

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
MINUTES OF THE FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MTG.
FEBRUARY 16, 2021
ELECTRONIC MEETING 2:00 – 4:00 p.m.

Present: Lisa Billingham, Melissa Broeckelman-Post, Richard Craig, Shannon Davis (Chair), Provost Ginsberg, Sr. Vice President Kissal, Tim Leslie, Kumar Mehta, Solon Simmons, Suzanne Slayden

I. Approval of Minutes: The minutes of December 10, 2020 and January 21, 2021 were approved as written.

II. Announcements

- Provost Ginsberg:
 - Congratulated Chair Davis on her appointment as Associate Dean of Faculty for GMU Korea.
 - Changes to Faculty Handbook, approved by Faculty Senate, have been included in the BOV agenda.
 - COVID testing has scaled up to 2000 tests per day.
 - In collaboration with Fairfax County Department of Health, Mason is hosting vaccination clinic on campus for the community. The clinic is staffed with volunteers (Mason Staff and Students).
 - Fall 2021 planning is progressing in coordination with academic departments with the goal of returning the campus to much greater amount of on-campus activity.
 - Expects combination of on-campus and remote learning to be consistent part of future offerings by Mason.
 - Meeting free week – encouraging everyone to enable meeting-free week in-lieu of no Spring Break.
 - Undertaking a deeper conversation with OAI and faculty regarding challenges and issues with sharp increase in reported violations of academic integrity.
 - Working with HR to examine the issue of maintaining consistency for promotion related raises for 9-month vs. 12-month appointments.

- SVP Kissal:

- Funding from Commonwealth of Virginia -- Mason added \$10M to its base budget in 2020-2021 and is poised to add another \$12M to the base budget.
- The additional allocations will be used for priorities such as faculty compensation, staff compensation, and many of the grand challenges identified by President Washington.
- From the stimulus bill -- University is starting to receive reimbursements for COVID-related expenses for setting up testing, labs, testing protocols, etc. That has reduced the pressure experienced from the budget deficit for 2020-2021.

Discussion:

- Senator observed that equity related raises had been identified and are expected to go into effect in March 2021. Noting that no information has been made public about it – Senator observed that lack of open communication in this regard is likely to yield more negatives because faculty at large would not be aware of the reasoning and process by which these were given.

SVP Kissal:

- This was the first phase for addressing the faculty pay.
- In Phase 2 – Market Analysis driven raises will be awarded. Comparing with peers from SCHEV data, the pay-gap is greatest for Assistant Professors. Expects bulk of the work and analysis to happen over the summer.
- State Legislature is expected to approve 3 to 3.5% increase in faculty pay.

Follow-up:

- Senator expressed frustration at lack of engagement regarding Phase 1, and resulting lack of transparency on the decision making.
- SVP Kissal noted that her office has disclosed what is being done and has not shared "how".
- Senators noted that the engagement of faculty in the entire process is essential because they are stakeholders. Faculty's point of view is relevant and important.
- SVP Kissal agreed that she would work towards ensuring faculty are informed and involved.
- There was spirited discussion on: a) the factors being used to determine raises in the different phases, b) on upcoming raises from state budget, and c) the need to run the process as transparently as possible.

- Chair Davis:
 - Meeting with VP Lester Arnold to discuss concerns raised by Budget and Resources, and Salary Equity Study Committee.
 - Rector Hazel will be joining Faculty Senate meeting on March 31.
 - President Washington will be joining Faculty Senate meeting on March 3.
 - Update on General Faculty Meeting:
 - Coordinating with all parties regarding General Faculty Meeting possibly on March 17th.

III. Progress reports, business, and agenda items from Senate Standing Committees

A. Academic Policies – Suzanne Slayden

Nothing to report.

B. Budget and Resources – Tim Leslie

1) Committee in conversation with the Provost Office about getting college level financial data released.

2) Committee is continuing to seek ways to increase faculty engagement some of the formative decision-making spaces -- particularly at the level of Provost's Office and the SVP's Office. Committee is trying to identify processes to enable faculty to meaningfully engage in those spaces.

C. Faculty Matters – Solon Simmons

1. Faculty Evaluations in time of COVID

[Appendix A](#)

- Draft of document was developed by Faculty Matters Committee with input from Provost's Office. Committee is seeking feedback from the Executive Committee.

Discussion:

- Planned course of action: a) the document would be discussed at Faculty Senate meeting, and b) it would be sent to Provost's Office as a recommendation.
- Document seeks to address the more immediate issue of annual evaluations, and the longer-term effects on promotion and tenure.
- Senator inquired about recourse for faculty, if Provost's Office accepts the recommendations but LAU leadership refuses to adopt appropriate accommodations. The was follow up discussion on need to reset and revisit some of the evaluation approaches, particularly for teaching.
- There was specific discussion on how service has been historically evaluated, and the importance for revisiting the evaluations particularly regarding leadership in service.

