

**Women’s Resource Center
Parent-Supportive Improvements Proposal
July 2004**

Goal: To better provide a family-friendly and parent-supportive atmosphere on campus for staff, students and faculty.

Objective: Install at least one lactation station on the main portion of the UM-Dearborn campus. The site we have identified is a portion of the lounge area adjacent to the women’s bathroom in the basement of the Science Building.

Summary: Imagine providing a low-cost benefit program that helps employees to come back more smoothly from maternity leave, reduces absenteeism, improves staff & faculty morale, and provides a more supportive environment for our returning students. The installation of a lactation or nursing station on the campus of the University of Michigan –Dearborn would do just that. A lactation station is a private, comfortable and sanitary place in which a woman can either nurse her infant, or express milk for later use.

Rationale: The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends breastfeeding for at least one year because of the associated health benefits, which include fewer gastrointestinal and urinary tract infections, respiratory tract illnesses, incidences of ear infections, and meningitis. In addition, women who have breastfed are less likely to develop breast and ovarian cancers, and have less osteoporosis later in life.

Given these facts, as well as the potential public relations benefits (employers that establish family-friendly workplaces tend to be viewed as progressive businesses that are supportive of families, and several parenting magazines regularly highlight employers that provide family-friendly benefits), hundreds and hundreds of businesses and universities across the United States have chosen to provide lactation stations. See the chart below for their occurrence at a sampling of universities:

University	# Of Lactation Rooms
U of California-Davis	18
U of Iowa	18
U of Michigan - Ann Arbor	14
Iowa State University	12
Virginia Tech	7
Duke University	6
Michigan State University	3
California Institute of Technology	1
Grand Valley State University	1
University of Michigan – Dearborn	0

As is apparent from the above chart, our campus is lagging behind in providing a family-supportive environment for staff, faculty and students. The potential benefit to the University of Michigan –Dearborn is substantial. For example, studies have demonstrated that nursing mothers

have a significantly lower absenteeism rate from work than non-nursing mothers. Furthermore, research by Kaiser Permanente has shown that infants who are breastfed experienced a much lower rate in health claims than formula-fed infants. Thus, providing lactations stations can lower costs to the employer. The increase in staff morale should not be underestimated. As one previously-nursing UM-D staff member described her situation:

...As I began planning for the delivery of my child, I simultaneously prepared my office for my absence by working ahead and briefing staff about special issues that might arise. However, as I began to transition to return to work, I realized that the University would not be able to offer me that same level of support upon my return that I had provided my office during my leave...I felt disappointed and frustrated that the University of Michigan –Dearborn had refused to update its standards to present day reality and in doing so had overlooked the needs of nursing women.

Budget Narrative & Request:

A basic lactation room requires several key items: assured privacy, a comfortable chair or sofa, a table, an electrical outlet, Kleenex, paper towels, a dry erase board (to make room-use appointments) and a wastebasket. Other items, such as an appropriate picture for the wall, a bulletin board for posting pertinent information and baby photos, and reading material, are often considered optional, but indeed, create an environment conducive to nursing. Still other items, such as a small refrigerator, clock and dish-drying rack, while certainly quite helpful, are less urgent than the others described above.

It is **important** to note that an environment where privacy is not assured will often induce stress in the nursing woman, and this can prevent effective lactation. This particular identified space does not have a door separating it from the public space of the lounge. Therefore, a sturdy accordion-type screen will be required, attached to the wall on one side, with a locking device on the other. Here is the budget request below:

Item	Cost
Accordion Door**	\$50.00 (such as manuf. by Panelfold)
Installation of Door	Unknown cost
Chair	0 (already in the lounge area)
Table	0 (already in the lounge area)
Paper Towel Dispenser*	10.00 (Boise)
Kleenex (10 boxes)	6.00 (Boise)
Wastebasket	5.00 (Boise)
Sm. Bulletin Board (2' x 1 ½')	24.00 (Boise)
Dry Erase Board (for appts.)	20.00 (Boise)
Picture@	20.00 (Target)
Reading Material#	0 (provided free of charge)
Total:	\$135.00 +
** Accordion door must be secured on one wall, with a locking device to attach to the opposite wall when in use. This ensures privacy. * Toweling to be supplied as usual along with bathroom supplies. @ Inexpensive, generic picture of infants, with a frame. # Year's subscription to American Baby Magazine provided free.	

The cost of installing the accordion door is unknown at this moment. This proposal will be submitted along with a project request form to Jim Shearer in Facilities Planning, and the cost of the installation will be determined.

Collaboration:

The Women's Resource Center will be happy to be the main contact for the Lactation Station, and a sign will be posted in the room stating that we are to be contacted if something is wrong with the room. Although the general upkeep of the room will be done by the maintenance staff as they maintain the women's bathroom, the Women's Resource Center will also take responsibility for ensuring that there is Kleenex available, and the reading matter is accessible and in good shape. We are also willing to help with the process of signing up to use the room, should it become necessary to have a sign-up sheet at any time.

Conclusion:

The need for the lactation room is clear, and the cost of installing it is minimal. While there is some talk of reconvertng a room in the Fairlane Center North building to a lactation station, it is important that the UM-Dearborn campus have one on this, the main part, of campus. The benefits to the campus community will be substantial and will demonstrate the administration's desire to create a family-friendly environment.