

Report of the Committee on Changes to the APT for the Effects of COVID-19
(Motions approved by the Faculty Senate on April 9, 2021)

We hold these truths to be evident:

1. COVID-19 has dramatically impacted faculty professionally by negatively affecting teaching, creative activity, scholarship, and service. Faculty have had to devote additional time to be responsive to the needs of students, colleagues, and local communities. As a result of national, state and local changing mandates and the commitment to DU's reputation as a premier university, enormous effort was dedicated to the modification of curriculum and associated teaching tools and techniques. Faculty continued to provide a high-quality education while they themselves were personally impacted by COVID-19. Personal impacts included the need to respond to school closures for their children, to care for other dependents, to grieve for the loss of family and friends, and to cope with the health (physical and mental) of COVID-19 stressors. It behooves the university community to recognize faculty members' extraordinary institutional contributions and to make accommodations for the effect of COVID-19 on their teaching, scholarship, creative activity, and service. While outside our charge, the committee would be remiss not to recognize the additional professional and personal impact of national events related to violence and racial injustice on our faculty as they continue their commitment to the institution's vision of being "a great private university dedicated to the public good."

2. COVID-19 affects different groups of faculty members differentially. Historically underrepresented and marginalized faculty and those with caregiver responsibilities have, in general, been negatively impacted more than many other groups of faculty members. (Please see Appendix 1, which lists some of the voluminous research documenting preexisting biases and the differential effects of COVID-19 across faculty groups.) In addition, academic units and disciplines across the University have and will continue to be affected differently. For example, faculty members in the performing arts have had to cope with the closing of performance venues, faculty members in the sciences have had to cope with limited access to laboratories and research participants, and faculty members whose work involves community engagement have had a more difficult time reaching communities in need.

3. No changes made to the APT for the effects of COVID-19 can eliminate the inequities suffered by historically underrepresented and marginalized people because of the implicit and explicit ways this disparity is long-standing in higher education. One of the highest priorities for changes at DU should be to avoid adding to the already increased disparity, which is resulting from COVID-19 for historically underrepresented and marginalized faculty, and to reduce historical disparities.

4. There will be disagreements among DU faculty about the benefits and drawbacks of various potential changes. Implementing some changes rather than others (or rather than no changes) involves tradeoffs of relative benefits and drawbacks, and affects each discipline differently.

5. Policies and procedures for appeals of decisions regarding reappointment, promotion, tenure, and termination are described in the *Policies and Procedures for Appointment, Promotion, and Tenure* (https://www.du.edu/facsen/media/documents/apt_jan16_2015.pdf). In addition to the role it plays in appeals of decisions regarding reappointment, promotion, tenure, and termination, the Faculty Review Committee also reviews, investigates, evaluates, and reports on (a) grievances respecting faculty status, working conditions, and appointments, (b) grievances respecting salary allocations providing that a pattern of inequity extending over at least a two-year period is alleged, and (c) grievances respecting violations of academic freedom (<https://www.du.edu/facsen/media/documents/senateconstitution20190308.pdf>). The University also has policies and procedures for other grievances under the heading of “Employee Dispute Resolution” in the *Employee Handbook* (https://www.du.edu/human-resources/media/documents/employee_handbook_may2013.pdf) and these policies should be consulted as appropriate.

6. The Committee’s report focuses on changes that should be made to *Policies and Procedures for Appointment, Promotion, and Tenure* (APT). Many other recommendations about accommodations for the effects of COVID-19 could be made such as about child and elder care support, mental health assistance, salary, fringe benefits, technological support for online teaching, and so on. But such was not the charge of the Committee.

The COVID-19 Accommodations Committee forwards three motions for changes to the APT to address the effects of COVID-19 on faculty teaching, scholarship, and service.

