit and retain well-trained staff and management. (*Results of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Study of Early Child Care, reported at the Society for Research in Child Development meeting, Washington DC, April 4, 1997.*)

High turnover of staff and management can have a detrimental effect not only on the children, but on the child care centers themselves. Nationally as well as locally, turnover of child care staff averages 30%. In one of the UM centers last year, however, turnover was estimated to be as high as 90%. Turnover and inability to recruit qualified management led to this year's closing of a summer camp program run by one of the UM centers. Additionally, five private child care centers in Ann Arbor (some very long established) went out of business recently due to an inability to recruit and retain qualified staff. Such closings lead to concern in the UM child care community of the potential for closings of campus centers, or at least, a potential drop in the quality of services due to similar difficulties.

Low salaries are frequently pointed to as the key reason for turnover among child care staff and management. Because teachers and directors can make significantly more income by moving to teaching positions within the public schools, there is currently a steady drain of staff out of child care center positions.

Some UM child care centers have raised rates by as much as 10% in attempts to recruit new teachers. However, additional rate increases can no longer be passed along to parents because UM centers' rates are already at the high end of the cost of care within the local community. As recently as 1998, 14 out of 18 major universities surveyed, including some peer institutions, provided significant financial assistance to their child care centers, recognizing that families cannot bear the full burden of cost.

The Task Force realizes that low pay for the work of child care providers is a national problem, indicative of the low value our society places on the care of children. Nevertheless, we believe the UM should play a leadership role in improving the situation locally.

The Student Parent Task Force therefore recommends that the Family Care Resources Program (FCRP) collect data regarding the adequacy of the salaries paid to UM child care center directors and teachers and their impact on turnover and quality of care. UM data should be benchmarked against other universities' child care centers where turnover has been

kept low. The committee that is assigned to oversee implementation of those Student Parent Task Force recommendations approved by senior leadership can review this information. FCRP's analysis can assist the committee in recommending solutions to reduce turnover and improve the University's ability to maintain high quality child care services for the campus community.

4F. Revise UM child care center wait list policy so that at least ten children of low-income students each year can gain access to UM center care.

As mentioned above, the University has applied for a federal Department of Education grant that is designed to expand access to child care for the children of low-income undergraduates. As part of that grant proposal, University leadership has already committed to reserving a total of ten spaces per year among the four UM child care centers that serve students. These spaces would be filled by the children of students who have applied for a child care subsidy, with top priority for placement going to low-income undergraduates. Reservation of spaces would begin with fall 2002 enrollment.

The Student Parent Task Force recommends that the University respond to students' need (particularly undergraduates' need) for greater access to UM centers by honoring this commitment even if federal funding for the grant is not received.

Recommendation 5:
Increase Funds to Help Students Pay for Child Care

5A. Increase the amount of money directed to the Child Care Subsidy Program that is administered through the Office of Financial Aid.

Background:

At the University of Michigan, undergraduate students -- as well as professional students in Business, Dentistry, Law and Medicine -- are awarded financial aid packages based on need. Although it is not part of the standard budget used to determine eligibility for need-based aid, a student may request to have his/her budget adjusted to allow for certain costs of supporting dependents (e.g., room and board, child care). In contrast, most graduate student funding is distributed on the basis of merit. No consideration is given to the financial needs of graduate students or the presence or absence of dependents.

Historically, dependents were taken into account in determining stipend levels for federally funded fellowships (e.g., National Science Foundation, National Institutes of Health, Department of Defense). Unfortunately, that method for determining funding levels ended about twenty years ago. The current practice of treating all graduate students as if they were single with no dependents creates a problem for graduate students who cannot support themselves and their families on their monthly stipends. As a result, student parents often need to look for additional employment and/or settle for less child care than they need or a lower quality child care than they want. With lower quality or informal care, parents face a greater likelihood of break downs in the child care arrangements. Thus, either additional employment by the student parent or opting for lower cost child care can have a significant impact on a student parent's ability to make adequate academic progress.

