

## LACKAWANNA COLLEGE

### PREGNANT AND PARENTING STUDENTS POLICY

#### COMPLIANCE

Reporting: Any member of the Lackawanna College community may report a violation of this policy to any supervisor, manager, or to the Title IX Coordinator. All mandated reporters are responsible for promptly forwarding such reports to the Title IX office. The Title IX Coordinator is responsible for overseeing complaints of discrimination involving pregnant and parenting students.

The Title IX Coordinator for Lackawanna College is:

Kelly Schneider, Esq., Healey Hall, Room 237  
Scranton, PA 18509  
(570) 961-7890 or [schneiderk@lackawanna.edu](mailto:schneiderk@lackawanna.edu)

Complaints may also be filled with the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights at:

Office for Civil Rights, National Headquarters  
U.S. Department of Education  
Lyndon Baines Johnson Dept. of Education Building  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202-1100  
Telephone: 800-421-3481  
Fax: 202-453-6012; TDD: 800-877-8339  
Email: [OCR@ed.gov](mailto:OCR@ed.gov)

Complaints may be filed online, using the form available at [www.ed.gov/ocr/complaintintro.html](http://www.ed.gov/ocr/complaintintro.html).

#### POLICY STATEMENT

Lackawanna College is committed to creating and maintaining a community where all individuals enjoy freedom from discrimination, including discrimination on the basis of sex, as mandated by Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX). Sex discrimination, which can include discrimination based on pregnancy, marital status, or parental status, is prohibited and illegal in admissions, education programs and activities, hiring, leave policies, employment policies, and health insurance coverage. Lackawanna College hereby establishes a policy and associated procedures for ensuring the protection and equal treatment of pregnant individuals, persons with pregnancy-related conditions, and new parents.

Under the Department of Education's (DOE) Title IX regulations, an institution that receives federal funding "shall not discriminate against any student, or exclude any student from its

education program or activity, including any class or extracurricular activity, on the basis of such student's pregnancy, childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, or recovery therefrom." According to the DOE, appropriate treatment of a pregnant student includes granting the student leave "for so long a period of time as is deemed medical necessary by the student's physician, "and then effectively reinstating the student to the same status as was held when the leave began.

This generally means the pregnant students should be treated by Lackawanna College the same way as someone who has a temporary disability, and will be given an opportunity to make up missed work wherever possible. Extended deadlines, make-up assignments (e.g., papers, quizzes, tests and presentations), tutoring, independent study, online course completion options, and incomplete grades that can be completed at a later date, should all be employed, in addition to any other ergonomic and assistive supports typically provided by Disability Services. To the extent possible, Lackawanna College will take reasonable steps to ensure that pregnant students who take a leave of absence or medical leave return to the same position of academic progress that they were in when they took leave, including access to the same course catalog that was in place when the leave began. The Title IX Coordinator has the authority to determine that such accommodations are necessary and appropriate, and to inform faculty members of the need to adjust academic parameters accordingly.

As with disability accommodations, information about pregnant students' requests for accommodations will be shared with faculty and staff only to the extent necessary to provide the reasonable accommodation. Faculty and staff will regard all information associated with such requests as private and will not disclose this information unless necessary. Administrative responsibility for these accommodations lies with the Title IX Coordinator, who will maintain all appropriate documentation related to accommodations.

In situations such as clinical rotations, performances, labs, and group work, the institution will work with the student to devise an alternative path completion, if possible. In progressive curricular and / or cohort-model programs, medically necessary leaves are sufficient cause to permit the student to shift course order, substitute similar courses, or join a subsequent cohort when returning from leave.

Students are encouraged to work with their faculty members and Lackawanna College's support systems to devise a plan for how to best address the conditions as pregnancy progresses, anticipate the need for leaves, minimize the academic impact of their absences, and get back on track as efficiently and comfortably as possible. The Title IX Coordinator will assist with plan development and implementation as needed.

## **SCOPE OF POLICY**

This policy applies to all aspects of Lackawanna College's program, including, but not limited to, admissions, educational programs, and activities, extracurricular activities, hiring, leave policies, employment policies, and health insurance coverage.

