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**Date:** Thursday, August 26, 2021 at 9:58 AM  
**To:** "allacad@listserv.ucsf.edu" <allacad@listserv.ucsf.edu>  
**Subject:** UCSF Guidance for Academic Review During and After the COVID Pandemic

Dear Members of the UCSF Academic Community:

A recent 2021 report from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine highlights how the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the careers of women in academic STEMM fields in ways that threaten to widen gender gaps and turn back some of the pre-pandemic progress that has been made toward gender equity<sup>1</sup>. Given these concerns and the inequitable impact of the pandemic on individuals and groups, we are writing to provide additional guidance and reassurance to our campus academic community about advancement actions during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. You may recall that we have previously communicated on several related topics, including:

- Using the candidate personal statement feature in Advance to highlight challenges and/or accomplishments that have arisen from the pandemic
- Options for deferral of academic review
- Our campus implementation of an automatic stop-the-clock for Assistant rank faculty in a Senate series (Clinical X, In Residence, Ladder rank)

Written in the early months of the global COVID-19 outbreak, our prior guidance was provided with some optimism for a shorter tail to the pandemic and its impact on our work and home lives. But we anticipate that negative impacts will very likely persist for several years to come.

We have also seen the profoundly inequitable ways in which the pandemic has impacted our faculty in terms of research, teaching, clinical work, community service and advocacy, household labor, child and elder care. Women, individuals from historically excluded groups, single parents, those caring for the elderly or disabled, and those with limited financial resources have been particularly impacted by increased caregiving demands. Many of these same individuals have been critical in mobilizing our institutional response to COVID-19. We are dedicated to supporting and retaining our diverse pipeline of faculty by ensuring that the academic review process is truly holistic in acknowledging hardships and other negative impacts of the pandemic.

***To this end, and in keeping with our long-standing practice of applying flexibility to a holistic review of faculty achievement, we will modify our academic review criteria to make sure that those who have suffered academic setbacks due to the pandemic will continue to progress. More specifically, we will assume that UCSF faculty who are newly-appointed or have demonstrated satisfactory academic productivity during pre-pandemic periods will continue on a similar trajectory during the pandemic and for a subsequent period, approximately 2 or 3 years. Specific guidance to faculty and to those who participate in the academic review process is given below to promote equity in academic review.***

At the foundation of UCSF's standards of academic excellence is the acknowledgement that academic review requires the judicious weighting of all criteria of evaluation, per APM-210-1(d):

*In evaluating the candidate's qualifications within these areas, the review committee shall exercise reasonable flexibility, balancing when the case requires, heavier commitments and responsibilities in one area against lighter commitments and responsibilities in another. The review committee must judge whether the candidate is engaging in a program of work that is both sound and productive. As the University enters new fields of endeavor and refocuses its ongoing activities, cases will arise in*

*which the proper work of faculty members departs markedly from established academic patterns. In such cases, the review committees must take exceptional care to apply the criteria with sufficient flexibility. However, flexibility does not entail a relaxation of high standards.*

To assist faculty, reviewers, and review committees in applying flexible academic standards to a holistic evaluation of each faculty member's academic record, we offer the following guidance, which adopts many of the best practices recommended by UCAP and endorsed by the UC Academic Council on March 31, 2021:

#### Guidance for Faculty:

- Use the candidate personal statement feature in Advance to describe how the pandemic has impacted your opportunity (e.g., the time and resources available) and productivity in the areas of creative/scholarly activity, teaching, clinical care and service. Personal information need not be revealed, but information on causes (e.g., caring for a sick family member, illness, child care) that contextualize the circumstances will be helpful (e.g., reduced time available for writing grants/manuscripts, limited access to research facilities, abrupt conversion to remote learning due to campus closure). Whenever possible, provide information to compare the current review period to previous records of creative/scholarly activity, teaching and/or service, that will aid reviewers in the evaluation of achievements relative to opportunity impacted by the pandemic. Faculty are also encouraged to use this feature in Advance to highlight additional clinical, service, teaching, or leadership responsibilities for the institution or the community that were taken on as a result of the pandemic. Additional guidance regarding the COVID-19 personal statement can be found here <<https://facultyacademicaffairs.ucsf.edu/academic-personnel/academic-review-and-advancement/COVID-Personal-Statement-and-CV-Guidance.pdf>> .
- Consider moving forward with “on time” academic review (i.e., to not defer your review) so that reviewers and review committees can

consider your accomplishments relative to your opportunity by holistically evaluating your academic record during the review period. This will include consideration of previous records of achievement in creative/scholarly activity, teaching, clinical care and/or service to provide context. Deferrals are permissible, but since they delay career progression, you are encouraged to discuss this option with your Chair and/or Dean's Office before making a final decision and to avoid this path, whenever possible.

- Indicate in your CV and/or personal statement if you were scheduled to participate in events or opportunities that were cancelled due to the pandemic.

#### Guidance for Reviewers and Review Committees:

- Review the Malisch et al. opinion piece in PNAS2 and its supplement: "Asking the Right Questions: A primer for merit, tenure and promotion evaluation committees," which highlights how research/scholarly work, teaching and service may be impacted.
- Recognize that caregiving (e.g., children at home doing remote schooling, home-bound parents, ill or disabled family members) have impacted the academic productivity of many faculty members.
- Faculty with family-related obligations must not be penalized if some of their duties were temporarily reassigned to others who do not have competing family-related obligations. Such collegiality is encouraged and should be documented in the departmental letter.
- Acknowledge innovations in teaching and the enormous work and opportunities for creativity in the shift to distance learning.
- Acknowledge increased clinical and/or service work that may have been taken on by faculty who are supporting colleagues with increased caregiving responsibilities.
- Consider achievements relative to opportunity (e.g., the time and resources available) and how the faculty member has performed historically. At UCSF, faculty are asked to use the candidate personal statement feature in Advance to describe how the pandemic has impacted opportunity (e.g., the time and resources available to them) and productivity. Reviewers are asked to consider this

information along with comparisons with pre-pandemic records of creative/scholarly activity, teaching, clinical care and/or service to aid in the evaluation. Appropriate adjustments to expectations shall be made in the impacted areas of review. For example, if publications were impacted during the pandemic due to child care, reviewers may consider the pre-pandemic rates of publication productivity and adjust expectations accordingly. Avoid deferral of file reviews when possible as this can create missed opportunities for advancement and delay career progression.

- Academic review committees should be proactive in promoting equity in the wake of COVID-era impacts. As such, anti-bias training should be required for all members of academic review committees, including divisional/departmental promotion committees. Resources are available through the UCSF Office of Diversity and Outreach at: <https://diversity.ucsf.edu/resources/unconscious-bias-resources> <<https://diversity.ucsf.edu/resources/unconscious-bias-resources>>

Rethinking academic advancement is one way that we can work collectively to promote equity for those impacted by the pandemic. We welcome your thoughts, as colleagues and partners, in helping us address the challenges that we collectively face in such an unprecedented time. Finally, we express our immense gratitude for your extraordinary dedication to our missions in discovery, education, patient care and service to others.

Best regards,

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Vice Provost-Academic Affairs

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2020-21 Chair of Committee on Academic Personnel

Steven Hetts, MD

2021-22 Chair of Committee on Academic Personnel

#### References

1. National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2021. *The Impact of COVID-19 on the Careers of Women in Academic Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine*. Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. <https://doi.org/10.17226/26061>.
2. Malisch JL, et al. In the wake of COVID-19, academic needs new solutions to ensure gender equity. PNAS July 7, 2020 117 (27) 15378-15381; first published June 17, 2020; <https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.2010636117>