

## MEMORANDUM

TO: Permanent Faculty  
Department Chairs and Academic Program Directors  
Academic Deans

FROM: Frances C. Welch, Interim Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs  
*Frances C. Welch*

DATE: April 3, 2020

RE: pandemic-associated tenure clock modifications

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, the College continues to operate and you, our faculty, continue to work under unprecedented circumstances, with dynamically changing and uncertain conditions. This communication addresses upcoming faculty reviews, our existing tenure clock modification policy, and interim measures to supplement that policy for our tenure-track, Instructor, and Senior Instructor faculty. Together with our full academic leadership team, I recognize that in addition to lessened time for scholarship due to fully online instruction, there are other ongoing and substantial disruptions to faculty research and professional development programs, including curtailing of travel and of data collection with human subjects; closure or inaccessibility of laboratories, archives, and field sites; and significantly delayed review processes at some journals and presses. Additionally, for some faculty members, family or extended family care-giving responsibilities have increased substantially.

After careful consideration and deliberation, our small working group addressing this topic recommended that we rely on the College's existing tenure clock modification policy, coupled with some interim revisions as outlined below. I'd like to thank Chris Korey, 2019-2020 Chair of the Advisory Committee on Tenure, Promotion, and Third-Year Review, Tracy Burkett, representative of the Faculty Welfare Committee, and Deanna Caveny, Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs, for that work. Their recommendation has now been vetted by the deans and by other members of the Provost's leadership team who work closely with faculty and have served as department chairs. Additionally, a representative group of department chairs and faculty have been consulted through their deans or members of the working group, respectively. Via this memorandum, I am formally endorsing and promulgating the working group's final recommendation and these interim measures.

Pandemic-Associated Tenure Clock Modifications

**Eligible faculty may elect a one-year pandemic-associated tenure clock modification under our current policy and associated interim measures. Interested faculty can opt-in by submitting a written request to their department chair or home program director. While approval of one-year pandemic-associated requests is automatic, all requests must be submitted in writing, reviewed and signed by the chair and**

dean, and then forwarded to the Office of the Provost for finalization and recording of the tenure clock modification.

The College's full extant tenure-clock modification policy is available in our *Faculty/Administration Manual*, Section V.G, at <http://academicaffairs.cofc.edu/FAM.pdf>. What follows here is a summary of the essential policy principles, associated business practices, and short-term revisions associated with COVID-19 pandemic circumstances.

### Eligibility

Tenure-track faculty, Instructors, and Senior Instructors

- Our existing tenure-clock modification policy, irrespective of its name, applies to Instructor appointments, tenure-track Assistant Professor and faculty librarian appointments, and any higher rank appointments (Professor and Associate Professor) for which the faculty member does not already hold tenure at the College of Charleston.
- Given the disruptions associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, we are expanding eligibility to Senior Instructors for their next renewal review.
- Faculty members who have already received one tenure clock modification are still eligible to request a one-year pandemic-associated modification, consistent with our allowance of two one-year modifications under the current policy.

Tenured Faculty

- There is no need for clock modifications for reviews for promotion to Professor, as the faculty member may choose their own schedule for review for that promotion once they become eligible.
- For those faculty scheduled for post-tenure review, our existing post-tenure review policy provides for appropriate modifications, which will be communicated separately.

### Deadlines

- **For faculty members currently scheduled for a tenure review or Senior Instructor promotion or renewal review in the 2020-2021 academic year, requests must be made by July 1, 2020.** This is an extension of the usual deadline.
- For all other eligible faculty members, the deadline for tenure clock modification requests is the Monday following Spring commencement immediately prior to the academic year in which the faculty member's tenure, Senior Instructor promotion, or Senior Instructor renewal review is currently scheduled. For example, a faculty member currently scheduled to undergo tenure review in 2021-2022 has until the Monday following the Spring 2021 commencement ceremony to request a tenure clock modification, with the only additional restriction being on requests for modifications associated with births or adoptions, as outlined in the next bullet.
- Please note that there is an additional temporal restriction for requests associated with births and adoptions. In addition to the deadlines above, requests for modifications based solely on births and adoptions must still be made within 90 days of the birth or adoption.

### Requests

- **Requests for all modifications under the policy and associated interim measures must be submitted in writing, reviewed and signed by the faculty member's chair and dean, and then**

**forwarded to the Office of the Provost for finalization and recording of the tenure clock modification.**

- There is currently no form for tenure clock modification requests. Requestors should simply articulate their request and its basis, with a focus on what aspects of their work were critically impacted by the pandemic. Faculty members preparing a request are encouraged to provide those details without revealing any sensitive personal information, particularly HIPPA-protected health information that is not necessary for consideration of the request.

#### Execution of Modifications

- To finalize a request, the faculty member is issued a letter under the Provost's signature that contains the details of the tenure clock modification. Recipients are asked to review, sign, and return a copy of that letter. That acknowledgement can be provided electronically if the faculty member is under quarantine or self-isolating or if the College is still operating with only essential personnel on site.
- For an approved one-year tenure clock modification, the faculty member is given an additional year on their probationary appointment, where "probationary" refers to the pre-tenure period or the Instructor period. The faculty member could then undergo their tenure or Senior Instructor review on their original schedule or one year later, as outlined in the modification letter. These final elections must be made by August 15 of the year that the faculty member intends to undergo review.
- Clock modifications are handled slightly differently for faculty members who were hired with one or two years of credit towards their tenure review. There is a "window" of opportunity and flexibility in those cases too, as outlined in the tenure clock modification letter.
- For faculty members in their first and second year at the College, with the approval of a pandemic-associated tenure clock modification, the third-year review will be moved to the faculty member's fourth year at the College. That change in the scheduling of the "third-year review" is rigid. That is, after the tenure clock modification is in place, the faculty member cannot move their third-year review from their fourth year back to their third year. However, the faculty member does have the scheduling flexibility outlined above for their tenure or Senior Instructor promotion review. This is consistent with our handling of tenure clock modifications for births and adoptions under our current policy.

#### Special Interim Business Processes

- Given the dynamic nature of the pandemic and the associated impacts on faculty work, we want to ensure that all faculty members covered under the policy and our interim modifications are well-informed regarding the policy, interim modifications, and their obligations. Given that, the Office of the Provost will be proactively reaching out to each College of Charleston tenure-track faculty member, Instructor, and Senior Instructor with the information here, with copies to their department chair and dean.
- Chairs and deans will be provided lists of these faculty members, along with their current review schedules, and will be asked to review those lists against their records.
- The chairs, deans, and a small Office of the Provost team will track requests using the list of candidates provided by the Office of the Provost.
- Chairs and deans will follow up with those faculty members who have not made requests, using June 1 as a trigger date for follow-ups for faculty members currently scheduled for tenure, Senior Instructor promotion, or Senior Instructor renewal reviews in 2020-2021, and using November 1 as a trigger date for follow-ups with untenured faculty members scheduled for later reviews.