

## PREAMBLE

In our efforts to acknowledge and ameliorate some of the impacts of COVID for our faculty, the Provost's office helped organize a Faculty Advancement Committee to develop general guidance to the university community involved with faculty advancement through teaching, scholarship, and service responsibilities. The committee, consisting of four faculty members and five administrators (1 ex-officio), met beginning in March, 2021 through the Summer term and completed their work in October, 2021. Additionally, three faculty leaders and three academic administrators met with the committee to provide feedback and direction throughout the development of the attached document. A faculty survey and campus-wide listening sessions provided important feedback to the committee, as well as meetings held with Deans' Council, Faculty Handbook Committee, and the Provost.

Consequently, for the 2021-2022 academic year, in assessing the performance of faculty members, according to the evaluation procedures provided for in Chapter 3 of the UNI Faculty Handbook, Professional Assessment Committee (PAC) members and administrators are encouraged to consider applying the Faculty Advancement Committee Strategies and Recommendations outlined below to address the potential impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on faculty work in the areas of teaching, scholarship, and service, as appropriate.

However, nothing in this document is intended to supersede or otherwise change the requirements of Chapter 3 of the Faculty Handbook, the University Guiding Standards, or applicable Departmental Standards and Criteria and PAC Procedures. This document is intended as non-binding guidance for PAC members and administrators and does not constitute a formally adopted or established policy/procedure under Section 11.1 or Subdivision 12.2c of the Faculty Handbook. Nor is this guidance document intended to confer any substantive or procedural rights or interests in faculty members being evaluated pursuant to Chapter 3 of the Faculty Handbook.

## **Faculty Advancement Committee Strategies or Recommendations:**

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### **INTRODUCTION:**

All faculty members' work lives are being impacted during the COVID-19 pandemic. These impacts differ for each person. Professional Assessment Committee (PAC) members and administrators should be cognizant of COVID-19 impacts and be empathetic when assessing each faculty member and their portfolio. Specific impacts on faculty work, according to one's discipline, should be reviewed and considered each year when submitting revised Departmental Standards and Criteria documents. For further details read below:

### **TEACHING:**

1. In the teaching area, modality changes/impacts on faculty work should be considered and teaching evaluation criteria adjusted for those modalities. Evaluate faculty according to those differences.
2. Due to UNI's emphasis on high quality teaching, faculty members have had to focus on adapting their teaching to better reflect the work demanded by the pandemic, which may have led to the reduction of scholarship/creative work and/or service. The administration may consider various options including portfolio flexibility options according to Faculty Handbook Subdivision 4.8a Portfolio Flexibility Options, allocating course releases (pending funding availability), or other strategies.
3. Due to the pandemic, department heads and PACs should consider that student assessment results may have been negatively impacted due to low response rates, changes to modalities, student learning conditions, unexpected personal or family COVID impacts, etc. It is important to examine student assessment results pre-pandemic, during the pandemic, and those occurring in subsequent semesters for a comprehensive review in accordance with Faculty Handbook, Paragraph 3.5d.2.

### **SCHOLARSHIP:**

1. During the department's annual review of criteria within the Departmental Standards and Criteria Document, faculty should consider accepting alternative types of scholarship pursued by faculty members during the pandemic in accordance with Faculty Handbook Section 4.3.
2. Departments should consider reduced scholarship opportunities that may have occurred; some due to budgetary implications or missed opportunities (e.g., cancelled conferences, delayed journal review processes, inability to collect data, etc.).

3. Specifics of short-term or long-term COVID-19 impacts related to the pursuit of scholarly activities may be documented in faculty self-reflections and included in PAC and Department Head evaluations.
4. If a faculty member previously elected to take an extension of their tenure clock due to COVID-19 impacts, that year may be considered a mechanism to stay on track to meet existing criteria rather than a modified portfolio.

**SERVICE:**

1. PACs and Department Heads should consider possible COVID impacts affecting service or professional development work when evaluating faculty members. Faculty should report changes or adaptations that occurred in completing department, college, university, profession, and community service, e.g. increased student support/advising sessions, participation on ad hoc committees and task forces, training/assistance related to learning new teaching modalities, increased or decreased committee work, lack of professional or community service opportunities, etc.
2. Specifics of short-term or long-term COVID-19 impacts related to the pursuit of service activities may be documented in faculty self-reflections and included in PAC and Department Head evaluations.

**GENERAL:**

- It should be appropriate, but not required, for faculty to make a case regarding how COVID impacted their overall work during their Fall Annual Goals and Reflection meeting and evaluation material submissions, including reflections, at each deadline in October and April in the future. Faculty should not, however, be required to disclose personal information (e.g., medical, caregiving) if they do not wish to do so.
- Overall Departmental Standards and Criteria should not change for promotion and tenure (unless such changes are permanent). However, we encourage departmental flexibility with regard to time frame and types of artifacts submitted over time by faculty on a case by case basis as agreed upon by the PAC and department head.
- PACs and administrators should support what faculty members accomplished annually during the pandemic. Concentrate on their efforts, not always on their results (i.e., faculty may have been accepted to conferences, but the conference(s) were cancelled. Faculty may have done a lot of work learning how to teach effectively in an online context, but student assessments may not reflect their work).
- Recognize that faculty provided increased support to students during the pandemic and acknowledge the time/energy it required.
- Consider case-by-case COVID impacts on post-tenure reviews.
- PACs and administrators in different disciplines will face different types and levels of impact.

- Departments should develop clear protocols for teaching observation in online and hybrid classes as well as in face-to-face classes.
- Any information that is provided to probationary faculty about evaluation and advancement should also be shared with deans, department heads, and PACs.

**CONCLUSION:**

The evaluative process, by definition, involves a rearview mirror appraisal of the evidence. However, the impact of COVID-19 will likely last several years into the future and thus, necessitates assessing the long-term effects of COVID-19 on faculty advancement during each stage of a faculty member's career.