The University is to be commended for the child care funding that is now available through the Child Care Subsidy Program administered through the Office of Financial Aid and through the Tuition Grant Program¹ offered through the Provost's Office. However, these programs only pay for a fraction of the cost of child care. Currently, the Child Care Subsidy Program covers, on average, about 25% of the child care costs of the students who end up qualifying for this program. In addition, students must have their children in licensed care to be eligible for a

¹ The Provost's child care tuition grant program is limited to those who are fortunate to have found a place within one of the University centers. In addition, a student would not be eligible for both this money and the Child Care Subsidy money administered through the Office of Financial Aid. The student currently can only receive the larger of the awards made from these programs.

subsidy - yet licensed care is usually more expensive than unlicensed care. The most expensive care of all is faced by parents of infants and toddlers. (The cost for infant care in the Ann Arbor area can be as high as \$12,000 per year.) Caring for babies is a labor intensive activity, so providers have to either decrease the number of children they take in or increase their staff – either of which impacts the structure of their fees. Student parents feel these financial burdens more intensely as they are least likely to be earning a salary that can accommodate the costs of high quality care.

Subsidy money also has to be increased to ensure that students working full-time on their degrees during the summer months can receive assistance with their child care fees. Subsidy awards have been made in the last two years to graduate students during the summer months – but this occurred not because the pot of money was increased, but rather because the Fall and Winter stipend levels were low enough to have monies available for the summer. There has been discussion of funding child care for students (undergraduates and graduates) who must work in the summer but are enrolled for the following fall term, however there was not enough subsidy money to seriously consider this idea. Finally, as more students hear about this program, the individual awards will decrease in size unless more money is directed to the program.

The Task Force recommends, therefore, that an additional \$50,000 per year be made available to undergraduate and graduate student parents through the Child Care Subsidy Program administered through the Office of Financial Aid.

5B. Revise University travel reimbursement policy so that students, faculty, and staff can claim their additional child care fees as an allowable travel expense where this is compatible with federal, state, or private funding agency guidelines.

When student parents need to travel on University related business, some students (particularly single parents who do not have friends or family members living close by), must arrange for additional child care while they are out of town. The cost of overnight care is quite high, so it takes no time at all for these additional child care fees to become a major portion of a student's travel expenses. The Task Force heard stories of student parents who, due to family responsibilities, were unable to present papers at conferences or to make additional dissertation research trips because of child care expenses. In many cases, these kinds of choices will significantly disadvantage the students in their professional development, their ability to form

networks, and to pursue future job opportunities. It may also contribute to the erroneous perception that students who have children are less committed to fulfilling their academic responsibilities.

Current University policy considers child care costs a personal, rather than allowable, travel expense. Thus, student parents cannot be reimbursed for child care fees as they can for their transportation, food, and hotel charges. While some deans have used their discretion to override this policy, it is not uniformly understood that such exceptions can or should be made. The Task Force, therefore, recommends that University travel reimbursement policy be revised to clearly allow for reimbursement of additional child care expenses where this is compatible federal, state, or private funding agency guidelines.

Recommendation 6:

Encourage All Schools to Determine How to Best Address the Additional Financial Needs of Students Who Have High Monthly Expenses Due to Dependent Care or Other Unique Costs.

As one looks at the financial needs of student parents, there is no way around the fact that these students consistently face monthly expenses that are higher than those of “traditional” students. Unlike the federal funding of graduate students that was available in the 1970s and 1980s, today many fellowships, including Rackham’s fellowships, do not account for any dependent care expenses a student might have. Having said this, we also assert that student parents with high child care expenses are not the only students who face this type of problem. Other students occasionally face the cost of caring for a seriously ill or injured spouse/partner or parent, or struggle to pay catastrophic medical bills, while pursuing their academic programs.

Many of the University’s schools already have special funds that can be offered, through loans or grants, to assist students in crisis. Most of these funds, such as the Rackham Discretionary Fund, have been set up to assist students through one-time emergencies. Other funds can be dispersed at the discretion of a school’s dean. These monies do not serve as the primary funding mechanism for a student; instead, they augment the other funding sources students receive such as stipends, loans, work-study.

