

COVID-19 pandemic Impact Statements, 2020-2021 Academic Year

Date: 16. March 2021

To: All faculty (regular, special rank, and administrative)

From: Executive Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost Bob Jones
Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs Amy Lawton-Rauh

Introduction: This document guides faculty to write a pandemic impact statement and is a result of the Provost's Caregivers Support During the COVID-19 Pandemic Joint Task Force, Faculty Reviews group through extensive collaboration with various stakeholders and leaders on campus. More details regarding this group's composition and activities and the process involved in creating this document will be filed on the Shared Governance website as reports (filed January 2021 and April 2021). The purpose of this impact statement is to help evaluators appreciate challenges faculty faced during the pandemic while also providing faculty the opportunity to reflect, share, and document their experiences. While required, it is acceptable to write very brief summaries.

Key Points:

- Required for all faculty as upload to DigitalMeasures for Annual Evaluation (May 2021)
- Three purposes of this document:
 1. Awareness of the impact of the pandemic on faculty across the University
 2. Guidelines for writing the impact statement
 3. Guidance on including pandemic impacts in letters requesting formative input from external evaluators
- Copy of the same document should be uploaded to two places in DigitalMeasures:
 - DigitalMeasures_AnnualReviewWorkflow
 - DigitalMeasures_TPRworkflow (the same document, as relevant; please confirm with TPR chair)
- Please contact DMAdmin@clermson.edu (Assistant Director of Institutional Research, Melissa Welborn) for technical questions.
- Please contact APFA@clermson.edu (Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs) for questions about policies and processes related to the impact statement.

Section	Topic:
1	The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on faculty in higher education
2	COVID-19 pandemic impact statement template (guidance for faculty)
3	Letter to external evaluators

Appendices:

Appendix A: TPR MEMO and TPR extension form (combined)

Appendix B: Spring 2020 course evaluations MEMO

Appendix C: Examples of impacts of the pandemic on teaching, research and scholarship, service, extension, and librarianship

Section 1: The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on faculty

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a widespread impact on faculty. This impact varies among disciplines, teaching and research methodologies, and personal-professional circumstances. When COVID-19 was declared a pandemic in March 2020, faculty implemented abrupt changes in all areas of teaching, research, extension, service, and librarianship. Peer-reviewed publications indicate that women, underrepresented minorities and faculty with caregiver responsibilities experience a disproportionate impact on their work (National Academy of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, 2021; Goodwin & Mitchneck, 2020; Myers et al., 2020). The pandemic is projected to amplify preexisting inequities in faculty promotion and tenure processes (Malisch et al., 2020). A broad body of literature documents gender and racial bias across crucial areas of faculty experience, including grant funding (Ginther et al., 2011), peer review (Tamblyn et al., 2018), student evaluations of teaching (Chavez & Mitchell, 2020), teaching and service load (Tierney and Bensimon 1996), and the tenure evaluation processes (Weisshaar, 2017).

Funding agencies, academic societies, and associations stress the importance of immediately adapting policies and practices employed in annual and TPR faculty reviews to ensure that reviews will fairly and consistently account for disruptions (Gonzales & Griffin, 2020). In anticipation of how abrupt changes impacted faculty, Clemson University's Office of the Provost, in collaboration with Faculty Senate, implemented two immediate adjustments during April 2020: 1) simplified pathway for TPR clock extensions for all faculty hired before July 1, 2020, not in their penultimate year, and 2) modification of student course evaluation surveys (Appendices A and B).

The COVID-19 pandemic impact statement will be used in annual evaluations and tenure, promotion, and reappointment review cycles pertaining to 2020-21 and 2021-2022 activities. All faculty must include this statement in their annual review dossiers and file the same statement in their tenure, promotion and/or reappointment dossier. This impact statement provides reviewers information they need to perform a fair, and discrete review. This statement is in addition to standard activities reporting for the annual review process (DigitalMeasures_AnnualReviews) and the TPR process (DigitalMeasures_TPRreview).

The statement should identify levels and broad categories of impacts. Faculty may opt to write a very brief statement if they feel that the pandemic has had minimal or no effect on their work. Though not explicitly stated, it is appropriate for faculty to share the emotional labor and impact they have recently experienced supporting their mental health and wellness needs, as well as the needs of others. Personal health, wellness, and medical information is not required and faculty should not feel obligated to share information that they prefer to hold private; however, faculty are encouraged to share their circumstances in broad terms to the extent that they are comfortable. Note that this statement is not considered confidential.

