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April 1, 2021

ACADEMIC SENATE DIVISION CHAIRS

Re: Guidance for Review of Academic Personnel Impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic

Dear Colleagues:

At its March 31 meeting, the Academic Council endorsed the attached letter from the University Committee on Academic Personnel (UCAP) offering guidance to campus CAPs, departments, and faculty around the preparation and review of academic personnel files impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The guidelines are best practices drawn from UCAP's unique systemwide perspective, and are also a useful follow-up and companion to Academic Council's January 2021 *Recommendations for Mitigating COVID-19 Impacts on Campuses*¹. As UCAP notes, the pandemic has dramatically altered faculty members' scholarly activity, productivity, and opportunity. The guidelines highlight issues campuses should consider during file review and are intended to promote equity across campuses. They are not intended to mandate actions to campuses or to CAPs.

In addition to UCAP, I want to acknowledge the University Committee on Faculty Welfare and the University Committee on Affirmative Action, Diversity and Equity, who contributed to the guidelines as they were developed.

I ask Division Chairs to circulate the document to your respective Committees on Academic Personnel for discussion with departments. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have additional questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mary Gauvain".

Mary Gauvain, Chair
Academic Council

Cc: UCAP
Provost Brown
Vice Provost Carlson
Academic Council
Senate Directors
Senate Executive Director Baxter

Encl.

¹ https://senate.universityofcalifornia.edu/_files/reports/mg-md-mitigating-covid-impacts-on-faculty.pdf



UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON ACADEMIC PERSONNEL (UCAP)
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March 23, 2021

MARY GAUVAIN, CHAIR
ACADEMIC COUNCIL

RE: GUIDANCE FOR REVIEW OF ACADEMIC PERSONNEL IMPACTED BY THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Dear Mary,

UCAP has developed the attached “Guidance for Review of Academic Personnel Impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic” with the goal of promoting uniformity and equity across campuses in reviewing faculty files impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and similar major external events (e.g., wildfires) that dramatically impact academic activity. This Guidance is not intended to dictate to divisional Committees on Academic Personnel or supplant campus policies, but to instead highlight issues that should be considered during file reviews.

Our committee wants to thank the chairs of the Committee on Faculty Welfare, the Committee on Affirmative Action, Diversity and Equity, and the Committee on Academic Freedom for assisting UCAP with designing these guidelines. We ask that Academic Council endorse this document and disseminate it to divisional Committees on Academic Personnel for distribution to Departments.

Please don’t hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan Tapert".

Susan Tapert, Chair
UCAP

Guidance for Review of Academic Personnel Impacted by the COVID-19 Pandemic

UCAP recommends the following guidance for campus CAPs, departments, and faculty, to promote uniformity and equity across campuses in reviewing faculty files impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and similar major external events (e.g., wildfires) that dramatically impact academic activity. Departments and CAPs are likely to see impacted files up through the 2023-24 academic year and possibly beyond, due to unforeseeable professional and personal impediments and missed opportunities for career progress. The pandemic has impacted nearly everyone, and yet the burden is unequally distributed (Malisch et al., 2020, *PNAS*). The goal of this guidance is to continue to ensure excellence in our faculty and yet appropriately consider the impact of unforeseeable events on academic activity during the impacted file review period(s).

Guidance for CAPs:

- Review the Malisch et al. opinion piece in *PNAS* and its supplement “*Asking the Right Questions: A primer for merit, tenure and promotion evaluation committees*”; this may be useful reading for CAP members to consider how differentially impacted opportunities may occur.
- Recognize that caregiving (e.g., children at home doing remote schooling, home-bound parents, ill family members) has impacted many faculty members.
- Acknowledge innovations in teaching, with the enormous shift to creating and delivering online course curricula.
- Consider achievements relative to opportunity and how the faculty member has performed historically.
- Consider that the process of publication may be slower than usual, as publishers and editors are needing more time to find reviewers. Campuses might consider asking faculty members to list the date of the submitted article.
- Avoid deferral of file reviews when possible, as this can create missed opportunities for advancement and delay career progression. However, such deferrals should be allowable for all faculty members. (We note that some campuses have considered providing retroactive salary support for those who defer and then achieve the proposed file action in the following year.)
- Track the number of files for which COVID-related deferrals were requested and pandemic impacts were factored into the decision, in coordination with the Academic Personnel and Programs office.
- Consider posting a pre-recorded video that highlights some of these points. Some people appreciate a more dynamic method for conveying this information.
- Consider notifying the faculty that a second appraisal prior to promotion to tenure can be requested, if two years have elapsed since the original first appraisal.
- Consider extending the final date for submission of file materials by 1-2 months, if the recommendation is a reappointment with no advancement. This could allow the faculty member to include some additional materials to make the case for advancement, to help mitigate pandemic-related slowing of article and book reviews processes. If additional materials were to be included in the current file review period, the file should be re-submitted and re-reviewed.

