**Assessment of COVID-19 Impact Statements in Annual Evaluations and**

**Reappointment, Promotion and Tenure**

**January 2021**

Annual Review and Reappointment, Promotion, and Tenure (RPT) inevitably relies on defined criteria of achievement within disciplines and in the good-faith judgements of evaluators, both external and internal. In ordinary circumstances these expectations are provided by assigned duties and unit bylaws, which are available for review and reflection.

Under the extraordinary circumstance associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, disruptions to teaching, research/scholarship/creative and performative arts, and service/outreach/engagement have varied in ways we were unable to anticipate at the outset of the pandemic. The University recognizes the pandemic is likely to have potential long-term impacts, so conversations within units, colleges and the University will have to occur repeatedly over several years. Faculty have been encouraged to include these disruptions and the impacts on their program in a COVID Impact Statement or as part of their activity reports for annual review. While faculty are not required to provide impact statements, and individuals may use their personal discretion on information they choose to include, providing the *context* of one's work in the narrative is useful for all reviewers.

Therefore, all reviewers (Chairs, School Directors, Annual Review and RPT Committees, external reviewers, Deans and the Provost) need to examine activity reports and dossiers for evidence that a discipline/field has been altered in such ways that our normal expectation may need to be modified as part of the current annual review and/or RPT cycle. It is not possible to categorize the consequences and impacts of the pandemic for each individual. However, reviewers should proactively identify some differences in patterns or evidence that can be directly attributed to the disruption faculty and academic staff have faced. Reviewers and evaluative committees should use impact statements or similar evidence in ways that advance inclusivity and refrain from comparisons that lead to unintended bias. Additionally, it is essential to recognize that effort may not directly match the outcomes across an individual’s assignment. The University recognizes that faculty work may look different than it has in the past. For example, the effort of pivoting to an online teaching modality may have influenced productivity in other parts of an assignment. The pandemic may have caused early career faculty and academic staff (FAS) to shift their focus and data collection methodology for which they should not be penalized. Additionally, alternate methods of sharing research expertise via webinars or public education outlets should be valued.

The following are suggested ways to standardize the thinking of reviewers at all levels of the process of annual review and RPT in terms of weight given to the impact statements that are submitted.

1. Broad discussions within disciplines[[1]](#footnote-1) and academic units need to be facilitated to explore how the discipline(s) has been impacted by the pandemic and what opportunities for program growth and scholarship were not possible to inform the context of how to judge accomplishments.
2. The impact statement provided by a faculty member is accepted as valid because they are a trusted member of the scholarly community.
3. Each impact statement is equally valued[[2]](#footnote-2).
4. Impact of the pandemic may be accelerating as well as decelerating and may change over time.
5. Under such extraordinary times, the work that is produced can still be evaluated based on quality and relevance to increasing knowledge and understanding rather than on quantity of work.
6. The work that is missing due to the pandemic is not known, and therefore can’t be evaluated.
7. Assessments about annual reviews, reappointment, promotion, tenure, etc. must be made on the information provided by the faculty member. While a COVID impact statement is not required, impact that is not documented cannot be considered in assessments.
8. Value-based categories like sharing information, expanding opportunities of others, and mentoring/stewardship may be applied to activity reports and impact statements to allow FAS to share the multiple ways learning, teaching, and knowing have occurred to indicate how FAS have been doing valuable, adaptive, human-based work in other new and perhaps non-traditional ways

1. Some academic units contain more than a single discipline and/or may have FAS that focus on interdisciplinary work. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. The value of each Impact Statement is of importance to understanding the context of the consequences of the pandemic regardless of length or the amount of personal information that is included. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)