MOTION 1: COVID-19 Impact Statement (CIS)

At their sole discretion, a faculty member may include a COVID-19 Impact Statement (CIS) in their review portfolios that are assembled for annual evaluations, pre-tenure reviews, reviews for reappointment, reviews for promotion, reviews for tenure, appeals of such reviews, and appeals of other matters made before the Faculty Review Committee. CISs must also be permitted in reviews for termination of an appointment. (See the University of Denver’s *Policies and Procedures for Appointment, Promotion, and Tenure* https://www.du.edu/facsen/media/documents/apt_jan16_2015.pdf)

EXPLANATION:

The intent is for a CIS to provide appropriate context when conducting reviews of a faculty member’s work and contributions to provide fair and equitable consideration. The purpose of providing context is so reviews can take account of the effects of COVID-19, especially the differential effects across faculty members.

A single CIS might be written for all the different types of reviews. Or different CISs might be crafted for different reviews. A CIS provides the faculty member the opportunity to explain how COVID-19 has affected the faculty member’s activities that are relevant to the given review. A faculty member need not reveal any information in a CIS they do not wish to reveal. That is, the decision to write a CIS and the contents of a CIS are within the sole discretion of the faculty member.

The University of Delaware's *Report of the Task Force on Equity in Faculty Evaluation* provides extensive (though not exhaustive) examples of the types of disruptions that might be cataloged in a CIS. With slight editing and the permission of the chair of that task force, we have reproduced those examples in Appendix 2. As Appendix 2 documents, the effects of COVID-19 that might be reported are widespread and may include, for example, reduced access to research participants and laboratories, added time and effort involved in switching to online teaching, added care-giving responsibilities, and increased physical and mental health demands. Not everyone is affected by COVID-19 in the same way, and different academic units will be affected in different ways. As the task force report by the University of Delaware notes: "Faculty candidates and reviewers should be mindful of the multiplicative effects of these impacts and the unique stressors and distractions of both the COVID-19 pandemic and the national movement for racial justice."

The Committee recognizes that CISs are not without at least two potential drawbacks. First, writing an adequate CIS places an additional burden on the faculty members who already suffer from the most deleterious effects of COVID-19. Second, revealing some effects of COVID-19 in a CIS may result in stigmatization of a faculty member or create (or add to) negative biases about a faculty member. However, the Committee believes the benefits of CISs greatly outweigh their drawbacks and that a greater number of faculty would benefit from CISs than would be diminished by them. Without CISs, faculty members affected by COVID-19 would have fewer means of making the impacts known to reviewers. In addition, the Committee makes two recommendations meant to alleviate, at least to some degree, the potential negative consequences of CISs (see below under "Implementation"). First, the Committee recommends that the University train faculty members to serve as CIS Facilitators to help other faculty members write appropriate and effective CISs. Second, the Committee recommends that the University train all administrators and faculty members who will be reviewing a CIS to be sensitive to bias (implicit and otherwise), stigmatization, and differential effects of COVID-19 across groups of faculty members. In addition, as noted above, the Committee recommends that writing a CIS is optional. No faculty member is required to reveal any information the faculty member does not want to reveal. In addition, it might well be possible to write a CIS noting potentially stigmatizing events without revealing stigmatizing details. For example, a CIS might simply make note that a faculty member suffered from serious health issues without revealing the nature of those health issues. Finally, note that CISs are a step toward assessing "achievement relative to opportunity" ([Butler, 2021](#); [Monash University](#)).

IMPLEMENTATION:

The University should train faculty members to serve as COVID-19 Impact Statement (CIS) Facilitators to help other faculty members write appropriate and effective CISs. Consulting with a CIS Facilitator is optional: Faculty may consult with a CIS Facilitator to the extent they deem appropriate. The intent is for CIS Facilitators to help faculty members recognize impacts of COVID-19 and document these impacts effectively to avoid bias and stigmatization.