Given our goal of having a diverse student community, we believe that it is critical for the University to retain academically qualified students who face special financial circumstances on an ongoing basis. The Task Force therefore suggests that each school maintain an additional fund to ease the unique financial burdens that some students face. These funds could be used to assist students with ongoing, as well as emergency, financial costs that are not otherwise covered. In the case of Rackham, we recommend that \$250,000 be allocated toward establishing such a fund. Such funds could be included as a priority for giving in the upcoming development campaign.

Recommendation 7:
***Expand and Improve Health Insurance Options and Information
for Students and their Dependents***

7A. Allow all University of Michigan students to purchase GradCare for themselves and their dependents.

Background:

Currently, in order for a student to be eligible to be enrolled in GradCare, he or she must fall into one of the following categories:

- Graduate Student Instructor or Graduate Student Staff Assistant employee of the University with an appointment of .25 or higher and funding for a minimum of four continuous months in Fall and Winter term, or two continuous months in Spring/Summer term
- Graduate Student Research Assistant employee of the University with an appointment of .25 or higher and funding for a minimum of four continuous months at all times
- Holder of a fellowship that includes health coverage
- Medical School student

Students not falling under one of these categories have only one other University health coverage option, depending on their nationality – either the insurance plan offered through Michigan Student Assembly for domestic students or the International Center’s plan. If the University were to allow any undergraduate, graduate or professional student to purchase GradCare, it would represent an important expansion of the health insurance options available to students – both those with dependents and those without.

GradCare provides more generous coverage than either of the two student insurance plans, particularly in areas important to student parents: well-child visits, immunizations, birth control pills, and family planning visits. Furthermore, both student plans limit coverage for pre-existing conditions, which would include care for pregnancies that began before the student purchased MSA insurance. GradCare does not limit coverage of pre-existing conditions. GradCare’s copay structure is also much simpler and its University provider network much broader than those encouraged under the student insurance plans. This results in a more rational “medical home” for families served through GradCare.

Because GradCare premiums are significantly more expensive than MSA student insurance for single students or students with only one dependent, we do not expect that many of these students would choose to purchase GradCare if it were made available to them. The Task Force assumes that most undergraduates, similarly, would not choose to enroll in GradCare if it were opened to them because many of them are covered by their parents' insurance. However, for graduate or older undergraduate students with two or more dependents, paying a slightly higher premium in exchange for the additional benefits offered by GradCare would make it an attractive choice over MSA student insurance.

It is understood that by opening up GradCare enrollment to all students, the plan would face increased risk due to potential adverse selection by some students or their dependents who might need the broader medical coverage offered through GradCare. However, it is reasonable to expect that the increased volume of healthy enrollees would offset this particular risk and thereby keep premium costs down. An expansion in the enrollment of GradCare would also have positive financial returns to the University's provider network. An accurate estimate of costs involved with implementing this recommendation would need to be developed under the direction of the head of the University of Michigan Health System, with financial input from M—CARE and the University Benefits Office.

7B. Create the role of a student health insurance coordinator who has the responsibility and authority to coordinate all University- or UM student-sponsored insurance and health service offerings to students.

Background:

Responsibility for the health insurance and services available to University students is divided among three different offices: the Benefits Office, the University Health Service Managed Care/Student Health Insurance Office, and the International Center. Each office makes decisions regarding insurance/service benefits, pricing structure, and eligibility largely independent of the other offices. The beginnings of a coordinated approach exist, but only through liaisons developed to support the Michigan Student Assembly (MSA) insurance contracting process.

Currently, all three offices also advise students who come to them with insurance questions. The International Center devotes approximately one full-time equivalent position to advising international students about insurance coverage. Employee Benefits has a team devoted to graduate student questions. University Health Service (UHS) has a staff of four who advise undergraduate and graduate students about MSA and UHS benefits, as well as other insurance/services available to them including governmental options.