- Provost Ginsberg emphasized his view that assessing single score to complex evaluation is not the right way to conduct evaluations, and the protocol and assessment approach needs to be revisited to become more contemporary. He shared his view that we will continue to fail at annual evaluation if we continue to use the current approach which is both outdated and outmoded.
- Extensive discussion followed on how evaluation of teaching needs to be significantly revisited. Discussion also included on how the data from recent student evaluations of teaching will be used, and safeguards against leadership exclusively or significantly relying on the data. Senators cited various examples about excessive reliance on student evaluation of teaching for annual evaluation, has created significant problems.
- Chair Davis noted the importance of Provost's Office clearly communicating:
 - How department chairs, academic heads and deans engage with the document, and
 - Set of expectations for the use of document in the overall evaluation process in the next year.

Chair Davis also noted that in absence of such communication clearly coming directly from Provost's office – these recommendations not only will not be followed, but also create anxieties on part of faculty who are already feeling quite vulnerable.

- Discussion on next steps towards bringing it to Faculty Senate meeting, and subsequent steps.
2. FEA Update/Discussion – committee has finished with qualitative evaluations and expects to publish them soon.
 3. FMC met with Budget and Resources regarding the question of class sizes.
 - Potential equity issues that might emerge.
 - Matter was brought COACHE committee, which is willing to look into it.
 - Issue of workload commitment that often disproportionately impact term faculty. The Term Faculty Committee is also actively engaged with the workload policy subcommittee.
 - Faculty are invited to share examples that they believe should be investigated.

Discussion:

- Senator noted that COACHE data is pre-COVID and the challenges about class sizes during COVID would not be actively reflected in the COACHE data.

D. Nominations – Melissa Broeckelman-Post and Richard Craig

1. Nominees for Capital Planning Steering Committee
 - Committee would like to nominate Samuel Frye. Previous experience as planning commissioner for a city, and experience with city development and communication makes him a good candidate for the committee.
2. After Committee had sent out the call for Capital Planning Steering Committee, Tobi Walsh (Asst VP, Capital Strategy and Planning, Office of the Sr. VP) submitted request to have the same person also chair the Academic Space Subcommittee. The Subcommittee will be comprised of a single rep from each school or college for space request development and update of the multiyear space needs plan. The subcommittee does not have decision-making authority but is advisory to the Space Working Group and would meet bi-monthly for at least an hour. Committee believes this to be a lot of work and wanted to bring this forward for conversation.

Discussion:

 - Senators agreed that it appears to be a lot of work for one person.
 - There was general agreement that a separate nomination for the position was the appropriate way to do, and with empowering Nominations Committee to communicate with parties involved and make final decision in this regard.
3. Proposal to split elections of university and senate nominations between spring and fall

Nominations Committee

Proposal to split elections of university and senate nominations between spring and fall

Seeing that many university committees need to begin their work when the semester begins, and the process of electing both university and senate committees at the same time creates stress on the process and the committee, we propose splitting the elections for University and Senate Committees across the spring (university nominations) and fall (Senate nominations) semesters. We propose the following timeline for soliciting nominations and holding elections:

February & March: Solicit nominees for BOV representatives, University Committees (except for seats that must be filled by Senators), and General faculty representatives to other committees.

Last meeting of the spring semester: Elect BOV representatives, University Committee members, and representatives to other committees

Summer: After all colleges have elected their Senators, calls will go out to all Senators soliciting nominations for Senate Committees, Senate representatives to University Committees, and Senate representatives to other committees.

First meeting of the fall semester: Elect members of Senate Committees, Senate seats on University Committees (where still needed), and Senate representatives to other committees.

Discussion:

- There was general agreement about merits of the proposal to enable committees to be formed earlier (where possible), members to be familiarized with the charge, and accomplish most during the academic year.
- Nomination committee will make announcement at the Faculty Senate meeting and invite discussion from interested parties.

E. Organization and Operations – Lisa Billingham

1. Faculty in non-collegiate academic units and other updates on apportionment
Apportionment for AY 21-22 is the same as last.

Discussion:

- With addition of 1 additional Senator in apportionment, there was discussion on need for Charter revision requiring approval prior to approval of the new apportionment.
2. Committee Charges under review
 - O&O and Academic Initiatives (AI) to begin review of AI committee's charge.
 - O&O is also currently in process of revising charges for other committees.
 3. Grading Process Task Force Update

Grading Process Task Force (Long-Term Project)

GOAL

The Grading Process Task Force will consider the grading scheme used at George Mason University for its undergraduate and graduate students and make a recommendation for our future grading processes (**in the event of an emergency**). This task force is intended to evaluate the university's previous use of the plus/minus grading system prior to COVID-19, assess the implementation of the alternative grading system as a result of COVID-19, and develop a proposal for how we will transition from the optional alternative grading system used during this crisis to the grading scale that will be in place for the future. The Task Force is further asked to be mindful of students and programs with a variety of backgrounds, as well as the communicative value of grading schemas to students once they leave the institution.

