

Letter to External Reviewers about the Effects of COVID-19 on Faculty Teaching, Scholarship, Creative Activity, and Service

We very much appreciate your willingness to evaluate the portfolio of materials that accompany this letter. As has been the case elsewhere, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused substantial interference in the teaching, scholarship, creative activity, and service work of faculty members at the University of Denver. During much of 2020 and 2021, research travel was strictly curtailed, access to research participants and collaborators was often limited, and all courses needed to be moved online for Spring 2020 and continued so for much of AY 2021-21, which interfered with work otherwise planned and added work that was unplanned. In addition, faculty members' work was often disrupted by illness and the closure of both K-12 schools and care facilities, thereby requiring faculty members to devote additional time to caring for themselves, their children, and other family members.

In evaluating the attached portfolio, we ask that you consider such effects of COVID-19. Please assess the value and influence of the faculty member's contributions, while recognizing the disruptions in those contributions that might have been the result of the pandemic. In evaluating a faculty member's work, please note that some faculty members have accepted a one-year delay in the timing of their reviews for reappointment, promotion, and/or tenure. We ask that you not use higher standards to judge the work of faculty members whose reviews have been delayed than you would use if there were no delay.

Faculty members have been invited to write a COVID-19 Impact Statement to describe the effects that the pandemic has had on their work. Such a statement might or might not be included in the portfolio of review materials you have received. The lack of a statement does not mean the pandemic had no effects, only that a faculty member has chosen not to document the effects in their portfolio. In addition, instead of providing the results of student evaluations of courses taught during the pandemic, faculty might substitute a statement about teaching challenges they faced because of the pandemic. Such a statement might or might not also be included in the review portfolio you have received.

Importantly, please note that some faculty members, especially faculty members of historically underrepresented and marginalized groups including women faculty, have been affected more than others by the pandemic, as described in the accompanying references. Such unequal effects might not be well documented in statements by a faculty member, but we hope you will nonetheless keep such unequal effects in mind as you assess a faculty member's portfolio.

Thank you for your assistance in the important work of evaluating our faculty member's portfolio of review materials. Please know that we greatly appreciate your contributions to the review process.

References

1. Malisch, J. L., et al. (2020). Opinion: In the wake of COVID-19, academia needs new solutions to ensure gender equity. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 117(27) 15378-15381; doi: 10.1073/pnas.2010636117

2. Mickey, E. L., Clark, D., & Misra, J. (September 4, 2020). Measures to Support Faculty During COVID-19. *Inside Higher Ed*.
<https://www.insidehighered.com/advice/2020/09/04/advice-academic-administrators-how-best-support-faculty-during-pandemic-opinion>
3. Rogers, B. (August 26, 2020). Not in the same boat: Career progression in the pandemic.
<https://www.qualtrics.com/blog/inequitable-effects-of-pandemic-on-careers/>