

COVID-related Faculty Evaluation Processes – February 2021 Update

In the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Office of the Provost released a statement about faculty evaluations for Spring 2020 and processed tenure-clock extensions for pre-tenure faculty. In November 2020, the Office of the Provost and the University Committee on Tenure and Promotion distributed a joint statement extending the course evaluation accommodations and offering general guidance for faculty evaluation processes. The Office of the Provost and UCTP wish to provide additional information and clarification in response to questions received, for both review committees and for faculty.

- While UCTP is involved in the discussion related specifically to tenure and promotion actions, the accommodations and recommendations described earlier and in this communication apply to faculty of all tracks and ranks and to all faculty evaluation processes.
- Due to the ongoing challenges posed by the pandemic, the option for faculty to voluntarily withhold student course evaluations from any faculty evaluation process (annual review, tenure, promotion, post-tenure review, tenure progress review) is now applicable for courses taught during Spring 2020, Summer 2020, Fall 2020 and Spring 2021.
- Because course instruction for Summer 2021 and Fall 2021 is expected to return to pre-pandemic standards, the option to withhold course evaluations is rescinded effective Summer 2021. If the university changes current guidance about Summer 2021 and Fall 2021 instructional modalities, this decision can be revised.
- For the duration of that same period (Spring 2020 through Spring 2021), units may also choose not to provide comparative data in faculty evaluation processes, given the difficulties of collecting viable data. Comparative data collection may be difficult or impossible for units with a substantial portion of instructors requesting evaluation data not be included, as well as for smaller units. Further, course modalities and student choice of modality may have shifted mid-semester. Finally, the pool of available data for those instructors who did choose to include their student course evaluations is unlikely to be representative. Given these complexities, units may choose not to comparative data for this period.
- Any teaching summary prepared by the unit for a faculty evaluation process should reflect teaching modality for courses taught by the faculty member, regardless of whether evaluation data and comparative data are available for this time period.
- The absence of comparative evaluative data should not be interpreted by reviewers as indicating a weakness in a candidate's file.