Creation of the role of a student health insurance coordinator would significantly improve coordination and education related to the various health insurance options and health services offered to students. This position could be housed within the Managed Care/Student Health Insurance Office at UHS or at the Benefits Office. However, given UHS' proximity to students and the fact that it is already advising on the full range of options available to both undergraduates and graduates, the Task Force recommends UHS as the more attractive location. We estimate the annual salary of this full-time position to be in the range between \$65,000 - \$85,000. If the role were incorporated into an existing position upgrade, new costs to the University would be substantially less than this figure.

The major responsibility of this position would be to coordinate with the administrators of all University- or UM student-sponsored insurance/service offerings. The coordinator would be a key participant in health insurance benefit design and contracting issues for all University employee plans, for the MSA and International student insurance plans, as well as for the benefit and pricing of UHS tuition-paid and Prepaid Plan services. This would allow the University to have an overall vision for the offerings made available to students, making it easier to recognize and correct any gaps or incongruities.

This position would also have an educational component. The University needs an ongoing comprehensive outreach effort to keep the campus community informed about the health care resources that exist within and beyond the University which are available to students and their dependents. All students as well as departmental student services staff need to stay current about the details of the various options for health insurance, health services, government programs, and other health related resources available to students. The coordinator would also serve as a reference point for students seeking advice and referrals related to the selection of health insurance appropriate to themselves and any dependents.

7C. Allow the spouses/partners of current and recently graduated or disenrolled UM students to buy the UHS Prepaid Plan health insurance.

UHS Prepaid Plan is an insurance package of outpatient services available through University Health Service that is sold only to students who graduated or were enrolled at the UM within the past twelve months. Its coverage is equivalent to the UHS services provided to enrolled students who pay a UHS fee as part of their tuition. By expanding eligibility for the purchase of this product to the spouses/partners of current and recently graduated or disenrolled students, a

relatively inexpensive insurance product covering outpatient treatments for many common illnesses would be made available.

As mentioned before, however, UHS does not serve children under 10. Government insurance programs offering generous inpatient and outpatient benefits are available for the children of poor or near-poor students and the Task Force believes it would be wiser to direct students toward these kinds of alternatives, rather than offer UHS Prepaid Plan to students' children (of any age).

An accurate estimate of costs involved with implementing this recommendation would need to be developed through a collaboration between the heads of the University Health Service, M-CARE, and the University of Michigan Health System.

7D. Review the copay structure for the three University-related clinics preferred under the domestic and international student insurance plans and lower instances of \$50 copays down to \$10.

An odd variation in copayment requirements faces any student parent whose family is covered by either the Michigan Student Assembly insurance for domestic students or that offered by the International Center. These copay structures are likely the result of policies that were well-reasoned initially, but are now outdated following changes in the University's provider network. Another contributing factor is that these insurance plans were designed so that students have a financial incentive (\$0 copay) to use the University Health Service (UHS). The reasoning behind this is that students already pay a fee for UHS services as part of their tuition and should not be charged additional copayments for services covered by that fee. Furthermore, copays of \$50 have been set as a disincentive for students and their families to use providers who are not within the preferred set of three University-related clinics. In some cases, though, students or their family members face a \$50 copay even if they are seen at one of the three preferred clinics.

Adding to the complexity of this issue is the fact that UHS does not provide services for children under 10, nor does it offer maternity care. Therefore, students' younger children, pregnant students, or the pregnant spouses/partners of students must go elsewhere to obtain care. The spouses/partners and children ten or older of students may be seen at UHS (except for maternity care), but their care must be paid for with other insurance or out-of-pocket. The two other preferred clinics provide comprehensive outpatient services and serve patients from gestation to old age. These are the North Campus Family Health Service run by the School of Nursing and

the East Ann Arbor Health Center, which is a large provider site within the University of Michigan Health System.

Within the three University clinics preferred under the student insurance plans, however, copay differentials of \$0, \$10 and \$50 per visit exist depending on whether the patient is the student, spouse/partner, or child and depending on the clinic location. (See copay chart on the following page.) These copay variations present a significant disincentive to establishing a “medical home” for the family’s care in one convenient place as students attempt to avoid unreasonable copays for certain members of the family by taking them to different locations for their care. For those students who choose to establish one clinic as their family’s “medical home,” the result is the imposition of unnecessarily high copayments for some family members.