Guidance for Departments:

- Provide options for faculty members to defer file reviews, but try to avoid deferrals unless alternative approaches are unavailable; this is because deferrals postpone career progress and can present salary disadvantages to one’s career trajectory.
- Consider temporarily adjusting expectations for the faculty if it can be shown that a major impact was experienced across a certain field. This adjustment for publications, teaching, and service could reduce expectations to 75% or so, for example, of the usual level of productivity.

- Provide a brief statement to your campus CAP describing how the pandemic impacted the disciplines in your department. This could include key types of research, performances, training opportunities or travel that affected multiple faculty members in your department and would be useful information for CAP as your files are reviewed.
- Review the faculty member's pandemic impact statement and discuss (as appropriate and maintaining confidentiality) during the departmental meeting. Topics for discussion and inclusion in the departmental letter could include how their opportunities and circumstances were affected by the pandemic, highlighting innovations, pivots, and flexibilities that demonstrate excellence in the circumstances. Consider that factors including culture, sex, gender, and career stage may reduce comfort with such disclosures.
- Educate and support the faculty in your department on these expectations and deferral options. It is suggested that departments have a conversation with the faculty to ensure they are aware of this file preparation guidance and that they understand the salary implications of a deferred review.
- Consider not requiring teaching evaluations for faculty members who provided adapted instruction (e.g., remote teaching). If evaluations are included and there are issues, voting bodies should consider the potential impact of remote teaching on the evaluation process. However, we recognize that some campuses may require inclusion of teaching evaluations.

Guidance for the Faculty:

- Indicate how the pandemic has impacted your scholarly activity, teaching, service, and contributions to diversity in the relevant sections of your **Candidate Statement**.
 - This COVID-impact information (either within the statement or as a separate document) is voluntary, and no disadvantages will be associated with sharing or not sharing this information.
 - Faculty members do not need to reveal anything personal in file materials. Providing key information about changes, limitations, and circumstances that affected your planned activities during this time is encouraged.
- Indicate in your file/dossier if you were scheduled to participate in an event that was cancelled due to COVID, or if you participated via videoconference rather than in person.
- Deferrals of file reviews may be requested; however, consider the work you have done and if this might still meet criteria for advancement before delaying your file review. The goal is to uphold standards of excellence but not disadvantage or delay career progress. If unsure about whether or not to defer your review, ask your chair or campus academic personnel office.
- If you are up for promotion to the Associate rank and coming close to the end of your 8-year period, an extra year may be requested twice. If a third year is needed, the request must be reviewed by UCOP.
- Consider providing information on "Submitted Manuscripts", including date of submission, in your personal statement. While submitted yet not accepted works will not count for the current merit/promotion cycle, this can demonstrate ongoing progress if other such evidence is not present in your file. Provide online links when relevant to reflect your activity.

Note: this is guidance and campus' policy/guidance would take precedence in case of conflict.

Reference:

Malisch JL, Harris BN, Sherrer SM, Lewis KA, Shepherd SL, McCarthy PC, Spott JL, Karam EP, Moustaid-Moussa N, Calarco JM, Ramalingam L, Talley AE, Cañas-Carrell JE, Ardon-Dryer K, Weiser DA, Bernal XE, Deitloff J. Opinion: In the wake of COVID-19, academia needs new solutions to ensure gender equity. *Proc Natl Acad Sci U S A*. 2020 Jul 7;117(27):15378-15381. doi: 10.1073/pnas.2010636117. Epub 2020 Jun 17. PMID: 32554503; PMCID: PMC7354923.