Accurate portrayals of impacts might be thought to necessitate disclosure of sensitive information such as involving personal mental and physical health issues. Some faculty members may fear that revealing such information could be stigmatizing. Or faculty might fear that some information could be misinterpreted or cause harm by leading to bias, whether conscious or unconscious. And those fears might be well founded. Faculty members might be left with a difficult decision of whether to disclose the information or omit deleterious effects due to

COVID-19---leading potentially to increased inequities because of an under-appreciation of the effects of COVID-19. A purpose of a CIS Facilitator would be to assist a faculty member in determining how to disclose information in a way that was not stigmatizing or harmful. CIS Facilitators must be entrusted to keep information and consultations confidential. Training of CIS Facilitators should start in the spring of 2021 and the burden of serving as a CIS Facilitator should be placed more on senior faculty than on junior faculty. Examples of COVID-19 Impact Statements should be made available, upon which faculty can model their own statements. The examples should model reasonable lengths for COVID-19 Impact Statements.

In addition, the University should train all administrators and faculty members who will be reviewing documents placed in review portfolios, including COVID-19 Impact Statements, to review these documents and deliberate about them fairly and to be sensitive to bias (implicit and otherwise), stigmatization, and differential effects of COVID-19 across groups of faculty members. We recommend training materials be developed by the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusiveness, the Office of Teaching and Learning, and the Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs. Administrators and faculty members who are empowered to read CISs and other review documents should be required to complete the training. Training materials should include documentation on the unequal effects of COVID-19 on historically underrepresented and marginalized faculty. (NSF has a short video for reviewers to make them aware of potential biases in their assessment of grant proposals ([Malisch et al., 2020](#).) Training should begin in the spring of 2021. The university should allocate appropriate resources for the implementation of the motions and the Committee's accompanying recommendations. The Committee is dedicated to consulting with the administration on implementing the motions and the Committee's accompanying recommendations.

MOTION 2: Statements to External Reviewers (SER)

When letters are solicited from external reviewers, such as for pre-tenure reviews, reappointment reviews, promotion reviews, and tenure reviews, communications soliciting those reviews will, at the sole discretion of the faculty member, include a Statement to External Reviewers (SER) from the University.

EXPLANATION:

A draft of a SER is included in Appendix 3. The SER acknowledges the effects of COVID-19 on teaching, scholarship, creative activity, and service. The SER also acknowledges the unequal effects of COVID-19 on historically underrepresented and marginalized faculty. The content of the SER may appropriately vary by academic unit but an academic unit may only add content to an SER. All SERs to which material has been added must be approved by the Dean or Director of the academic unit. Examples of Statements to External Reviewers should be made available, upon which faculty can model their own statements. The examples should model reasonable lengths for Statements to External Reviewers.

External reviewers should be selected partly for their anticipated sensitivity to equity concerns, especially involving historically underrepresented and marginalized faculty. Letters from external reviewers that appear (to those conducting the review) to violate DU's SER guidance should be excluded from consideration at DU.

MOTION 3: Course and Teacher Evaluations (CTE)

The traditional course and teacher evaluations (CTEs) must be implemented during the 2020-2021 academic year and the results of CTEs for the 2020-2021 academic year will be forwarded to faculty members for formative feedback. But CTEs from spring 2020 and the 2020-2021 academic year will be included in review portfolios for appointed faculty members for annual reviews, pre-tenure reviews, reviews for reappointment, reviews for promotion, reviews for tenure, appeals of such reviews, and appeals of other matters such as made before the Faculty Review Committee only if the course professor so chooses. Professors may include some CTEs for a given quarter or semester and exclude others. Professors may include CTEs in some portfolios and review files and not in others. In all cases, professors will receive the results of CTEs from the Office of Institutional Research and Analysis and make decisions about including or excluding the results of a CTE for review only after receiving the results. Any professor who does not include the results of a CTE for review must include, in their place, a Reflection on Teaching for the given course.

