

*This is a joint message from RIT's Faculty Senate and the Office of Faculty Affairs to
RIT's Faculty*

December 13, 2021

Dear Colleagues,

Since the Spring 2020 closure of our campus due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its ongoing impacts, the Faculty Senate and Office of Faculty Affairs have continuously assessed options to adjust policy to support faculty members' success during this difficult time. With the support of Provost Granberg, we are pleased to share that we are extending several of last year's COVID-19 policy adjustments and proposing that 2021 plans of work be streamlined. Specific information on these adjustments can be found below.

Annual Evaluation and Plans of Work. This section reports on adjustments to Policy E07.0, Annual Review of Faculty. Policy E07.0 contains two major elements: the annual evaluation and faculty plan of work. The Faculty Senate approved these adjustments at their December 9, 2021 meeting.

1. Annual Evaluation: In most colleges, faculty members complete extensive annual self-assessments of their success in meeting their approved plan of work goals. From that self-assessment, the department chair or school director prepares a formal evaluation, which can be equally extensive and includes an overall performance rating.

Last year, the Faculty Senate and the Office of the Provost proposed that all colleges adopt an approach to self-assessment and evaluation to minimize the time and effort required by all parties.

To meet this overarching objective again this year, the Faculty Senate and the Office of the Provost ask that **all colleges extend the streamlined approach developed in 2020 for this year's annual evaluation process.** RIT requires only that an annual rating be recorded in Oracle, that there be documentation available to support the rating, and that both the rating and the associated documentation be available to the faculty member. Keeping this in mind, the following will be required: (a) the faculty member will submit a brief report on accomplishments the specific form of which may vary and will be determined by the college; (b) the department chair/school director will prepare an equally brief statement with feedback that explains the basis for an overall annual rating. For faculty who are on the tenure track, feedback must also incorporate progress towards tenure and a statement as to whether the faculty member is still on track for tenure.

2. Plan of Work: In alignment with the goal to streamline the time and effort by all parties relative to annual review, the Faculty Senate and the Provost approved **the use of an abbreviated plan of work for next year**. The faculty member will submit a brief report on expected work activities and anticipated outcomes, the specific form of which may vary and will be determined by the college. RIT policy requires that plans of work are approved and signed by the faculty member, department head, and dean.

COVID Impact Statements

Last year, faculty were allowed the option to provide COVID impact statements for annual evaluation, tenure, and promotion. Since then, faculty members have continued to express the difficulties of balancing their work productivity with their personal demands as the pandemic continues (i.e. dependent care, access to research facilities, travel restrictions etc.).

We recognize the ongoing pandemic may have caused disruptions to faculty in their teaching, research/scholarship/creative activity and service goals. While we remain committed to recognizing and rewarding high standards of excellence in all three mission areas, we also acknowledge that the COVID-19 crisis may continue to impact faculty work in these areas. Accordingly, as was in place last year, **faculty will have the option to submit a COVID-19 impact statement for annual evaluation in AY2021-2022**. In addition, **faculty seeking tenure and promotion review in AY2022-23 also have the option to include an impact statement as part of their dossier**. Guidance to the content of impact statements are provided below:

- 1) Annual Evaluation – [Pandemic Impact Statement](#)
- 2) Tenure and Promotion - [COVID Impact Statement for PT Dossiers](#)

Addendum to External Letters for Tenure

In April 2020, additional language was included in invitation letters to external reviewers to address COVID-19 and other impacts on the length of the tenure clock. In light of the ongoing impacts of COVID-19, as was put in place last year, for tenure candidates undergoing review in AY2022-23, **all invitations to external reviewers should include the addendum regardless of whether the candidate has taken an extension**. The addendum can be found here – [Guidance for External Reviewers](#).

COVID-19 Extension of the Tenure Clock

In late April 2020, the Faculty Senate and Office of the Provost provided an automatic extension of the tenure clock upon request by any faculty member whose progress towards tenure was impacted by the pandemic. All eligible tenure-track faculty members are reminded that this automatic extension remains available, upon request, through May 15, 2022. As with any other extension, tenure committees will be expected

to evaluate cases that received an extension as if there were no extension. Details regarding this extension are outlined below.

1. Any pre-tenure, tenure-track faculty member may receive an automatic one-year extension of the tenure clock. The faculty member simply needs to make their desire known in writing directly to the provost, with copies to the department chair and dean. This is the same procedure used for extensions due to the birth or adoption of a child.
2. An automatic one-year extension due to COVID-19-related disruption can be requested at any point through May 15, 2022. After that date, faculty who desire an extension can make application through the normal “Extraordinary Circumstances” justification in the current tenure policy ([Policy E05.2.c.4.d](#)).

These procedures for requesting an extension of tenure related to COVID-19 disruption will be evaluated again if the current disruptions persist for an extended period of time.

We hope these extensions will be helpful as you move through the remainder of the year. Please continue to raise your questions and provide feedback as to what we can do to help you. Thank you, as always, for your dedication to RIT’s students and to the intellectual and creative mission of our university.

Sincerely,

Dr. Clyde Hull, Chair, Faculty Senate
Dr. LaVerne McQuiller Williams, Associate Provost for Faculty Affairs