Measures to Address Impacts

of Pandemic on Faculty Career Progress

March 20, 2020

The Office of the Provost offers the following guidance to address the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on faculty evaluation and career progress.

Faculty have responded quickly and admirably to rapidly-changing conditions brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, those responses and the broader conditions are anticipated to have variable disruptive effects on faculty productivity in the areas of teaching, scholarship and creative activity, and service. The following policy provisions and additional considerations are offered in response to such possible disruption.

* **Tenure Clock**: The COVID-19 pandemic will impact each faculty member’s productivity differently. Pre-tenure faculty may request an extension to their tenure clock in accordance with [University Policy 4340, Section 4.1.3 Extensions of the Probationary Period](https://www.boisestate.edu/policy/academic-affairs-faculty-administration/policy-title-faculty-promotion-guidelines/), which states: “faculty shall be granted an extension of the probationary period in certain circumstances where the faculty member’s progress toward tenure is impeded. These circumstances include responsibilities related to childbirth/ adoption, significant responsibilities with respect to elder/dependent care, disability/chronic illness, or other circumstances beyond the control of the faculty member.”

The scope, duration, and intensity of the global pandemic are very significant and might affect a faculty member in ways that warrant a tenure clock extension. To request an extension, faculty are advised to follow the procedure outlined in policy.

Before requesting an extension related to the COVID-19 pandemic, a faculty member is strongly encouraged to speak with their supervisor or mentoring committee about the pros and cons of an extension, particularly in light of the considerations below.

* **Review of future promotion cases; annual performance evaluations**: Supervisors and other decision makers shall hold faculty members harmless relative to reduced activities and productivity directly attributable to pandemic conditions. Examples include, but aren’t limited to, canceled events (conferences, exhibitions, or performances), delayed research activity, and unanticipated teaching expectations (also see below). This principle applies to annual performance evaluation, progress to tenure, and promotional review. It is incumbent on the faculty member and supervisor to document and describe any productivity disruptions experienced in enough detail to allow future reviewers to make informed and appropriate judgments within the evaluative context at hand.
* **Student Course Evaluations**: All faculty members, regardless of rank, will be shielded from the impacts of negative teaching evaluations attributable to pandemic conditions and their consequences. Faculty will be given the option to include or exclude their student course evaluations from Spring 2020 in future performance evaluations (including tenure and promotion processes).

If a faculty member chooses to exclude those evaluations, they are expected to produce a document that reflects on the challenges and opportunities of the altered teaching environment. For example, they might write a narrative explaining how the move online was accomplished, how student expectations changed, and what new skills or other insights regarding pedagogy were gained as a result. This document would stand in place of the evaluations in any subsequent review where the evaluations would appear.

* **Sabbatical Leave**: Faculty with approved sabbatical leave planned for the 2020-21 academic year may request a deferral, if the pandemic has introduced factors that problematize the proposed work. To request a deferral, faculty are advised to follow the procedure outlined in policy.