The Task Force recommends, therefore, that the copay structure for the three University-related clinics preferred under the domestic and international student insurance plans be reviewed and instances of \$50 copays be lowered to \$10.

Copay Structure of Domestic and International Student Health Insurance Plans

Type of Insured	University Health Service	East Ann Arbor Health Center	North Campus Family Health Service	Oth
Student	\$0	\$50	MSA: \$10 Int'l: \$50	\$50
Spouse/Partner	\$10	\$50	\$10	\$50
Child < 15	\$10 (Services Available For Children Age 10 & Over Only)	\$10	\$10	\$50
Child 15 & Over	\$10	MSA: \$50 Int'l: \$10	\$10	\$50
Visiting Scholar	\$0	\$50	\$10	\$50

Notes:

1. Copays as of the 2000-2001 benefit year.
2. Copays are the same for both MSA and International student plans except where noted.
3. UHS is one of the units overseen by the Vice President for Student Affairs. The East Ann Arbor Health Center is part of the University of Michigan Health System. The North Campus Family Health Center is part of the UM School of Nursing.

Recommendation 8:
***Modify Buildings Across Campus to Accommodate the Needs of
Students, Faculty and Staff Who Have Children***

8A. Install diaper changing tables in at least two bathrooms (one for men, one for women) in existing major campus buildings, especially those used by the public. In all new buildings and renovations, install changing tables in at least two bathrooms.

Currently, there are few comfortable or sanitary places on campus for parents to change their children's diapers. While restaurants, airports and other businesses have responded to the need of parents of young children by installing diaper changing tables in their men's and women's restrooms, the University has lagged behind. This modification is inexpensive and simple to implement. Current price for each changing table is approximately \$280 and University Plant Operations estimates installation costs of less than \$100 per table. All major buildings on campus should have at least one in a men's restroom and one in a women's restroom. All new campus buildings and campus renovations should be required to have them.

8B. Increase the number of lactation rooms on campus and require all new buildings to have a lactation room.

Background:

Many parents, along with their pediatricians, recognize the important medical and emotional benefits of nursing babies through the first year or more of life. Research has shown that infants fed human breast milk have stronger immune systems and are at less risk of later developing food allergies than infants fed with formula. Mothers and babies also benefit from the special bonding experience that nursing brings. With the advent of light weight, portable breast pumps, many mothers have found they can continue feeding their infants breast milk even after they have returned to school or work, simply by pumping milk during the day for later use by their child care providers or their husbands/partners.

However, nursing mothers are hampered by the University's current scarcity of dedicated lactation rooms. With irregular access to the few existing lactation facilities on campus, or faced with the challenge of making special arrangements in order to pump in privacy, many mothers on campus either cease breastfeeding or minimize the time they are on campus. For staff or faculty women committed to nursing, lack of a proper lactation area at work has been shown to be an important factor in delaying a new mother's return to work following childbirth.

Fortunately, modifying facilities to accommodate nursing mothers is a fairly simple thing to do. To begin with, one only needs a small space - a current closet or the corner of a restroom is sufficient. When using restroom space, it is important that the nursing area be privatized by either having a curtain or a door. Preferably, a nursing area should be as far away from the toilets as possible. In fact, there are a number of women's restrooms at UM that already have a lounge area adjacent to the toilet area. Such areas could easily be converted to include a "nursing nook." Within the nursing area, all that is needed is a chair, a table large enough for a pump and any personal possessions, an electrical outlet, a coat hook, and access to nearby water, soap and paper towels.

This Task Force recommends that every major office and classroom building on campus should have at least one lactation room. Plant Operations' estimated cost for installation of a curtain to privatize a corner in an existing women's restroom is \$364. The Michigan Union, the Michigan League, the Undergraduate and Graduate libraries, and Pierpont Commons are especially critical buildings in which to have such accommodations. Dean Lewis has agreed to have a lactation room in the Rackham Graduate School when it reopens after renovations. All other buildings that are renovated or newly constructed (e.g., the Life Sciences building) should plan to include a lactation room. As these rooms are developed, it is also recommended that campus maps, as well as information specifically for student parents, note the locations of lactation areas on campus.

