

## **Recommendations from Senate/Admin Task Force 2021 Spring**

COVID 19 Pandemic has introduced challenges to academic personnel review, including review of promotion cases and merit advancements. It has adversely affected all Senate faculty, some more than others. Faculty particularly vulnerable to this impact include parents of school-age children and those responsible for sick and aging relatives, as well as those whose research or creative activity requires long-distance travel and/ contact with large numbers of other people. Examples of such impacts may include challenges related to family care responsibilities, loss or reduction of childcare, illness to self or family members, death among family members and social network, restriction in research lab and population access, access to graduate students and staff, changes in instructional delivery, and acute and chronic stress.

Per UC academic review policies, UC Merced faculty will continue submitting case files for advancements. Accordingly, all levels of review must continue assessing files and making recommendations or decisions using fair, objective review processes. However, for the period extending through AY 2023-24 (and possibly beyond), our joint Admin/Senate Task Force offers the following guidance for campus CAP, departments, faculty, and administrators involved in AP Senate review. The goal is to maintain high review standards per APM and MAPP while providing some flexibility consistently across departments and schools. *These guidelines cohere with the March, 2021, UCAP recommendations.*

### **Guidelines for CAP:**

- Openly discuss the range of challenges to research, teaching, and service that some faculty may be facing (see examples above).
- Acknowledge innovations in teaching, especially with the major shift to creating and delivering courses remotely, as well as in research, such as changes in research approaches, questions, and methods.
- Be mindful of external delays in publishing articles and book manuscripts---article and book reviews are not as timely at this time as they ordinarily would be.
- Conduct an analysis in collaboration with APO of how deferrals in review are affecting decisions in the long run.
- Pay careful attention to explanation about pandemic-related challenges contained in material from all levels of review and especially in faculty self-statements.
- Continue encouraging flexibility in reviewing materials and making recommendations, for instance, by considering special documents that may come from candidates, departments, or deans.

### **Guidelines for Departments:**

- Allow Senate faculty to delay academic personnel review (for instance, through Stop-the-Clock) when necessary.
- Consider providing a brief statement to higher levels of review on how the pandemic may be affecting the disciplines in your department. The statement could reference what should count as acceptable divergence from research standards or changes beyond faculty members' control. Examples include inability to do field work or access populations and research labs, or limitations in physical research work.
- Educate faculty on expectations for compiling review materials and considering Stop-the-Clock or leave options.
- Encourage faculty to explain challenges in their self-statements, including remote instruction difficulties.
- In case analyses, describe how opportunities and circumstances were affected, and highlight innovations, pivots, and flexibilities that demonstrate excellence given the circumstances. Be mindful of factors such as culture, sex, career stage, and individual circumstances that may create sensitivities with such disclosures for some faculty.

### **Guidelines for Senate Faculty:**

- Clearly articulate in specific section(s) how the pandemic has affected contributions to research and creative activities, teaching and mentoring, service, and contributions to diversity in the self-statement.
- If unsure about deferring your review, seek advice from the Chair or a mentor. If you need further guidance, you could also speak to your Dean or the Vice Provost for Academic Personnel.
- As always, be very clear about the status of your publications, for instance, in press or already published. Work cannot be counted in more than one review period (exception: career reviews, such as tenure).

### **Guidelines for Administrators (Deans, VP-AP, EVC/Provost):**

- In general, continue encouraging as well as applying flexibility in making recommendations and final decisions.
- Promote a culture and practice of acknowledging and rewarding excellent contributions despite challenges.
- Request that staff be readily available to answer questions, provide advice, and extend deadlines (within reason)
- Ask department chairs to promote flexibility with review committees and faculty.
- Be available for personal meetings as needed.
- VP-AP will continue to hold workshops for faculty with concerns about negative impacts of COVID-19.