EXPLANATION:

The professor determines the contents of a Reflection on Teaching. A Reflection on Teaching might include comments on the challenges of teaching a given course because of COVID-19, actions taken (or to be taken) to address these challenges, alternative evidence of teaching effectiveness, and/or the lessons learned from teaching in the presence of COVID-19. A Reflection on Teaching may, at the professor's sole discretion, be included in the portfolio sent to external reviewers.

Course and teacher evaluations should never be the sole means of evaluating teaching effectiveness. Section 4.3.2 of the University of Denver's *Policies and Procedures for Appointment, Promotion, and Tenure* contains a range of types of evidence (in addition to CTEs) to use in assessing quality of teaching. The Committee requests that the Teaching Excellence Task Force provide guidance on creating Reflections on Teaching and on how to document teaching effectiveness, absent CTEs.

Members of the Committee:

Apryl Alexander, Associate Professor, Graduate School of Professional Psychology
 Norma Hafenstein, Daniel L. Ritchie Endowed Chair in Gifted Education and Clinical Professor, Morgridge College of Education
 Barbekka Hurtt, Teaching Assistant Professor, Department of Biological Sciences
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 Deb Ortega, Professor, Graduate School of Social Work, Director of the Latinx Center @ the University of Denver
 Chip Reichardt, Professor, Department of Psychology, Chair of the Faculty Senate Personnel Committee
 Derigan Silver, Associate Professor, Department of Media, Film and Journalism Studies, Chair of the Faculty Senate Academic Planning Committee
 Robert Urquhart, Associate Professor, Department of Economics
 Kate Willink, Vice Provost of Faculty Affairs

Appendix 1

Selected Literature Documenting Biases and Differential Effects of COVID-19 across Faculty Groups

Appendix 1 contains a brief listing of research and commentaries about (1) long-standing biases toward historically underrepresented and marginalized faculty and (2) differential effects of COVID-19 across groups of faculty members, and the especially deleterious effects of COVID-19 on historically underrepresented and marginalized faculty.

Long-Standing Biases against Historically Underrepresented and Marginalized Faculty

Course and teacher evaluations ([Chavez & Mitchell, 2019](#); [Yetter, 2019](#))

Grant submissions and funding ([Ginther et al., 2011](#); [Rissler et al., 2020](#); [Tamblyn et al., 2018](#))

Teaching and service/workloads ([El-Alayli et al., 2018](#); [June, 2015](#); [Matthew, 2016](#))

Promotion and tenure ([Cardel et al., 2020](#); [Kulp et al., 2019](#); [Lisnic et al., 2019](#); [Tierney & Bensimon, 1996](#); [Weisshaar, 2017](#))

Effects of COVID-19 on Historically Underrepresented and Marginalized Faculty

Overview ([Gonzales and Griffin, 2020](#); [Malisch et al., 2020](#); [Mickey et al., 2020](#); [Rogers, 2020](#))

Promotion, tenure, and career ([Oleschuck, 2020](#); [Gewin, 2020](#); [Hansen, 2020](#); [Weissman, 2020](#))

Publication and rates of submissions for publication ([Andersen et al., 2020](#); [Cui et al., 2020](#); [Flaherty, 2020a](#); [2020b](#); [King et al., 2020](#); [Pinho-Gomes et al., 2020](#); [Squazzoni, et al., 2021](#); [Viglione, 2020](#))

Work hours ([Collins et al., 2020](#))

Morbidity ([Kell, 2020](#))

Effects on COVID-19 on Caregivers

([Andrew et al., 2020](#); [Fulweiler et al., 2020](#); [Myers et al., 2020](#); [Nicholas, 2020](#); [Pettit, 2021](#))

Effects of COVID-19 on Early Career Faculty

([Cardel et al., 2020](#); [Levine et al., 2021](#); [Shillington, 2020](#))

