

To: Leslie Rutkowski, Chair, SOE Policy Council

From: Faculty and Budgetary Affairs (FABA) Committee of the SOE Policy Council

Re: Proposal for handling merit review and Trustees Teaching Award nominations during the period of COVID-19 Pandemic

Date: 12/04/2020

On this date the FABA addressed a charge from the Policy Council to develop a recommendation for handling merit review and nomination of faculty for Trustees Teaching Awards in 2021 for the 2020 year, in response to the difficult circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We recognize there have been unforeseen burdens, and for some increase in existing burdens, that have fallen on the faculty during this year, including the following, 1) extra work associated with moving our teaching and advising online, 2) navigating all facets of work from home, 3) adjusting research programs and 4) facing difficulties in all facets of work the depend on others who are also impacted by the pandemic. Some members of the faculty have been further affected by dramatic increases in the demands of childcare, supervising school at home, caring for ill and elderly relatives, experiencing illness themselves, and losing family members and friends to the virus.

The campus has taken two actions in 2020 relevant to our discussions of merit review: 1) Members of the faculty have been extended the opportunity to apply for a year extension to the tenure timeline; and 2) campus-wide administration of course evaluations was suspended for the spring and summer 2020 semesters. In addition, several realities factored into our deliberations. We understand that chairs need to hold reviews with pre-tenure faculty and the SOE must decide on appointment renewal for those in fourth and fifth years and for NTT positions by March 1 each year. Chairs and committees need time to review any material put forward by faculty for merit review, and members of the faculty must complete the DMAI yearly regardless of other methods used in the merit review. The DMAI reports are also particularly critical to the institution in terms of analytics comparing us to other institutions and in terms of assessing the impact of COVID on institution-wide research productivity. We have also been asked by Policy Council to reduce the amount of faculty governance and administrative work required of the faculty now and in the near future.

After much discussion, we recommend the approach to merit review detailed below.

- 1) Faculty complete the DMAI as usual with these differences:
  - a. Extend the window for completion to January 31 which affords two additional weeks to the faculty;

- b. Encourage faculty who are running short on time to focus now primarily on entering all the details of their publications, with less emphasis on details of teaching and service -- which are highly valued but which can, of course, be revised and extended somewhat later;
  - c. Encourage faculty *who feel they were particularly affected by COVID* to use the Summary Statement feature of the DMAI to include a "COVID Impact" statement. The statement is not to be framed as asking faculty to rationalize any lack of productivity, but to serve as a way to highlight additional work (teaching and service in particular) undertaken specifically during this time and the circumstances requiring that work to be done. If a statement is submitted, it should be anywhere from a paragraph to no more than 500 words.
- 2) The EAD will request that chairs charge merit review committees to take a streamlined approach to reviewing DMAI reports this year and *this year only*. The purpose will be to ascertain that faculty under review have been *at least* minimally productive. Committees forward the verification of this streamlined review to chairs. Chairs and EAD do not meet.
  - 3) Faculty verified as *at least* minimally productive will all receive a pandemic-specific ranking "P" (for Pass or pandemic). We do not anticipate situations in which *at least* minimum productivity is reported, but in that event the existing U ranking should be used.
  - 4) Chairs will be provided with a template letter using language to explain this process and report the ranking to faculty. Should raises be forthcoming this year, every member of faculty ranked "P" will receive the same raise.
  - 5) We will adopt a three-year window of merit review for review year 2021, due January 2022, with the first window encompassing the years 2019, 2020, and 2021. *In the first cycle, emphasis may be given to the most productive of the years in the window.* Subsequently, emphasis would always be given to the current year of this sliding window. In this recommendation we recognize that most members of the faculty will have been **more than** minimally productive this year, that some had a great year in 2019 when no merit raises were issued, that some carried out significant work in 2019 which came to fruition in 2020, and that the effects of the pandemic are likely to extend into 2021. The committee recommends that this revision to merit review be adopted permanently.

We further recommend a process *this year only* for nominating candidate for the Trustees Teaching Awards.

- 1) Send out a call for nominations, including self-nominations, to the faculty including the criteria for the award, a reminder that anyone whose nomination is selected to be put forward would need to prepare a dossier, and that only 15% of the faculty in any one department may be selected for the Trustees Teaching Award. Nominations, including self-nominations will provide 100-150 words stating the basis on which they feel

qualified to be selected. As per the description of the award, this basis may be overall strong teaching, but may also be innovation in teaching.

- 2) Chairs of departments select from nominations those to be forwarded to the EAD.
- 3) EAD makes invitations to the final group of nominees for development of the dossier that will go to that Faculty Development Committee.

**From:** E Pavalko, Vice Provost, Faculty & Academic Affairs <[vpfaa@indiana.edu](mailto:vpfaa@indiana.edu)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, December 3, 2020 9:10 AM  
**Subject:** FW: messaging on annual review and DMAI

Dear Deans and Academic Associate Deans,

I know we are all thinking about any ways to reduce demands on our faculty, and several of you have asked if we will be having annual reviews or if faculty need to fill out their DMAI this year. University and campus policies require that all faculty have some type of annual merit review, and the DMAI is the tool that we use for recording that work each year. I realize you all use that information in varying ways. While we still need to conduct some type of annual review, this year we will let each school decide how much you want to stick to the usual timetable and process for annual review. As one example, I'm including a message that the College sent to their department chairs about annual reviews.

Normally about now I would send a message to all faculty reminding them that their DMAI updates are due January 15, 2021. Instead this year, I am planning to send a message indicating that, while we are required to conduct annual merit review for all faculty, their dean or chair will give them information on the process to be used for this year's merit review.

Please let me know if you have any concerns.

Thanks  
Eliza

Example Message From the College to Department Chairs:

"We encourage units to consider whether it is possible to streamline your merit review process this year to reduce the burden on faculty and merit review committees. For example, if your department normally uses DMAIs in the merit review process, you could consider a less onerous procedure for this year, such as asking faculty to submit 1-2 page narratives describing their major accomplishments in research, teaching, and service, and/or submitting an updated CV. Per our usual practice, the College will require that all faculty submit an updated CV through the department chair. The College does not require that faculty update their DMAIs in time for merit review this year, although they will need to do so by January 2022."

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