Recommendation 9:
Provide Electronic Data Ports to All Family Housing Residents

Many student parents mentioned the need for electronic data ports in the Family Housing units. At present, Family Housing is the only major on-campus housing unit that does not have Ethernet connections. Thus, while students living in campus residence halls already have such a connection provided as part of their standard housing costs, students living in Family Housing do not. Students in Family Housing wishing to establish connectivity must pay a \$125 installation fee and an approximately \$35 monthly charge in order to have a one-meg modem in their unit. Unfortunately, this cost is prohibitive for many Family Housing residents. The general lack of data connectivity in Family Housing poses a serious inconvenience and additional cost burden to student parents who are less able than students without dependents to travel conveniently to campus computing sites whenever Ethernet access is needed.

The Student Parent Task Force understands that a separate task force devoted to the needs of international graduate students and their families has already presented a set of options for addressing this need to the Vice President for Student Affairs. We encourage the University to make funding available in order to improve the computing resources available to students living in Family Housing.

Recommendation 10:

Appoint a Small Committee To Solicit Input About the Student Parent Task Force Recommendations, Monitor their Implementation, and Continue to Address the Needs of Student Parents

The Student Parent Task Force is grateful for the opportunity to have served the University in researching options to address the barriers experienced by our student parents. We have heard from some truly outstanding students (including those on our own Task Force) who represent an inspirational blend of scholar, teacher, and care giver. To ensure that conversations continue on this important topic, the Task Force suggests that a smaller, on-going committee be constructed. One purpose of this group would be to act as an “implementation overseer” to ensure that any of recommendations in this report that are approved for implementation are done so in a timely and strategically organized manner. In addition, this committee would be expected to periodically communicate with the larger community about the status of the approved recommendations. Finally, the existence of an ongoing committee would provide a necessary structure for continued discussions about the needs of student parents.

Section III: Other Issues for Consideration

**Enriching the Mix:
Responding to the Needs of Student Parents
at the University of Michigan**

Final Report to the Provost from the Student Parent Task Force

Over the course of our work, a number of worthwhile suggestions were brought to our attention or developed by the Task Force. While we did not feel that every idea should be recommended as a priority item to UM senior leadership or necessarily fell under the purview of the Provost, we nevertheless thought that these ideas had merit and we wanted to capture them in some manner.

These issues for future consideration are listed below. They are not listed by priority, but instead are organized thematically.

Academic/Cultural Flexibility

1. When a doctoral program provides flexibility so that a student parent can temporarily take a leave of absence or reduce his or her work load, there may be an increase for that department's average time-to-degree. What kind of ways might departments be penalized by external review of this information? Is there something that can be done in the way time-to-degree information is calculated and/or reported to indicate when an increase in time-to-degree is because the department has made positive changes on behalf of student parents or other students with special circumstances?
2. Allow exceptions to be made to LS&A's "10-term rule" for those who need additional time in graduate school because of family, medical or other personal reasons.
3. Modify the current prohibitions that do not allow children to enter any building where toxins are handled. Make it possible for children, under the accompaniment of a parent or guardian, to be in the part of a building which does not house toxic chemicals.
4. Revise the University's inclement weather policy so that only "essential" employees are required to work when weather conditions are particularly bad.

Child Care

5. Expand eligibility for the Child Care Subsidy to undergraduate parents who will be enrolled for the following fall semester, but are currently working or interning over the summer and therefore still in need of child care.
6. Allow the Provost's child care tuition grants to be used for non-UM providers as well as UM child care providers.
7. Increase the hours of operation of UM child care centers.
8. Develop drop-in care as an option at UM child care centers.
9. Recognize outstanding UM child care programs.