CHARGE

The Grading Process Task Force is charged with doing the following:

- (i) Assess the advantages and disadvantages of the current A+ to F structure in place
- (ii) Conduct a thorough review of peer institutions, best practices, and existing scholarship about the advantages and disadvantages of other known schemes, including such options

as Mason's 'Alternative Grading Scheme' used in Spring/Fall 2020, High Pass / Pass / Fail, ranked grading, straight A-F scales, plus/minus scales, and any other system deemed worthy of consideration by members of the committee

(iii) Make a recommendation about which grading scheme best fits the institution's mission, providing a rationale and support for that recommendation

(iv) Outline a potential timeline, cost, and a communication plan for implementing any recommended changes

(v) The Task Force a Chair from (perhaps Stearns Center or someone with a wide understanding of the educational system?)

DELIVERABLE OUTCOME

After deliberation and external engagement, the Task Force is charged to bring a report, including proposed action items and rationales, to the Faculty Senate for subsequent approval and implementation by University Administration. If appropriate for time-sensitive elements, intermediate reports and action items are welcomed.

TIMELINE:

Report to Faculty Senate the semester following its inception. (proposed 1 year for task (report to Senate, 2 years for final suggestions and report. (EXEC 11.16.2020)

COMPOSITION

The Task Force shall be composed of:

(i) One instructional faculty member from each college or school, elected by the faculty of that college or school, (this is not limited to tenure-track faculty)

(ii) One member of the Academic Policies Committee

(iii) Two students: one elected member of GAPSA and one elected member of Student Senate

(iv) the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education (or designate)

(v) the Associate Provost for Graduate Education (or designate)

(vi) the Stearns Center designate), and

(vii) the Registrar (or designate).

Updates:

- The proposal has been shared with all of the stakeholders.
- Most recent feedback -- it **does not** wind up that definitely Stearns Center is the group that has to run the committee.

Discussion:

- Senator commented that charge says “*deliverable*” – “*to deliver a recommendation for implementation by the university administration*”. Noting that grading scale changes is academic policy – the deliverable should go to the Academic Policies Committee to make a recommendation to the Faculty Senate. The Faculty Senate can then discuss and vote to submit the recommendation to Provost’s office.
- There was discussion on reporting timeline with suggestions of reporting once a semester to the Faculty Senate, as well as potential placeholder on every Faculty Senate meeting agenda.

IV. Other Committees/Faculty Representatives

Salary Equity Tool Evaluated by COS

- Chair Davis shared that she was perplexed by the fact that the Salary Equity Study Committee has not been engaged in any of the work that HR has been doing.
 - Specifically speaking to COS tool, see the Statement Regarding Faculty Compensation Tool Development in the College of Science (below).
 - Noting that no information was shared as to why this was being undertaken, where it fits into the overall process or procedure, or how it is to be used by the university.
 - A report from Salary Equity Study will be released soon, with the fact that the committee has been left out of the decision-making.
 - There is great frustration on part of the committee members because they have attempted to engage with number of people but have not been able to. The committee was charged with Studying the concerns around salary equity – instead of cooperating, engaging and assisting the committee, consultant has been hired to undertake this with no engagement with committee or transparency to the process.

Statement regarding faculty compensation tool development in College of Science

Background

In October 2020, the College of Science faculty at Mason learned of a collaboration with central administration and Segal Consulting to develop an instructional faculty salary analysis tool. The tool was intended to generate comprehensive salary reviews that include a market analysis by academic discipline. These salary reviews would be used to support efforts to equitably compensate faculty. We were informed the initial structure of the tool was complete and invited to volunteer to participate in virtual design sessions with the consultants to talk through the factors and weighting in the tool. A small group of COS faculty were selected to participate in these design sessions, which occurred on November 4, 2020 and December 10, 2020. Discussions during and after these meetings prompted the following statement to be communicated with the COS Dean, the Salary Equity Study standing committee, and COS faculty senators during the week of February 8, 2021.

The faculty compensation tool under development has fundamental flaws and probable biases which will impede its effectiveness.

