

Date: May 3, 2021

From: Chuck Taber, Provost and Executive Vice President
Melinda Markham, Faculty Senate President

RE: Guidance for Evaluators of Faculty Regarding COVID-19 Impact Statements

Dear Colleagues,

Recognizing the unprecedented challenges faced by our faculty and staff as a result of the pandemic, the university has taken steps to provide flexibility for both faculty and staff evaluations. For unclassified professionals and USS staff, the university [announced](#) in July the suspension of requirements for formal evaluations for 2020. For faculty, the university announced a [one-year extension on tenure clocks](#) for probationary faculty, the optional use of [TEVALS](#), and the development of [COVID-19 impact statements](#) for use in future faculty evaluations.

In February, we sent a [message](#) to deans, department heads, and faculty regarding the rationale and guidance for COVID-19 Impact Statements for Evaluations after approval by Faculty Senate. There was recognition at the time that additional information was needed for those who are evaluating faculty.

Last week, Faculty Senate approved the following guidelines for evaluators of faculty regarding the use of COVID-19 Impact Statements. These guidelines should accompany the COVID-19 impact statements prepared by faculty for purposes of the evaluation for annual reviews, reappointment, promotion and/or tenure reviews, post-tenure reviews, and professorial performance awards to provide guidance for all evaluators involved.

If you have questions regarding the guidance below, please contact Brian Niehoff at niehoff@ksu.edu.

Guidelines for Evaluators of Faculty regarding COVID-19 Impact Statements

Approved by Faculty Senate on April 13, 2021

General Overview

It is important that the effects of the pandemic on faculty work be acknowledged with respect to impacts across all duties, including: (1) research outputs (quantity and quality); (2) the transition of teaching, advising, and mentoring into multiple modalities (which include online and virtual settings); (3) performance of work duties disrupted by remote location; and (4) limitations on university service and on public impact through outreach and engagement.

All evaluators of faculty are instructed to take the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic into consideration when evaluating work performed. For example, evaluators should consider if and how any criteria need to accommodate changes resulting from the pandemic. (See the K-State Covid-19 website <https://www.k-state.edu/covid-19/> for information about how the pandemic affected the K-State community.)

For Evaluators of Faculty

These guidelines should accompany the COVID-19 impact statements prepared by faculty for purposes of the evaluation for annual reviews, reappointment, promotion and/or tenure reviews, post-tenure reviews, and professorial performance awards. Evaluators of faculty may include department heads, faculty members, college advisory committee members, external reviewers, deans, etc., and all evaluators should receive these guidelines along with the faculty members' COVID-19 impact statements.

Given these extraordinary times and while remaining committed to recognizing and rewarding high standards of excellence in our teaching, research, and service mission areas, it is important for evaluators to be mindful of and to approach faculty evaluations with creativity, flexibility, and understanding that generally has not been necessary to consider in previous evaluations. In doing so, evaluators also need to recognize the unique contributions faculty make to address the COVID-19 pandemic both on and off campus.

- **Use of Impact Statements in Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure Process**
 - Beginning in AY 2021-2022 and for the foreseeable future, faculty undergoing the evaluation processes will have the option to develop and include COVID Impact Statements in their materials. ***It is important to remember that faculty under review in the current (2020-2021) reappointment, promotion, and tenure cycle did not have an opportunity to include such statements in their materials.*** Therefore, evaluators during the current evaluation cycle should remain conscientious of the variable effects the pandemic may have had on each faculty and the evidence provided regarding standards met and work conducted in their realms of responsibility.
- **Use of Impact Statements in Post Tenure Review and Annual Review Processes**
 - Faculty undergoing post-tenure review in AY 2020-2021 may begin submitting COVID Impact Statements as part of their materials.
 - Departments should determine and communicate how faculty can address COVID impacts in AY 2020-2021 annual review materials.
- **Timeline for Using COVID Impact Statements**
 - K-State anticipates that COVID Impact Statements will be needed and allowable for the next several years. The university community will be given ample notice — no less than two full academic years — before COVID Impact Statements are phased out.

- **Important Considerations**
 - The evaluation process should not disadvantage faculty because of these effects. Faculty have been encouraged to highlight innovations and new developments in courses, curricula, and programs in their materials submitted for evaluations.
 - When evaluating performance in the teaching realm of faculty whose efforts have been disrupted by COVID-19, the faculty's reflections and evidence of growth and learning through these innovations may be important considerations for departmental faculty and other evaluators.
 - COVID-19 may have changed, slowed, or suspended the research and extension/engagement activities for some faculty or cancelled scientific meetings, extension programs, or juried competitions. Review times for some journals or funders may also have been affected.
 - It is important for evaluators of faculty in departments with quantified expectations for productivity recognize and account for the atypical circumstances of the pandemic as they evaluate faculty's productivity. These would include quantified expectations in the areas of Research, Scholarly and Creative Activities, and Discovery (RSCAD), and also Engagement, Extension, Outreach, and Service.
- **Disproportionate Effects on Faculty**
 - COVID-19 has been disproportionately disruptive to individuals with caregiving and other family responsibilities, often women and underrepresented minorities (Viglione, 2020; Cui, Ding, & Zhu, 2020). Departmental faculty and other evaluators are encouraged to consider these issues as they evaluate faculty's performance relative to their departmental and other standards.
- **Delay in Tenure Clock Reminder**
 - Faculty were given the option to request and be granted COVID-related extensions on their tenure clocks. Evaluators are reminded that the extra time provided by extensions of the tenure clock, regardless of reason, should not be viewed in a manner that is harmful to the faculty member. Tenure clock extensions are approved by the Provost to recognize significant disruptions in faculty work and therefore should never lead to an expectation from reviewers that "more should have been accomplished" by the faculty member given the extra year(s) in the probationary appointment.

References:

Cui, R.; Ding, H.; & Zhu, F. (2020) Gender inequality in research productivity during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Manufacturing & Service Operations Management, Forthcoming, Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3623492> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3623492>*

Viglione, G. (2020) Are women publishing less during the pandemic? Here's what the data say. *Nature*, 581, pp. 365-366, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1038/d41586-020-01294-9>.