## DEFINITIONS

- a. *Medical Necessity*: a determination made by a health care provider (of the student's choosing) that a certain course of action is in the patient's best health interests.
- b. *Parenting*: the raising of a child by the child's parents in the reasonably immediate postpartum period.
- c. *Pregnancy and Pregnancy-Related Conditions*: include (but are not limited to) pregnancy, childbirth, false pregnancy, termination of pregnancy, conditions arising in connection with pregnancy, and recovery from any of these conditions.
- d. *Pregnancy Discrimination*: includes treating an individual affected by pregnancy or a pregnancy-related condition less favorably than similar individuals not so affected, and includes a failure to provide legally mandated leave or accommodations.
- e. *Pregnant Student / Birth-Parent*: refers to the student who is or was pregnant. This policy and its pregnancy-related protections apply to all pregnant persons, regardless of gender identity or expression.
- f. *Reasonable Accommodations*: (for the purposes of this policy) changes in the academic environment or typical operations that enables pregnant students or students with pregnancy-related conditions to continue to pursue their studies and enjoy the equal benefits of Lackawanna College.

## REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION OF STUDENTS AFFECTED BY PREGNANCY, CHILDBIRTH, OR RELATED CONDITIONS

- a. Lackawanna College and its faculty, staff, and other employees will not require students to limit their studies as a result of pregnancy or pregnancy-related conditions.
- b. The benefits and services provided to students affected by pregnancy will be no less than those provided to students with temporary medical conditions.
- c. Students with pregnancy-related disabilities, like any student with a short-term or temporary disability, are entitled to reasonable accommodations so that they will not be disadvantaged in their courses of study or research, and may seek assistance from the Title IX office.
- d. No artificial deadlines or time limitations will be imposed on requests for accommodations, but Lackawanna College is limited in its ability to impact or implement accommodations retroactively.
- e. Reasonable accommodations may include, but not limited to:
  - 1. Providing accommodations requested by a pregnant student to protect the health and safety of the student and / or the pregnancy (such as allowing the student to maintain a safe distance from hazardous substances);
  - 2. Making modifications to the physical environment (such as accessible seating);
  - 3. Providing mobility support;
  - 4. Extending deadlines and / or allowing the student to make up tests or assignments missed for pregnancy-related absences;

5. Offering remote learning options;
6. Excusing medically-necessary absences (this must be granted, irrespective of classroom attendance requirements set by a faculty member, department, or division);
7. Granted leave per Lackawanna College's medical leave policy or implementing incomplete grades for classes that will be resumed at a future date; or
8. Allowing breastfeeding students reasonable time and space to pump breast milk in a location that is private, clean, and reasonably accessible. Bathroom stalls do not satisfy this requirement.

Nothing in this policy requires modification to the essential elements of any academic programs. Pregnant students cannot be channeled into an alternative program or student against their wishes.

### **MODIFIED ACADEMIC RESPONSIBILITIES POLICY FOR PARENTING STUDENTS**

- a. Students with parenting responsibilities who wish to remain engaged in their coursework while adjusting their academic responsibilities because of the birth or adoption of a child or placement of a foster child may request an academic modification period during the first 6 months from the time the child entered the home. Extensions may be granted when additional time is required by medical necessity or extraordinary caretaking / parenting responsibilities.
- b. During the modification period, the student's academic requirements will be adjusted and deadlines postponed as appropriate, in collaboration among the Title IX office, the student's academic advisor, and the appropriate academic department (s).
- c. Students seeking a period of modified academic responsibilities may consult with their academic advisor or with the Title IX office to determine appropriate academic accommodations requests. The Title IX office will communicate all requests under this policy to students' academic advisors and coordinate accommodation-related efforts with the advisors unless the students specifically request that their advisors be excluded. Students are encouraged to work with their advisors and faculty members to reschedule course assignments, lab hours, examinations, or other requirements, and / or to reduce their overall course load, as appropriate, once authorization is received from the Title IX office. If, for any reason, caretaking / parenting students are not able to work with their advisors / faculty members to obtain appropriate modification, students should alert the Title IX office as soon as possible, and the office will help facilitate needed accommodations and modifications.
- d. In timed degree, certification or credentialing programs, students who seek modifications upon the birth or placement of their child will be allowed an extension of up to 6 months to prepare for and take preliminary and qualifying examinations, and an extension of up to 6 months toward normative time to degree while in

candidacy, to the extent those deadlines are controlled by Lackawanna College. Longer extensions may be granted in extenuating circumstances.