Our concerns with the tool include the following:

- **A cost of living adjustment (COLA) is not being included.**
 - There is no explicit cost of living adjustment, despite this being one of the primary reasons faculty have left Mason and top candidates have turned down job offers.
 - If one of the purposes of this tool is to retain and attract outstanding faculty, then we must include COLA
 - Segal has pledged to include regional peer institutions in the data set, however it unclear if this will be an effectual alternative to an explicit inclusion of relative COLA percentages.
- **The Segal tool will perpetuate inequities in faculty salaries.**
 - The dataset being used for this tool cannot be tested for systematic bias because race/ethnicity/ gender/age are not required variables.
 - Gender bias in academia is a well-established reality. We have no assurance that the salary data being used in this tool are truly representative of market value or divergent due to bias.
 - It is very possible the gender bias repeatedly observed is “baked in” to the data and the salaries are representative of both bias and market. For example, if a mostly women female biology department has lower salaries and a mostly male physics department has higher salaries, can we conclude the difference is because of the market for biology vs. physics professors? Or are they different because of a gender bias? We cannot distinguish between these variables in this case.
- **The tool cannot offer a true peer comparison of many unique faculty positions.**
 - There is no clear way to evaluate how administrative or outreach activities for example may influence market value. To compensate, the tool allows for “weights” to be added for certain activities, but there is no clear way to apply these weights consistently.
 - How will activities that add to Mason’s success (improve image, recruit students, attract top talent and students, etc.) in the academy be counted?
- **The tool has too many “fudge factors” to be meaningful.**
 - These factors will artificially sway salaries up or down at the whim of whoever is using the tool, thus rendering the results useless.
 - Values of teaching, research, and service are challenging to quantify and one role should not dominate the calculations.

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Statement regarding faculty compensation tool development in College of Science

- **The dataset being used is incomplete and unreliable.**
 - CUPA HR data are reported by HR officials
 - Faculty are labeled with CIP codes, which have not been shown to be appropriate for people and may negatively reflect on faculty with diverse expertise
 - Years of faculty experience are not included
 - No cost of living adjustment (COLA) is included to equate salaries across localities.
 - No specific details about job type and responsibilities are included in the dataset
 - No demographic information is included.
 - Has not been benchmarked against salaries compiled and publicly available from resources such as field-specific professional societies, such as the American Chemical Society
- **Appropriate and knowledgeable University elected faculty representatives have not been engaged in this process**
 - It is our understanding that the tool being developed is related to the work of the Salary Equity Study standing committee at Mason. Why has that faculty group, with a specific charge to study salary equity, not been involved in this process?

The new tool from Segal is not going to address equity. **How can we seriously talk about faculty compensation, when there is no discussion about remediating existing inequities?** We do not know where in Mason or COS are the major equity gaps. We do know these gaps exist because publicly reported numbers show it. Why have equity study results not been shared with faculty? **Why aren't strategic plans to ameliorate inequities not taking precedent over developing a "market value" tool.**

If plans persist to deploy this tool, there must be a **test phase and opportunities for revision pending results from those tests.** Furthermore, we advocate for explicit procedures that constrain its use and invite the consideration of other datasets and professional salary sources appropriate to each discipline.

We urge the College of Science and Mason administration to seriously consider these objections and concerns. **Administration and faculty stakeholders should explore and review methodologies to ensure that faculty are equitably represented.** This compensation tool has the potential to influence many faculty salaries and careers at Mason. We appreciate your attention on this important matter.

- Chair Davis expressed her desire to share updates with colleagues in COS and elsewhere to inform them of: a) President's update regarding efforts to address some of the past inequities, b) update from SVP Kissal to the Exec Committee, and c) the work done by faculty in this space and how these fit in.

Discussion:

- Senators discussed how long to wait with suggestion of waiting to see if information shared at BOV meeting clarifies matters, before making decision to provide updates to faculty.
- Senators expressed deep concerns about unwillingness on part of SVP to share any information regarding the factors used to identify candidates and amounts for salary raises.

- Discussion on damage from negative narratives taking hold in absence of transparency in decision making. The importance of enabling a cultural change in transparency and engagement to increase trust by faculty.

V. New Business, Updates, and Discussion

- Schedule special meeting with Visitor Davis outside of Executive Committee meeting time (all committee chairs are encouraged to do the same) – Meeting – Thursday March 25th 3-4 pm.
- Planning for 2021-2022 Faculty Senate meetings (see below)
Discussion:
 - Importance of identifying the calendar for Faculty Senate meetings for AY 2021-2022.
 - Options for increasing number of meetings (scheduled plus spillover) to enable dealing with the agenda.
 - Timeline for making determination of the calendar and presenting it at the Faculty Senate meeting. The importance of having it available earlier so that incoming Senators can have these on their calendars.
- Chair Davis:
 - Update: the Faculty Assembly at Mason Korea is close to finalizing their by-laws .

