



ACADEMIC SENATE

27/AS/20/SEC

Joint Statement on RPT evaluations in the context of COVID-19 pandemic

WHEREAS: The novel COVID–19 pandemic has affected every aspect of university life, including the teaching, research, service, and professional preparation and development of faculty engaged in the Retention, Promotion, and Tenure [RPT] process; and

WHEREAS: The University RPT Committee, the Provost, and the Deans of the respective colleges issued on August 20 of this year the attached Joint Statement on RPT evaluations in the context of COVID-19 pandemic that university reviewers must take the circumstances of the pandemic into account and that department level reviewers are encouraged to do the same; be it therefore

RESOLVED: That the Academic Senate affirms the purpose and language of the attached Joint Statement; and be it further

RESOLVED: That the Academic Senate urges departments to consider their RPT review processes and how they might be best implemented to appropriately address the work of their faculty within the context of the Joint Statement and of the COVID–19 pandemic.

Attachment: RPT evaluations in the context of COVID-19 pandemic statement



To:	Tenure-line Faculty
From:	Provost Greer, Dean Evans, Dean Gomez-Arias, Dean Myhre, Dean Tuedio, Speaker Nainby, URPTC Chair Coughlin, URPTC members Filling, Nainby, Stone, Tibrewal
Date:	August 20, 2020
RE:	RPT evaluations in the context of COVID-19 pandemic

The novel COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically impacted every aspect of our lives. Departmental RPT elaborations were written and adopted without clauses addressing how natural disasters such as a pandemic might impact candidates. Every aspect of faculty work has been affected by the current COVID-19 conditions. The process for a department to change their elaborations cannot happen in time for revised elaborations to be used in the upcoming cycle of reviews. Once the evaluation process has started, the review criteria cannot be changed. The start dates for review are August 28, for the 2nd year evaluations and October 1, for everyone else. Therefore, it is paramount that we consider the effect of the pandemic when applying the existing departmental elaborations to the evaluation of faculty.

Our campus “Principles, Criteria and Procedures for Retention, Promotion, and Tenure Review” policy, states in Section V: F, “It shall be the responsibility of the Departmental RPT Committee Chair and the candidate to gather information pertinent to the RPT review, including student evaluation of teaching data and a current vita.” In Section V: G, “The Departmental RPT Committee shall be responsible for providing detailed description and evaluation of the candidate's performance for each of the stated criteria. The purpose shall be to communicate all pertinent information about the candidate to subsequent levels of review.”

The Principles, Criteria and Procedures policy, and departmental elaborations were written and reviewed without clauses addressing the impacts of natural disasters. Thus, candidates should include statements of how the COVID-19 pandemic impacted their teaching, RSCA and service. Then, Department RPT Committees, in their “detailed description and evaluation,” should include statements of context so that subsequent levels of review, in conducting their independent reviews (Sections V: H, I, J, K), may develop understandings of the ways in which the COVID-19 pandemic and limited access to campus have impacted the candidates’ teaching, RSCA, and service activities in relation to the departmental elaborations.

As a guide, we recommend that department RPT committees consider the following:



1. Acknowledge the value of the research, training, and preparation work of the faculty member in transitioning to fully remote delivery modes involving both pedagogical and scholarly adjustments.
2. Recognize and support changes, even drastic ones, in the research, scholarship, and creative activity agenda of the faculty member in response to the new challenges and opportunities they face. Explicitly noting that COVID-19 has interrupted virtually everyone's scholarly activity agenda would be wise, including acknowledgement of how said interruption impacts faculty research productivity and metrics in the coming years.
3. Take a comprehensive view of the faculty member's work in teaching, service, and research, scholarship, and creative activities with an understanding that an imbalance among the three areas may be an appropriate and desirable response to the needs of the institution and our students during this pandemic.

We must take into consideration the unusual circumstances all of us have been under due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We encourage departmental level reviewers to do the same. While we are focused on the immediate impact of the pandemic, this document should also be considered relevant to future RPT reviews for all tenure-track Assistant and Associate Professors in active service during the COVID-19 pandemic which began in 2020.

Approved by the Academic Senate on October 6, 2020

Approved by President Ellen Junn on November 18, 2020