

Academic Leadership Retreat: Lasting Impacts of COVID on Review and Promotion

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THE UNIVERSITY OF
TENNESSEE
KNOXVILLE

Working Group Members

Name	School/dept	College	Name	School/dept	College
Suzie Allard *co-chair	INSC	CCI	Charles Noble *co-chair	MARK	HCB
Katherine Ambroziak	ARCH	CAD	Todd Reynolds	MICR	CAS
David Bassett	KRSS	CEHHS	Ragan Schriver	SOWK	CSW
Joshua FU	CE/EE	TCE	John Stier	PLSC	HCA
Brian Krumm	Law	LAW	Tracey Vitori	NURS	CON
Thura Mack	Library	LIB			

Our Charge

- Focus on the differential and lasting impacts of the COVID-pandemic on review and promotion.
- Consider how the work of women and faculty of color may have been differently impacted.
- Make recommendations about how to:
 - recognize, accommodate, and address the impact of the COVID-pandemic on faculty
 - Address this through the review and promotion processes during the next 8-10 years.

Our Process

Framing the problem at UT

- Shared observations from working group
- Review of information from published literature

What we did

- Worked through networks at each college (avoided survey)
- Invited comments & shared with working group
- Reviewed and identified issues at UT
- Developed a basis for evidence-based recommendations

Initial Observations

- T/TT Faculty across the campus are feeling the effects of the COVID pandemic. While each school/unit has had unique experiences, we found commonalities across the 7 areas of concern mentioned next.
- Based on what we learned, we offer 10 recommendations that can help support faculty who have and are dealing with COVID-related disruption as they build their careers in the next 5-8 years.

What was affected

1. Conducting Research & Creative Activities
2. Disseminating Research
3. Conducting Outreach
4. Education – Teaching, Recruiting
5. Other Career Concerns
6. Working from Home
7. Faculty Reviews (P&T, APR)

1. Conducting Research & Creative Activities I

- Change in work balance reducing time for research.
- Inability to carry out research agenda. Labs & sites closed, human subjects difficult, performances cancelled.
- Loss of lab time.
- Need to reimagine/refocus research agenda.
- Long-term effects on agenda.
- Loss of protected time.

1. Conducting Research & Creative Activities II

- Concerns about timing on startup packages.
- Delay of deliverables for funded research.
- Loss of pilot data collection for grant proposals.
- Funder priority changes.
- Increased productivity examples.
- Research affected by doctoral student disruption.
- Inability to access locations for conducting research.

2. Disseminating Research

- Publication bottlenecks even if research has been productive
- Writing challenges
- Conference access & limitations
- Cancelled conference proceedings

3. Conducting Outreach

- Inability to access locations for outreach activities
- Inability to bring populations to campus
- Some positives in rethinking how to do outreach

4. Education

Teaching

- Shifted balance of time for teaching/research
- Course prep for new modality took more time
- Concerns that unusual deviations in instruction could affect student feedback
- Hybrid classes challenging
- Challenges with lab courses
- Mentoring doc students was more difficult
- Difficult to find field and school placements for students

Recruiting

- Could not bring students to campus
- Limited ability to recruit international students
- Faculty believe students are more likely to choose online

5. Other Career Concerns

- Networking disruptions
- Mental health and wellness
- Isolation – difficult for those who started Aug 2019 & 2020. Likely already causing issues for those starting Aug 2021

6. Working from home

- Workspace
- Children
- Illness
- Flexibility
- Support
- Reduced professional efficiency

7. Faculty Reviews (P&T & APR)

Concerns about:

- How to convey these issues in a dossier
- How they will be reviewed at UT
- How UT reviewers will be prepared for the UT process
- How outside reviewers will be prepared
- Finding outside reviewers

Our data included a list of suggestions from those who shared with us

Ten Recommendations I

1. Create a systematized way to document the COVID period and resulting career disruption and be sure whatever process is created is designed to be transparent.
 - a) Suggest faculty have the opportunity to include a statement of COVID impacts (and how they responded) in their research statement for outside reviewers, if they so choose.
 - b) Already introduced for annual performance reviews.
2. Inclusion and equity -- provide guidance about how to address P&T issues that may be especially magnified for BIPOC and women faculty.
3. Identify alternatives to the traditional T&P criteria. This will be domain specific.
 - a) e.g., Could music/arts faculty perform? Could social work faculty do outreach?

Ten Recommendations II

5. UT should consider the time frame during which COVID impacts P&T should be taken into consideration." For instance, it might be 5 or 6 years, but it would not be indefinite.
6. Encourage supervisors to be flexible -- recognize and reward faculty since effort had to shift to a higher percentage for teaching (i.e., note taking this time was valuable); recognize and reward supervisors for the extra work it takes to consider these circumstances individually.
7. Find ways to identify and assess impact on the larger industry/research environment beyond UT to help chart how to help faculty in those areas most affected.

Ten Recommendations III

8. Make mental health counseling readily available for faculty.
9. Do a better job in the future to help our faculty set up good at-home office space such as providing funding for proper furnishings.
10. Use the Office of Research and Engagement's metrics about proposal submission and research funding to supplement the understanding of how each domain/department/school was affected by the pandemic.

Thank you!
Questions? Comments?



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