

## FACULTY AGENDA ITEM

Date: March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021

Submitted by: Kelly Thor

SUBJECT: Resolution Recommending Tenure and Promotion Processes Following COVID-19 Outbreak

Description: Recommendations on promotion and tenure to be sent to the VPAA's office for consideration.

Rationale: As has become apparent to everyone, the profound and rippling effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic have changed the way we are able to interact, work, and carry out plans—not only professionally, but personally. Last Fall, Faculty Affairs was asked to consider the many ways COVID-19 had impacted faculty working towards Tenure and/or Promotion and to provide recommendations for ways in which Washburn University could substantively ameliorate these effects at every level of governance.

After consulting a variety of sources for additional information, hosting two listening sessions, and receiving the stalwart support of the Academic Diversity and Inclusion Committee (ADIC), Faculty Affairs proposes the following to the Office of Academic Affairs:

Financial Implications: None

Proposed Effective Date: N/A

Request for Action: *Approval by FAC and FS*

Approved by: *FAC 3/8/2021*

*Faculty Senate on date 3/15/2021*

Attachments Yes  No

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After consulting a variety of sources for additional information, hosting two listening sessions, and receiving the stalwart support of the Academic Diversity and Inclusion Committee (ADIC), Faculty Affairs proposes the following to the Office of Academic Affairs:

- a) Request that units and departments revise and/or amend their Tenure and Promotion Standards in light of the changes to research and travel plans that may last for as long as 5-10 years. These revisions should be made in consultation with Tenured and Tenure-Track faculty and delivered to the VPAA Office by August 1, 2021.
- b) Instruct Unit heads to revise their annual performance review forms to include a section that explicitly relates to the impact of COVID on a faculty member's performance.
- c) Encourage Unit and Department heads to use annual performance reviews and the Third Year Review as opportunities to evaluate the faculty member's progress in light of any revised T&P expectations and/or the impact of COVID. For example, the use of multiple versions of student perception forms for the last three semesters should be noted.
- d) Direct Department and Unit heads to consider increasing the weight given to teaching and service in light of the adaptations and innovations in teaching and/or added service to the department, college, and university that many faculty have already accomplished and will likely continue to engage in.
- e) Make clear the ways in which Tenure and/or Promotion Workshops and Review Committees from all levels will be instructed in how to take into consideration the myriad and uneven impact of COVID-19, in order to ensure that revisions at the department level will guide subsequent committee reviews.

- f) Ask that all applicants for Tenure and/or Promotion be given the opportunity to supply an *optional* individual narrative, such as a “COVID Impact Statement.” The ways in which COVID has altered our lives are as diverse as the population of Washburn. Illness, job loss, remote work, disruptions to child care, and the plethora of mental and emotional tolls should be taken into account here. As also recognized by the ADIC statement, people of color and women have been shown to shoulder a disproportionate burden when it comes to the negative impacts of COVID on research, work, and home life. In addition to the impact statement, faculty may also choose to include innovations in this area as well, i.e. to demonstrate the positive changes and contributions they have made in the face of challenges that COVID has created. Faculty are encouraged to consult with their Chair or Unit heads about this statement.
  
- g) Finally, we request that a written response from the Office of the VPAA be made to the points above, so that we might offer faculty and staff written reassurance that at all levels, Washburn is seeking to create an equitable work environment that acknowledges not only the current reality of COVID-19 but the impact it will doubtless have in the years to come.

Further, we hope that this process might be a vital step in shifting the culture in Higher Education away from a rigid set of silos to one that evaluates our lives and work in a broader fashion. Opportunities to expand definitions around teaching, service, and research are increasing, whether through the integration of teaching and research with the emerging field of “pedagogical research,” the new forms of public scholarship that enable us to bring our scholarship to communities well beyond academia, or the blending of teaching and service with High Impact Community Engagement Practices (HICEP) and the recent grant received by Learning in the Community (LinC) to develop “Community Engaged Scholarship.” Perhaps the greater challenge lies in how we might acknowledge the vital ways our personal and professional lives inform one another and offer substantive support and flexibility for more productive integration of these spheres.

The members of Faculty Affairs thank you for your support in our efforts to provide a dignified and safe space in which to not only tell our stories and voice our concerns but also make these specific requests from the Office of Academic Affairs.

Sincerely,

Faculty Affairs Committee

Faculty Senate