Health Insurance and Sick Leave

10. Offer greater coverage of pediatric examinations, pediatric immunizations, birth control, and family planning visits in the insurance offered by MSA and the International Center to students and in the Blue Cross/Blue Shield/United of Omaha insurance offered by the University to employees. This would also improve benefit coverage to faculty and staff employees of the University who are covered under the Blue Cross/Blue Shield/United of Omaha insurance.
11. In International and MSA (domestic) student insurance plans, reduce the pre-existing condition limit that has the potential to limit coverage of maternity care, among other health conditions. Currently, a pregnant woman newly enrolled under one of these plans might not have all her prenatal care or delivery costs covered, depending on when she became pregnant.
12. Have a written policy that student employees of UM (GSIs, GSSAs, and GSRAs) are allowed to use some of their sick leave as family care leave, just as other UM employees are allowed.

Miscellaneous

13. At several points in our discussions, questions arose relating to postdoctoral researchers at UM. What University benefits are they eligible to receive? Who keeps track of their appointments? Can an email list of all of them be developed? What type of orientation materials do they receive? It became clear that the status of postdoctoral researchers at the University needs to be examined as a topic on its own. We recommend that another committee be constructed to look into the appointments, benefits, and socialization of postdoctoral researchers in the University.

Attachment A:
UM Reports and Articles Reviewed by Various Task Force Members

“Strategic Plan for Child Care Programs at the University of Michigan.” Report of the Child Care Task Force. February 1998.

“Graduate Student Parents: Enriching the Mix.” Study report by the Center for the Education of Women and the Rackham School of Graduate Studies. December 1999.

“Michigan Business Women’s Family Initiative: Findings and Recommendations for Improving UM Business School’s Response to Student-Parents.” Report submitted to UMBS Dean Joseph White and Senior Associate Dean Susan Ashford by student Erin Wilson. April 2000.

“Developing an Action Plan: Needs Assessment for Student Parents at the University of Michigan.” Report written for a Social Work 651 class by students Kelly Dunham, Sarah Firmin, Irene Kepler, and Rebecca Stotzer. November 2000.

“Student-Parent Accessible: A Study of Seven State Universities in Michigan.” Report written for Sociology 395 by student Aimee Bingham. December 2000.

Attachment B:
Student Parent Forums Held During Academic Year 2000-01

October 26, 2000 – Student parent panel discussion held on North Campus. Parents on the panel and in the audience discussed issues of child care, public assistance, housing, social networking, and spousal employment. Representatives from the co-sponsoring UM units reviewed resources currently available to student parents. Co-sponsored by the Center for the Education of Women and the Family Care Resources Program.

November 13, 2000 – Small group discussions organized by Rackham’s Coordinator of Diversity Initiatives. These discussions allowed graduate student parents to discuss the benefits and challenges of being a mother or father while in graduate school, and to generate strategies for resolving role conflict.

January 11, 2001 – Town hall meeting on child care coordinated by Rackham Student Government and the Graduate Employees Organization. Panel statements made by Vice President for Student Affairs E. Royster Harper, Rackham Dean Earl Lewis, Family Care Resources Program staff Carolyn Graves, and Rackham Coordinator of Diversity Initiatives Jayne London. Students and UM administrative representatives (including many of the UM child care center directors) discussed child care issues experienced by students on campus.

January 17, 2001 - Graduate student parent discussion group organized by Rackham’s Coordinator of Diversity Initiatives. This event was an informal opportunity for graduate student parents to meet one another and discuss their common joys and frustrations.

February 2, 2001 – Undergraduate student parent luncheon held at the Center for the Education of Women. Students discussed child care needs, academic issues, social networking, and resources available to student parents through CEW. Sponsored by CEW.

February 16, 2001 – Planning meeting for student parent social events. Resulted in an April event in which students could meet for a tour at the Exhibit Museum. The next month members of this group put on a May-Day celebration.

March 12, 2001 – Meeting with undergraduate student parents held at CEW. Student ideas were gathered to inform UM administrators’ decision making regarding potential submission of a grant proposal to the Department of Education’s “Child Care Access Means Parents in School” Program. Co-sponsored by the Center for the Education of Women and the Family Care Resources Program.