

Provost Statement on COVID-19 Impacts for External Evaluators

29 April 2022

Dear Evaluator,

The COVID-19 pandemic took a substantial toll on faculty productivity and career progress throughout higher education. UCCS seeks to be attentive to the pandemic's extenuating circumstances and ongoing impact as we evaluate this candidate's case.

Campus Context: Our campus swiftly moved to remote operations in March 2020, including *highly* restricted access to classrooms, campus offices, labs, studios, the library, and other resources. All university sponsored travel was suspended. It was not until June 1, 2020, that UCCS deemed faculty research access essential and permitted greater campus access. However, from June 1 until February 22, 2021, our campus remained in primarily remote operations as a pandemic mitigation strategy. In April 2021, the university lifted the domestic travel ban with the university requiring Dean approval for domestic out-of-state travel. Additionally, interlibrary loan sharing capacity was highly limited. In-person human subject research was highly restricted until March 2022. Today, the campus has entered a transition period where we are seeing a return of teaching, research, and service on campus but where a large portion of work may still be conducted online or in a HyFlex model. This new phase has resulted in an ease of previous restrictions, more courses offered in person, more consistent access to interlibrary loan materials, regular access to campus research space, studios, and labs, and a lifting of restrictions on human subject research. In this transition phase, the UCCS leadership continues to recognize the long-term impacts of COVID-19 and pandemic-related restrictions on faculty, staff, and students. Such challenges experienced in the pandemic and the long-term impact of these restrictions, loss of or limited access to creative and research spaces, quick pivots to remote teaching, increased time for review of submissions for publications/funding, and often increased service loads experienced by faculty.

Impacts on Workload: During the primarily remote operation period, all faculty transitioned to some form of online teaching which required them to garner expertise using Canvas LMS, re-develop course lectures and readings, learn and use video lecture recording and production, re-envision course assignments and assessments using online tools, teach and support in-class student dialogue and conversations in a remote or hybrid environment, and provide an academic-safety net for our substantial number of first-generation and economically-challenged student body as well as an increasing number of students facing significant mental health issues. Many faculty continue to grapple with the demands of remote or hybrid teaching environments. Furthermore, faculty service demands have increased significantly over time/since March 2020/the onset of the pandemic. Not only were faculty called to lead COVID mitigation-related committees and implement new COVID processes, but they have also been on the front lines of meeting student academic and mental health needs. Supporting students and colleagues during the pandemic by way of virtual research mentorship, emotional encouragement, etc. took a toll on faculty wellness and challenged their ability to sustain their typical research and teaching efforts.

Reviewer Request: As you consider this candidate's professional achievements, we invite you to also consider and acknowledge the very real toll of the COVID-19 crisis and our campus' ongoing response to the pandemic. It is reasonable to expect that the pandemic mitigation efforts outlined above, such as moving to remote learning, limited access to campus research spaces and resources, increases in service load, and restricted travel, have and will lead to variation in the period for review and may have long-term impacts on faculty productivity. Therefore, we would appreciate that in evaluating this candidate, you do not consider the number of years since PhD or years in position. Instead, your evaluation, consistent with primary unit criteria, should consider the quality of the work during the review years and the impact on the field in cases where the quantity, rate, or timeliness of the accomplishments were impacted by COVID-19 pandemic.

We hope you will use an empathic assessment of research productivity, teaching effectiveness, and service commitments that acknowledges the vastly different circumstances faculty are operating under and adapting to and the long-term impacts of the pandemic. We have provided a sample of questions to consider while reviewing a candidate's dossier and the impact of COVID-19 across their research, teaching, and service. Thank you for your time and energy in this important candidate review process.

Sincerely,

<Provost Signature>

Kelli Klebe, Ph.D.

Interim Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs

Office of the Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
Main Hall 406 • 1420 Austin Bluffs Pkwy • Colorado Springs, CO 80918
719-255-3121

IMPACT OF COVID ON FACULTY WORKLOAD

Please consider the short and long-term impacts of COVID-19 on the candidate's teaching, research, and service. The following questions are meant to be a starting point for considering the pandemic across a faculty candidate's workload.

TEACHING

Did the Candidate:

- Have to move courses online and adopt new technologies?
 - What did the workload entail? How many courses experienced a shift in delivery format?
 - If the course involved lab or studio components, how did the candidate adapt content and pedagogy to accommodate remote learning for non-remote-friendly courses?
- Note their course evaluations were affected by delivery mode and/or the pandemic?
 - Here are known biases with regard to faculty evaluations.
- Experience technical challenges or a lack of technology resources?
- Take on additional teaching responsibilities?
- Assist others with technology?
- Mentor students for independent study or independent research?
- Take on additional advisees?

How is the Candidate:

- Using this experience to inform continued growth in teaching, course delivery, or pedagogy?

RESEARCH

Did the Candidate:

- Lose research time due to health issues or caregiving responsibilities?
- Lose access to their research lab, office, computing, studio, or performance space?
- Have no or limited access to equipment, specimens, or in-person research?
- Lose access to start up funds?
- Receive no cost extensions on grants?
- Lose internal or external funding?
- Have grant solicitations cancelled?
- Miss opportunities for field research?
- Have travel cancelled?
- Have cancelled conferences, speaking engagements, performances, or time with collaborators?
- Experienced slow review times for journals, manuscripts, or grants?
- Lose sabbatical or leave opportunities (Fulbright, Guggenheim, etc.)?
- Face challenges due to library closures?
- Experience changes with mentoring/supervising student researchers?

How is the Candidate:

- Redirecting research or scholarly priorities and/or productivity?

SERVICE

Did the Candidate:

- Serve on a disproportionate number of departmental and/or university committees compared to other faculty?
- Increase or shift their service/leadership/outreach duties at UCCS, CU System, community, or in the profession?
- Informally or formally mentor and support students from marginalized or minoritized backgrounds during the pandemic?
- Increase their service/leadership/outreach commitment in an effort to increase the diversity of committees?
- Participate in any department or university initiatives related to the pandemic?
- Aid students with coordination of changing requirements for degree completion, or assist students in other ways with their career plans?
- Contribute to public discussions or community engagement during the pandemic? Were these related to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)?

How is the Candidate:

- Using this experience to inform continued growth?