

COVID Support for Untenured Faculty, PEAR Faculty under review, and Faculty on Continuing Review

October, 2021

While we had hoped that the potential for pandemic-related disruptions would have receded by now, the rise of the delta variant has reminded us that we continue to need to be flexible and to support faculty in a variety of ways, particularly junior faculty. The following tools or approaches are available to support TT faculty. The TT faculty member should discuss these options with their review committee chair and ask for their recommendation. Some tools, such as eliminating online courses (F'20 or W'21) included in student sampling or class observation for faculty under review, can be implemented by the TT faculty member. Others (stop the clock agreements, course releases, some decisions to remove courses from student sampling or class observations) need to be approved by the Dean of the College, in consultation with the review committee chair. Approval in these cases will be provided in writing to the TT faculty member and the review committee chair. **The dean will take into consideration that needs and impacts will vary among faculty, and she will consider both equity and consistency across the college when approving these requests.**

What types of scholarly support are available to untenured faculty or faculty who are not yet promoted to full professor, to assist in restarting work lost as a result of the pandemic?

Tenure-track faculty and faculty who are not yet promoted to full professor can request **funds for a variety of purposes** to help restart scholarly or creative work or make up for lost lab, archive, or field time, or otherwise support work to regain the momentum lost as a result of the pandemic. The kinds of resources needed will vary considerably depending on the nature of specific research projects. For example, faculty can request funds to purchase equipment, supplies, software licenses, access to digital resources, travel to sites of research (labs, archives, other field sites); and funds to support student research assistants or educational associates; funds to access professional services, such as outsourcing data analysis, transcription/translation services. If they are unsure what might qualify, they should just ask. In addition, they can request **one or two course releases** in response to research interruptions resulting from the pandemic, such as unexpected additional time spent in preparing and teaching courses during COVID, the additional time spent supporting and working with students during the pandemic, or the need to care for family members during the pandemic. Priority for these resources will be given to untenured faculty. Decisions about course releases will be made in consultation with the department chair/program director and include a strategy for replacement, if necessary.

To apply for this support, faculty should send Dean Hofmeister an email detailing the support they are requesting, including a budget and a brief explanation of how this support will help them restart or regain momentum in their scholarly work. Requests will be accepted on a rolling basis through the remainder of this academic year (at least). This support is in addition to the [normal grant opportunities](#) offered by the Dean of the College office.

Can a faculty member request a COVID-based “stop the clock” before the third-year review or between the third-year and tenure reviews?

Yes; untenured, tenure-track (TT) faculty should first discuss this with their department or committee chair and then make the request directly to the Dean of the College. The dean will usually request to have a conversation with the TT faculty member, which may or may not include the review committee chair, according to the wishes of the TT faculty member. If approved, notification will be made in writing.

Evaluation of excellence in teaching

As a general principle, it is important to gather data that reflect the faculty member’s portfolio of courses taught, including experiential, project- or research-based courses and comps. For faculty whose teaching is being evaluated during the pandemic, we will gather data in the usual way, with a few exceptions to student sampling noted below. **The Faculty Personnel Committee will take into account that the pandemic has influenced the students’ experiences and evaluations in ways that have been outside of the faculty member’s control, such as:**

- The ways in which courses have been adapted over time do not only reflect the natural progression of a faculty member’s development as a teacher but also the restrictions imposed by the pandemic.
- Many characteristics of courses have been impacted by the pandemic in ways that would not be the faculty member’s preferred approach, such as the teaching mode, the ability to structure and regulate group work, the experiential components of courses, and the methods of student assessment, to name a few.
- It was difficult to establish mentoring relationships with all students in large classes on Zoom (e.g. 30+ student classes).
- The stress due to the pandemic and ongoing violence against people of color have increased the cognitive load borne by faculty and students, with the major impact being on faculty and students of color and people from other marginalized groups.
- Faculty have had to spend more time than usual providing academic and emotional support for students.

How will courses taught during the pandemic be included in student sampling for third-year and tenure reviews?

- All courses taught during Spring 2020 will automatically be excluded from student sampling.
- Faculty members wishing to exclude online courses taught during Fall 2020 or Winter 2021 from student sampling may do so at their discretion.
- Spring 2021 and subsequent terms have been treated as normal terms for earlier cohorts of faculty under review and this practice will continue in the future for the sake of consistency. Any COVID impact on Spring 2021 or subsequent terms can be discussed with the dean and requests for exclusion from sampling can be made on a case-by-case.

Tenure-track faculty don't need to make a decision about including courses until their review process is underway and Institutional Research begins preparations for student sampling. At that time, Institutional Research will send a list of the courses for verification by the faculty member. The online-only courses taught in Fall 2020 and Winter 2021 will be included on the list. If the faculty doesn't want to include the Fall 2020 or Winter 2021 online course(s), they will simply strike the course(s) from the list.

How will courses taught during the pandemic be included in class observations for third-year and tenure reviews?

- All courses taught during Spring 2020 have already been excluded from class observations
- Courses taught online during Fall 2020 or Winter 2021 have already been excluded from class observations, at the faculty member's discretion.

If there are additional courses that have experienced a significant disruption due to circumstances outside of the faculty member's control, the faculty member should discuss the possibility of requesting that they be excluded from evaluation with the department or review committee chair. If the faculty and department/committee chair believe that (an)other course(s) should be excluded, they should propose this to the dean, who must approve any additional exclusions from sampling and observation.