Draft

2021/22 Faculty Senate Calendar

Green = Senate meeting
Purple = Spillover, special guests like President and Rector
Blue = Exec

Note, need agenda one week before Senate meeting

August 2021						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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29	30	31				

September 2021						
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November 2021						
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December 2021						
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January 2022						
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February 2022						
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March 2022						
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April 2022						
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May 2022						
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29	30	31				

June 2022						
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July 2022						
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31						

This has 5 meetings per semester, 4 spillovers in fall and 3 spillovers in spring.
Suggest Rector October and February spillover, President November and March spillover

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Federal holidays 2021/22

Sep 6, 2021	Labor Day	Dec 24, 2021	Christmas Day (obs.)	Jan 17, 2022	Martin L. King Day
Oct 11, 2021	Columbus Day	Dec 25, 2021	Christmas Day	Feb 21, 2022	Presidents' Day
Nov 11, 2021	Veterans Day	Dec 31, 2021	New Year's Day (obs.)	May 30, 2022	Memorial Day
Nov 25, 2021	Thanksgiving Day	Jan 1, 2022	New Year's Day	Jul 4, 2022	Independence Day

Mason Days of Note

Aug 23, 2021	First day of classes	Jan 18, 2022	First day spring term
Oct 11, 2021	Fall break	Mar 7-13	Spring break
Nov 24-26	Thanksgiving recess	May 2	Last day of classes
Dec 4	Last day of fall classes	May 13	Commencement
Dec 16	Winter graduation		

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VI. Agenda for FS Meeting March 3, 2021

- **President Washington**

- **Committee Reports:**

- A. Faculty Senate Standing Committees**

- Executive Committee

- Coffee and Connect with Faculty Senate Executive Committee March 5 9-10 am.

- Academic Policies

- Budget and Resources

- Faculty Matters

- Nominations

- Organization and Operations

- Allocation of Senators AY 21-22

- B. Other Committees/Faculty Representatives**

- **New Business**

- **Announcements**

- Provost Ginsberg
 - SVP Kissal

- **Remarks for the Good of the Faculty**

- **Adjournment**

Respectfully submitted,

Kumar Mehta

Secretary

Appendix A

Faculty Evaluation Recommendations during the Novel Coronavirus COVID-19 Pandemic

Prepared by the Faculty Matters Committee, a Standing Committee of the GMU Faculty Senate
Bethany Letiecq (Co-Chair), Solon Simmons (Co-Chair), Keith Renshaw,
Benjamin Steger, Victoria Grady

February 12, 2020

Background

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in more than 16,400,000 million cases and over 300,000 American deaths since March 2020, with numbers expected to rise well into 2021, until vaccines are widely available. The death toll is staggering. Less understood are the physical and mental health complications of COVID-19 survivors. The disproportionate effects of the pandemic^{1,2} for Black, Indigenous, immigrant, and other communities of color, coupled with the movement for Black lives, has laid bare deeply-entrenched racial and economic inequities and injustices produced by and instantiated in our social systems.

Universities and those they serve have been far from immune. The pandemic has also upended the work of university faculty with disparate effects. In March, instructional faculty were required to convert their in-person courses to fully online. These conversions continued through the summer and fall of 2020 (and will likely continue through summer 2021). Many faculty were forced to shift their workloads significantly, increasing their time spent teaching and in service to the institution. Faculty had to work from home, many without private home offices, the equipment necessary for virtual work and/or high-speed internet. Term faculty teaching 4-4 loads have been particularly burdened in a variety of ways, including increased course caps, new class preparations, student emotional support and mentoring, and online course conversions. In addition to the extra time many have had to devote to teaching and service, research projects have been delayed or canceled, conferences have been canceled or moved to fully virtual offerings. Finally, there is reason to believe that these challenges are not proportionate in impact, with much of the extra work falling on women and minority faculty members.³

Virtually all daycare, preschool, K-12 schools, and other care-based services were closed or severely curtailed during this time. This placed an additional burden on faculty with young and/or school-aged children and/or other caregiving demands within their families, with few to

¹ <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/07/05/us/coronavirus-latino-african-americans-cdc-data.html>

² <https://familyinequality.wordpress.com/2020/12/11/covid-19-mortality-rates-by-race-ethnicity-and-age/>

³ The University of Michigan ADVANCE report notes that, "Faculty of color and women are doing more emotional labor through supporting students and performing service." Their citation is Gonzales, L.D., & Griffin, K.A. (2020). [*Supporting faculty during & after COVID-19: Don't let go of equity*](#). Washington, DC: Aspire Alliance.

no supports other than offers of flexibility or reduced effort for reduced pay from their employers. It is well documented that women have been especially impacted^{4,5,6,7}. Given these significant disruptions and the likelihood that these will continue through 2021, the Faculty Matters Committee is recommending *pandemic-centered criteria* for evaluating instructional/research faculty for the 2020-2021 academic year and, possibly, in future years depending on the course of the pandemic. Moreover, we recommend that evaluations account for disproportionate disruptions for different faculty, to the extent possible.

Pandemic-Specific Evaluation Recommendations

Consistent with the GMU *Faculty Handbook*, expectations for teaching, research, and service are “in large measure a faculty responsibility,” and generally originate at the level of the local academic unit (LAU). Thus, these recommendations should be taken up at the LAU level in conversation with the individual faculty member for consideration, adoption, and implementation of accommodation procedures.