- e. Students can request modified academic responsibilities under this policy regardless of whether they elect to take a leave of absence.
- f. While receiving academic modifications, students will remain registered and retain benefits accordingly.

## **LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

- a. As long as students can maintain appropriate academic progress, faculty, staff, or other Lackawanna College employees will not require them to take a leave of absence, or withdraw from or limit their studies as the result of pregnancy, childbirth, or related conditions, but nothing in this policy requires modification of the essential elements of any academic program.
- b. Enrolled students may elect to take a leave of absence for up to two consecutive semesters or one year, as per Lackawanna College's Leave of Absence Policy page 27 in the Student Handbook, because of pregnancy and / or the birth, adoption, or placement of a child. The leave term may be extended in the case of extenuating circumstances or medical necessity.
- c. Students taking a leave of absence under this policy will provide notice of the intent to take leave 30 calendar days prior to the initiation of leave, or as soon as practicable.
- d. Intermittent leave may be taken with the advance approval of the Title IX office and students' academic department(s), when medically necessary.
- e. Students who elect to take leave under this policy should contact the registrar's office (and financial aid, if appropriate) to discuss status options to continue their eligibility for certain benefits.
- f. To the extent possible, Lackawanna College will take reasonable steps to ensure that upon return from leave, students will be reinstated to their program in the same status as when their leave began, with no tuition penalty.
- g. Continuation of students' scholarships, fellowship, or similar Lackawanna College-sponsored funding during the leave term will depend on the students' registration status and the policies funding program regarding registration status. Students will not be negatively impacted by or forfeit their future eligibility for their scholarship, fellowship, or similar Lackawanna College-supported funding by exercising their rights under this policy.
- h. The Title IX team will work collaboratively with Student Financial Services who can and will advocate for students with respect to financial aid agencies and external scholarship providers in the event that a leave of absence places eligibility into question.

## **STUDENT-EMPLOYEE LEAVE**

- a. All student-employees will be entitled to the protections of the Family and Medical Leave Act, regardless of whether they are also students or hold post-doctoral status.

- b. Pregnancy and related conditions will be treated as any other temporary disability for job purposes, including leave and benefits.
- c. Pregnancy and related conditions will be regarded as justification for a leave of absences without pay for a reasonable period of time, as the conclusion of which employees will be reinstated to the status that they held when the leave began or to a comparable position, without decrease in rate of compensation or loss of promotional opportunities, or any other right or privilege of employment.

## **RETALIATION AND HARASSMENT**

- a. Harassment of any member of the Lackawanna College community based on sex, gender identity, gender expression, pregnancy, or parental status is prohibited.
- b. Faculty, staff, and other Lackawanna College employees are prohibited from interfering with students' right to take leave, seek reasonable accommodation, or otherwise exercise their rights under this policy.
- c. Faculty, staff, and other Lackawanna College employees are prohibited from retaliating against students for exercising the rights articulated by this policy, including imposing or threatening to impose negative educational outcomes because students request leave or accommodation, file a complaint, or otherwise exercise their rights under this policy.

## **HOUSING-RELATED ACCOMMODATIONS**

Pregnant students' on-campus housing status will not be altered based on pregnancy status unless requested by the pregnant students. Parenting students' access to housing is governed by Residence Hall Policies; see Student Handbook page 233.

## **DISSEMINATION OF THE POLICY AND TRAINING**

A copy of this policy will be made available to faculty, staff, and employees in annually required training and posted on the Lackawanna College website. Lackawanna College will alert all new students about this policy and the location of this policy as part of orientation. The Title IX office will make educational materials available to all members of the Lackawanna College community to promote compliance with this policy and familiarity with its procedures.