Appendix 2

Potential Effects of COVID-19 on Faculty Teaching, Scholarship, and Service

(The following lists have been adapted and reprinted, with permission, from the University of Delaware's Report of the Task Force on Equity in Faculty Evaluation)

Listed below are examples of potential effects of COVID-19 on faculty members' teaching, scholarship, creative activity, and service. The lists are not exhaustive, and faculty could not easily reference them all in a CIS. (Nor could the University in a statement of effects.) It is recommended that faculty describe only the most impactful items in a CIS, so the statement is manageable. Different faculty will have effects distributed differently across any potential list of items. Note that effects can interact to have multiplicative impacts. (Faculty members might also wish to consult documents by [University of Massachusetts](#) and [Malisch et al. 2020](#).)

Teaching

- The switch to remote instruction in the spring of 2020 was inhospitable to everyone concerned. Some courses were more negatively impacted than others especially those that involve lab/studio/clinical/field-based/community-engaged pedagogy.
- For those who chose to use student evaluations for the 2020 spring quarter/semester, the comments and numeric metrics needed to be contextualized for the rapid shift in delivery mode.
- Technology challenges altered traditional methods of assigning and assessing student work.
- Remote or hybrid instruction continuing into the 2020-2021 academic year required many faculty members to spend a significant amount of time learning new pedagogical methods and technological approaches, and to revise existing courses for new teaching approaches.
- Student care activities went up significantly both for coursework and for advising (academic and other).
- Caregiver needs intruded on teaching time.
- Additional teaching responsibilities in response to the pandemic (e.g., serving as a replacement instructor for a colleague)
- Cancellation of performances and exhibitions
- Cancellation of field courses
- Cancellation of community engaged educational programs
- Interruption of clinical teaching and supervision of internships; the need to revise how those programs are designed and delivered
- Required revisions of research and teaching assistantship activities for undergraduate and graduate students who are under faculty supervision
- Cancellation of conferences related to teaching professional development
- Student feedback potentially more negative
- Collaborators/team teaching members impacted
- Interruption/cancellation of study abroad
- Extension work was interrupted or cancelled.
- Sabbatical interruptions, postponements or adjustments

Research and Creative Activities

- Lab closures and/or loss of research material

- Impacts on grant funding, including changes in the priorities of granting agencies, cutbacks in funding available, new grant funding opportunities, and the fact that faculty were encouraged to continue to pay students, postdocs and technicians even if not advancing projects.
- Cancellation of book contracts due to the closure of or cutbacks at university or other presses
- Cancellation of performances and exhibitions
- Cancellation of conferences before or after abstracts/papers accepted
- Inaccessibility of field work sites, human subjects, libraries, archives, and other research collections
- Delays in journal review process and publication schedules
- Delay in arrival of international students/postdocs
- Impact of the need to revise/redefine activities of undergraduate and graduate student research assistants and how those trainees are supervised and mentored
- Cancellation of invited talks
- Cancellation of fellowships, artist/scholar-in-residence appointments
- Caregiver needs intruded on research time
- Other workload priorities intruded on research time
- Collaborators/research team members impacted
- Extension work was interrupted or cancelled
- Sabbatical interruptions, postponements or adjustments

Service

- Pandemic response suspended or curtailed traditional and ad hoc service assignments
- Pandemic response greatly increased service responsibilities for some faculty, especially for those engaged in community outreach, governance, curriculum or mentoring.
- Pandemic complicated external service responsibilities such as journal editorships, chairing of academic conference sessions, professional organization service, and other integrated scholarly service
- Service to community-based institutions was halted and then altered in significant ways as were public presentations
- Caregiver needs intruded on service time
- Other workload priorities intruded on service time
- Collaborators/service and engagement team members impacted
- Sabbatical interruptions, postponements or adjustments

Appendix 3
The University of Denver Statement to External Reviewers about the Effects of COVID-19
on Faculty Teaching, Scholarship, and Service

The final version of the statement will be forthcoming and uploaded separately