Teaching

Student evaluations of teaching (SET) during the period of the pandemic should not be used in a routine way to evaluate faculty teaching, either in annual evaluations or in RPT reviews. Rather, whether courses were taught in-person, online, or hybrid, the SETs should be treated as informative only, not as a determinative evaluation criterion during the pandemic. In effect, faculty should be held harmless. Researchers and administrators have long recognized gender and racial [biases](#) built into evaluations by students⁸. The extraordinary teaching conditions brought on by the pandemic may exacerbate bias in evaluations⁹. Furthermore, experts have raised questions about the validity of using survey items developed for face-to-face courses in evaluations of teaching in a wholly online environment^{10, 11}.

Instead, we recommend allowing faculty to include SET data *if they wish*, but also advising that faculty can submit alternative evidence of their teaching performance. The goal is not to place an extra burden on faculty members already under stress, nor on their peers to evaluate them,

⁴ <https://advance.umich.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/UM-ADVANCE-Faculty-Equity-and-COVID-19-Oct-2020.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.preprints.org/manuscript/202009.0632/v1>

⁶ Squazzoni, Flaminio and Bravo, Giangiacomo and Grimaldo, Francisco and Garcia-Costa, Daniel and Farjam, Mike and Mehmani, Bahar, No Tickets for Women in the COVID-19 Race? A Study on Manuscript Submissions and Reviews in 2347 Elsevier Journals during the Pandemic (October 16, 2020). Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3712813> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3712813>

⁷ <https://www-nature-com.mutex.gmu.edu/articles/d41586-020-01294-9>

⁸ <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11199-005-8292-4>

⁹ <https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2020/09/04/advice-academic-administrators-how-best-support-faculty-during-pandemic-opinion>

¹⁰ <https://academeblog.org/2020/04/17/suspend-student-evaluations-during-pandemic/>

¹¹ <https://www.aacu.org/blog/student-evaluation-teaching-covid-19-considerations-validity-and-fairness>

but to provide for alternative means of performance assessment based on forms of evidence that the faculty member has an opportunity to shape. This alternative evidence may include:

- Peer observation of synchronous teaching (if applicable)
- Self and/or peer review of online teaching (if applicable), using resources found here: <https://stearnscenter.gmu.edu/knowledge-center/online-teaching/online-course-quality/>
- Formative feedback from students made periodically during the semester
- Sample(s) of work developed in this period, such as revised syllabus for online teaching, sample assessments with or without de-identified examples of feedback provided
- Evidence related to work outside the classroom (e.g., students advised, student outreach to promote engagement in online courses)
- Optional brief reflective statements on the impact of COVID about what went well, what was challenging, and what adjustments a faculty was forced to make to meet work objectives.

Again, we do **not** advocate adding extensive additional work for faculty to generate evidence of their performance during this time. Faculty should be encouraged to provide whatever evidence can be readily generated. Faculty should be supported in their efforts to expand their documented evidence of teaching effectiveness beyond the SET over time.

Beyond these basic recommendations, we also recommend that faculty, LAUs, and Colleges/Schools consult the guidance provided by the [Effective Teaching Committee](#) (ETC) on assessing teaching effectiveness during the pandemic. Also, we recommend that LAUs work directly with instructors who request additional teaching supports, are identified as in need of additional supports, or are experiencing burnout. Possible considerations might include reducing teaching loads, adjusting assignments, and connecting faculty to university resources, including the Stearns Center and employee assistance programs.

Finally, most if not all faculty have engaged in significant additional work to meet the needs of students, and this work should be recognized. LAUs are encouraged to pay attention those faculty who went above and beyond the call, either due to the number or complexity of courses converted, ingenuity of approaches developed, extra work to engage and mentor students, and/or assistance provided to other instructors. In addition to explicitly counting these activities as significant contributions in annual review and RPT, additional recognition could include monetary awards, future release time, or future study leaves.

Research

Criteria for the evaluation of scholarship and research should be altered to account for the pandemic and subsequent years of post-pandemic recovery. Pre-pandemic expectations regarding external funding and publications, for example, should be reconsidered during this time and in subsequent years that are affected by pandemic research interruptions.

We recommend that each LAU re-evaluate its current criteria for research and scholarship to determine what adjustments are necessary to match those criteria to the new reality of the pandemic. This re-evaluation should consider immediate effects (e.g., annual evaluation criteria

for the 2020-2021 academic year) and longer-term effects (e.g., criteria for annual evaluations and RPT over the next several years, based in the reality of how research interruptions during this period are likely to affect faculty members' productivity in years to come).

