

Date: October 1, 2021

From: Chuck Taber, Provost and Executive Vice President

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

Dear Colleagues,

On May 3, 2021 Faculty Senate President Dr. Mindy Markham and I provided [guidance for evaluators of faculty as they consider COVID Impact Statements](#). In that message we reviewed the steps that we have taken to acknowledge the unprecedented impact of the pandemic on faculty, including a one-year extension of tenure clocks, optional use of TEVAL scores, and a recommendation to include COVID Impact Statements in all faculty evaluations.

As we enter the season of evaluation of portfolios for faculty annual review, promotion, and tenure, I want to expand on my recommendation and guidance.

As you know, the COVID pandemic has impacted faculty members across all areas of work, including teaching, research, service, and engagement. COVID Impact Statements provide an opportunity for faculty members to document these impacts.

Our May 3 guidance instructed all evaluators of faculty “to take the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic into consideration when evaluating work performed” and in particular to “consider if and how any criteria need to accommodate changes resulting from the pandemic.” The use of COVID Impact Statements does not imply that our standards of evaluation have changed, but they do provide critical context in understanding how those standards might be met.

Your assessments should recognize that COVID impacts have fallen unequally on our faculty. People face different impacts that could be based on gender, race, ethnicity, immigrant status, socio-economic status, rank, and age. Moreover, faculty activities have been impacted differently due to disparate working conditions, family and support networks, differential caregiving responsibilities, or access to RSCAD facilities.

Just as the conditions of faculty work have changed, the criteria through which we measure progress on our standards may need to be adjusted to evaluate faculty fairly and appropriately in the context of COVID impacts. For example, a standard used in some fields for promotion and tenure is national or international prominence as a scholar or research, and this may have been measured according to criteria like publication counts, research grants, or creative performances. When COVID has negatively impacted measures like these, we will need to use flexibility in our criteria, including for example greater reliance on assessments of quality. We should also put greater emphasis on the trajectory of productive work across all areas from non-COVID years when evaluating faculty impacted by COVID.

It is imperative that we keep the impact of the COVID pandemic in mind when assessing and evaluating faculty currently under review. I expect that as we review the trajectories of faculty work in the coming months, we will be mindful of the myriad ways this situation has affected the lives of our colleagues and recognize their accomplishments within the backdrop of these extraordinary times.

Thank you for all you do to support K-State faculty excellence and success.