

MEMORANDUM

TO: Andy Leynes, Chair of CFA

CC: William Keep, Interim Provost and Vice President of Academic Affairs
Matthew Bender, Faculty Senate President
Joseph O'Brien, Staff Senate President
Patty Kou, Student Government President

FROM: Steering Committee

RE: Modification of Scholarly Expectations for COVID-19

DATE: April 2, 2020

Background

COVID-19 represents a major disruption to faculty scholarship, higher education, and society in general. With respect to faculty scholarship: shifting courses online has required faculty to devote additional, unplanned time and resources to their teaching; some scholars no longer have access to their labs, equipment, and data; and the publication process has slowed as referees and editors have less time to devote to [reviews and submissions](#). In addition to these scholarly disruptions, many faculty members face new challenges in balancing work and life and in maintaining personal health and well-being. Such challenges fall disproportionately to faculty who belong to vulnerable and/or underrepresented groups. All of these changes make it harder for junior faculty members to meet scholarly requirements for tenure and promotion. To acknowledge the transformed landscape in which faculty are working, well over one hundred Colleges and Universities across the nation have [extended tenure clocks and/or shifted the standards for tenure and promotion](#).

The College of New Jersey, along with the other state colleges in New Jersey, has its tenure clock determined by state law. According to the General Counsels at the New Jersey Association of State Colleges and Universities, The College cannot extend the clock unilaterally, but requires statutory relief to do so. The President of the College's local union chapter has [stated](#) that the Council of New Jersey State College locals will not seek such relief from the state. Under these circumstances, College governance seeks remedy for junior faculty working under the disruptions created by COVID-19.

Charge:

Steering asks CFA to consider and recommend ways to adjust scholarly expectations for tenure and promotion to associate professor in response to the disruptions caused by COVID-19. These recommendations might include reductions in scholarly expectations within disciplinary standards, as well as other solutions that CFA may propose. For example, CFA might propose that departments have the option to revert back to the disciplinary standards they had in place under the four-year tenure clock just a few years ago. (However, this may not be a good option for departments that added to *and changed* their disciplinary standards. These departments may need to reduce their standards in a different way.)

In drafting their recommendations, CFA should consider, at a minimum: (a) how the recommendation affects faculty at different stages in the reappointment and review process; (b) how the recommendation can be implemented consistently, equitably, and quickly across departments and programs; and (c) how the recommendation might affect faculty with appointments in more than one department. CFA will likely generate many other issues to consider, as well.

Because the matter is urgent, Steering asks that CFA address this issue right away and ahead of any of its other work. We request that CFA present its initial recommendation to the Faculty Senate at its April 15th, 2020 meeting. Simultaneously, Steering will facilitate expedited collection of testimony among Faculty, Deans, and Department Chairs. Steering requests a final recommendation by April 22nd, 2020.

Testimony Tier: Faculty and Staff: Tier III

The issue requires a high degree of testimony from the campus community. The assigned council or committee should consult with relevant individuals and groups in developing a preliminary recommendation. The completed preliminary recommendation should then be made available to the relevant stakeholder groups. Testimony should be solicited in the form of both written and oral feedback, as well as approval by the appropriate representative bodies.

Timeline

CFA should prepare a preliminary report for Steering by April 8th. Steering will then facilitate testimony from the campus community with the aim of revising and deciding on a recommendation by April 15th, 2020.

TCNJ Governance Processes

Step 1 – Steering issues a charge

Step 2 - Governance prepares a Preliminary Recommendation

Once the appropriate standing committee or council has received the charge, it should start by collecting data needed to make a preliminary recommendation. It should receive input from affected individuals and all relevant stakeholder groups prior to making a preliminary recommendation. For issues that have broad implications or that affect a large number of individuals, initial testimony should be solicited from the campus community at large. For some issues, sufficient initial testimony may come from input through committee membership or solicitation from targeted constituent groups.

When, in the best judgment of the committee, adequate clarity of the principles contributing to the problem are known, a preliminary recommendation should be drafted and disseminated to the campus community.

Step 3 – The Relevant Stakeholders provide Testimony

Step 4 – Governance prepares a Final Recommendation

Step 5 – Steering considers the Final Recommendation

Step 6 – The Provost and/or President and Board consider the Final Recommendation

Step 7 – Steering notifies the Campus Community

For a complete description of all steps and of the testimony tiers, see Governance Structures and Processes, 2019 Revision, pages 23–26.