Section 2: the COVID-19 pandemic impact statement template

The COVID-19 pandemic impact statement allows faculty to formally document the pandemic's impact on their work in research, teaching, outreach, extension, service, and librarianship (as applicable). This statement will be used to document interruptions, delays, shifts in opportunities, and atypical circumstances that impacted and many continue to impact expected productivity. It also describes shifts faculty are navigating as the pandemic impact leads to new or different future work. There will be variations in experiences, resources, duration, and needs. Faculty candidates and reviewers should be mindful of the multiplicative effects and the

unique stressors of the COVID-19 pandemic. Faculty should limit statements to no more than 1000 words or two pages. A list of representative impacts of the pandemic in each category (teaching, research, and scholarship, service, extension, and librarianship) provided in Appendix C may help.

The following prompts should be considered when faculty write a concise statement (as relevant):

Teaching:

- What specific challenges, if any, did you encounter in shifting your course modality?
- What steps did you take to address these challenges? What outcomes (negative, neutral, and positive) do you think resulted from those actions? Include any opportunities or changes resulting from how you addressed these impacts.

Research and Scholarship:

- Was your research program impacted? If so, how? As provided in Appendix C, examples include lab closings, access to materials/sites, team challenges, increased workload in one area resulting in a focus on a different area, new data, switch to remote activities such as analyses, etc.
- How did you adapt to these circumstances? This prompt is an opportunity to briefly describe how you re-centered or changed your research and scholarship approach.

Service:

- Have you experienced increases or decreases in service load or ability to effectively meet current service obligations?

Extension:

- Was your extension program impacted? If so, how? As provided in Appendix C, examples include facility closures, access to materials and sites, team challenges, increased workload in one area resulting in a focus on a different area or activity, switch to remote operations and public or corporate interactions, etc.
- How did you adapt to these circumstances? This prompt is an opportunity to describe how you re-centered or changed your extension work and approach very briefly.

Librarianship:

- Was your area of librarianship impacted? If so, how? As provided in Appendix C, examples include facility closures, changes in access to materials and sites, team challenges, increased workload in one area resulting in focus on a different area or activity, switch to remote operations and interactions with others (internal and external).
- How did you adapt to these circumstances? This prompt is an opportunity to describe how you re-centered or changed your work and approach very briefly.

Workload and General:

- Has your actual or assigned workload changed in a manner not documented in your annual goal setting?
- Do you have comments to share about emotional support activities and roles for Clemson University (colleagues, students, others) that do not fit into specific categories?

Section 3: Letter to external evaluators

Example letter section for TPR committees to use when requesting evaluations from external reviewers. Include an edited version of this section below within the letter provided requesting a review of the full candidate dossier (not when requesting a commitment to review):

Dear External Evaluator,

The TPR committee provides dossier materials representing the candidate's research and scholarship activities for promotion and/or tenure [name of candidate].

Your evaluation should consider the quality of work and the impact of the candidate's research and scholarship on the area of study. You are not being asked to recommend for or against promotion or tenure, nor being asked if the candidate might receive promotion or tenure at your institution.

The pandemic has affected everyone in higher education since March 2020. You are asked to assess productivity and impact on the field in a manner that acknowledges the continued impact of the pandemic on research and scholarship. In particular, you are asked to consider major changes that occurred March 2020 – present, such as moving to new (mostly remote) teaching and engagement with students and research groups, limited access to research spaces and resources, and restricted travel. Clemson University faculty are required to document the pandemic effects on their work, including how they adapted or created new directions and opportunities through various shifts in their responsibilities and workloads. This statement from the faculty candidate will be used internally to provide context in letters evaluating the candidate for tenure and/or promotion.

It is important to note a procedural adjustment related to research and scholarship due to the pandemic:

All tenure track faculty members hired before July 1, 2020 and not entering their penultimate year had a fast-tracked simplified system for requesting and approving their tenure clocks by an additional year. Individual faculty members retained the right to not to utilize this extension and to later opt-out and use their original timeline.

You can find more information on Clemson University's COVID-19 response at:

<https://www.clemson.edu/covid-19/index.html>

[more from your department-specific letter]

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