In addition, we recommend and encourage each LAU assess potential disparate effects of the pandemic on individual faculty members and incorporate these disparities of impact when re-evaluating their criteria. The re-evaluation process should engage all unit faculty, with the results clearly recorded and disseminated to all faculty in the unit. Finally, we recommend that each College/School engage in similar processes in re-evaluating their college-level P&T criteria and ensuring transparent recording and dissemination of the results. The burden of developing such a plan is in no way insignificant and LAUs are already themselves facing increased pressures from the same causes. What is clear is that complicated processes like these will need to be developed both for annual reviews and for RPT processes and will require some form of collaboration between and among representatives from the LAU, the school or college level, and the provost office. Results of these processes should be made public in a timely way and disseminated through the Faculty Affairs and Development website.

Again, we do **not** advocate adding extensive additional work for faculty to generate evidence of their performance in scholarship and research during the pandemic. Indeed, faculty and administrators should consider ways to minimize the burden to faculty of assembling evaluation packets or explaining their individual and/or familial circumstances during the COVID-19 pandemic (beginning Spring 2020). We provide additional guidance below. Faculty who request additional supports or who are identified as in need of additional supports should be provided or directed to the resources necessary to recover and/or reconceive of their programs of research.

Tenure-track faculty have already been granted extensions to their tenure clocks. There is some evidence that these extensions have differential impacts by gender, whereby men benefit more than women, and that they can stymie the acquisition of external funds^{12,13}. Extensions can also further instantiate inequities regarding pay (e.g., delayed raises). In regard to this latter point, the University should consider the feasibility of making raises tied to tenure and promotion retroactive to the period that a faculty member *would* have been promoted in the absence of an extension. Also, the university should study the effectiveness of tenure clock extensions as a function of gender and discipline.

Service

During the pandemic, many faculty have experienced both disruptions to their service and opportunities and requests to engage in unplanned, new service endeavors in support of the university's mission. We recommend that faculty be strongly encouraged to duly capture these endeavors, including hidden forms of service that are time-consuming and invaluable to the

¹² <https://pubs.aeaweb.org/doi/pdfplus/10.1257/aer.20160613>

¹³ <https://www.asanet.org/news-events/asa-news/call-higher-education-administrators-support-caregivers-during-covid-19>

university and broader community (e.g., mentoring colleagues and students, engaging in public scholarship, university level initiatives). We furthermore strongly encourage supervisors and committees to give due weight to activities that have been crucial to the maintenance of Mason's mission and the promotion of health and safety more broadly during this unprecedented time

Beyond university-based service or service to one's profession, many faculty may have engaged in community-based service and/or volunteerism to help meet the critical needs of communities confronting the COVID-19 pandemic. Service may look different during this time, and we recommend that LAUs encourage faculty members to include community-based service and volunteer efforts in their evaluative documentation. Consistent with the university's mission to be a community builder, we encourage LAUs to consider the broader impacts of service in faculty evaluations. Moreover, service in the time of the pandemic has demonstrated the importance of faculty leadership in an atypical way. The university should use this opportunity to revisit service criteria to include a category of "faculty engagement and leadership" that would place service on a level more on par with the traditionally more critical criteria of research and teaching.

Assessing COVID Impact: Faculty Checklist

Many universities are recommending faculty produce COVID Impact Statements to delineate the professional impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in their evaluative documentation. Because some faculty may find these statements burdensome to produce and because many faculty, especially those most impacted by the pandemic, may question how these statements will be used and whether there will be any negative repercussions or unintended consequences associated with such statements, the statements should be entirely voluntary. If a faculty member does not wish to produce such a statement, they should not be forced to do so.

We have developed a preliminary **Faculty Checklist of COVID Impact** (see below) to support faculty self-assessment of disparate COVID disruptions to their work and life. However, the checklist should **not** be required by LAUs unless specific parameters are agreed upon by the faculty and instantiated at each level of review to ensure faculty are not harmed by – and are indeed supported for – their honest appraisals of their pandemic experiences. As noted, disruptions during the pandemic have not been equally felt as a function of individual and familial characteristics (e.g., race, gender, family configuration), scholarly discipline, faculty rank and position, number and type of courses taught, type of scholarship, among other factors.

Assessment of COVID impact raises salient concerns about privacy and use in terms of who will have access to self-assessments and how the data will be used. We strongly recommend that the checklist **not** be used in the aggregate or to establish norms for comparative purposes. LAUs should be very clear that the checklist will be used to capture disparate effects of the pandemic for different faculty and to build supports for faculty recovery from the pandemic. If the checklist is used for evaluative purposes by LAUs or the administration, it will only further erode faculty morale and mistrust of the university system.

Importantly, we recognize that the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic can include both disruptions and reduced productivity, as well as new or unusual contributions made in response to the crisis. Faculty are also encouraged to document the ways in which they were able to increase their production or contribute to the pandemic response during this time. However, the checklist of COVID impact centers most pointedly on the challenges that emerged for different faculty during the pandemic both professionally and personally. The checklist is not comprehensive and should be modified at the local level to reflect discipline-specific criteria.

RPT and External Evaluator Letter Solicitation

While this document focuses primarily on annual evaluation of faculty, LAUs should consider adaptations for faculty review, promotion, and tenure (RPT). Units may consider including the following language in external evaluator letter solicitation¹⁴: As stated in the research section, above, it will be important for each LAU to coordinate a complex process between and among members of the LAU, the school or college and the Provost office. It is not possible to specify what these local processes will look like in every case, but they should be started as soon as possible and they should be adapted to the specific needs of the LAU.

Beginning in the Spring 2020 semester, faculty across the University experienced a significant disruption due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In Spring 2020, as a result of the health crisis, all faculty moved their courses online, research facilities including labs and libraries were closed, and student evaluation of teaching was modified. In conjunction with the disruptions experienced on-campus, many faculty were working out of their homes while simultaneously providing childcare due to closures of daycare facilities and K-12 schooling. Research disruptions, significant shifts in teaching modalities, limited childcare, and remote work persisted into the Spring of 2021. We ask that you take these unprecedented events into consideration when evaluating work performed during the Spring 2020 to Spring 2021.

¹⁴ Adapted from Michelle Budig, Vice Provost for Faculty Development at UMass Amherst “Documenting COVID-19 Impacts in Faculty Personnel Review Materials” PPT Presentation

Faculty Checklist of COVID Impact¹⁵

This checklist is presented as a way to start the conversation. A final version would have to be the result of the coordination of stakeholders at the LAU, school or college level and the provost office.

Teaching Impacts	Yes	No	NA	Notes (optional)
Did you have to convert course(s) for remote learning? (Note how many courses)				
Had you taught online before?				
Did you experience an increase in student needs for support (e.g., technical, emotional)?				
Did you provide increased support or increase engagement with students?				
Did you have adequate supports and resources (e.g., time, equipment, space, internet access, funding) to convert and/or deliver courses online?				
Did your students have adequate supports and resources to successfully engage in your courses?				
Did you adapt your approach to advising or mentoring students?				
Did the increased workload for transitioning to remote learning restrict time for research/service?				
Research Impacts	Yes	No	NA	Notes
Was your research program adversely affected by the pandemic?				
Did your research pivot to address emergent questions/issues related to the pandemic?				
Did your research program benefit from the pandemic (e.g., funding sources shifted to your area of expertise, had more time to write)?				
Did you donate your time, equipment, PPE, or other resources to support a COVID-19 response?				

¹⁵ Adapted from Michelle Budig, Vice Provost for Faculty Development at UMass Amherst “*Documenting COVID-19 Impacts in Faculty Personnel Review Materials*” PPT Presentation

Were you affected by cancellation, delay, or alteration of conferences, invited talks, or performance venues for you to present your research/creative activity?				
Were your research lab, studio, field site, and/or study populations inaccessible?				
Were grant proposal submissions delayed or calls for proposals shifted away from your areas of expertise during the pandemic?				
Did travel restrictions impact your ability to staff your lab, visit a field site, or conduct research?				
Were specific scholarly products (manuscripts, manuscript reviews, experiments, performances) slowed, delayed, or canceled due to the pandemic?				
Were you on release time or sabbatical during 2020 but unable to carry out scholarly plans?				
Service Impacts	Yes	No	NA	Notes
Did you perform services (or hidden labor) important to sustaining the campus mission during the pandemic, such as serving on Safe Return to Campus committees, helping other faculty with IT or remote learning, helping students navigate remote learning and relocation, pitching in to support coworkers in their tasks?				
Were your professional service endeavors curtailed during the pandemic?				
Did you engage in or increase mentorship or outreach (locally, nationally) during the pandemic response?				
Did you engage in community-based service or volunteerism related to the pandemic?				
Were you able to engage in consequential service?				
Did the increased demands for service as a result of the pandemic affect your productivity?				
Personal Impacts*	Yes	No	NA	Notes

Was your time for research, teaching, or service altered or restricted due to caregiving demands for family members or others?				
Were you a parent primarily responsible for homeschooling and/or caring for young or school-aged child(ren)?				
Were you providing eldercare or special needs care to a family member during the pandemic?				
Was your time restricted due to health issues experienced in your household or network?				
Was a chronic health condition ¹⁶ exacerbated due to the pandemic and/or changes in access to health care?				
Did you or a household member have to quarantine or isolate due to COVID-19?				
Did you experience a severe illness or death in your family, household, or network?				
Was anyone in your immediate household a frontline worker during COVID-19?				
Did someone in your household/extended familial network experience job loss and/or economic hardship during the pandemic?				
If you wish, please include any additional information beyond what is captured in the checklist below.				

**Faculty may wish to denote their personal circumstances in the checklist. Revealing such circumstances should be done at the sole discretion of faculty members.*

¹⁶ <https://www.aaup.org/article/chronic-illness-and-academic-career#.X9ZHKs1KjIV>

