



California
State
University,
Fresno

April 6, 2020

Dear Faculty Colleague,

We want to thank you for all that you have done to transition from face-to-face teaching to the virtual classroom mid-semester this semester. This has been done in the face of the impact of COVID-19 on your life and the lives of your students. Your commitment to your students, your resilience, and your modeling of professionalism and dedication to learning have been incredible to witness. I greatly admire the positive and responsive actions to ensure that the University mission is served.

I know that, in light of the many changes that have had to take place in response to shelter-in-place, there have been many questions about evaluation of faculty and about possible changes to processes and policies that affect faculty. We have been working to develop proposals and to consult with various stakeholders to ensure that perspectives are heard and that we offer an approach that will serve the campus and individual faculty members. Just as you have been asked to be flexible while retaining standards, we have considered how best to achieve the goals of the APMs for faculty reviews while offering flexibility and support in recognition of the challenges of the Spring 2020 semester.

After consultation with the Executive Committee of the Academic Senate, the deans, the department chairs, and the CFA representatives and with the approval of the Provost, the Office of Faculty Affairs would like to notify all faculty of California State University, Fresno of the following:

1) **Probationary Period**

Some probationary faculty are concerned about being able to fulfill the terms of their probationary plans because of the impact of COVID-19 and/or the transition to a virtual teaching environment. We encourage faculty members to talk with their mentors, departmental colleagues, chair and dean about any concerns. In addition, if conversation with your department and dean does not alleviate your concerns, probationary faculty have two options which they may want to consider and discuss with their mentors, chair and dean.

Revision of the Probationary Plan

APM 324 allows for modification of the probationary plan. Any modifications must be reviewed by the department and the college and must be approved by the Provost or designee.

Extension of the probationary period

In addition to the extension provision provided in CFA CBA 13.7 and 13.8, the campus and the union have agreed to allow faculty to request a one (1) year extension related to the COVID-19 conditions and the transition to a virtual environment. (See attached document entitled REQUEST FOR EXTENSION OF PROBATIONARY PERIOD.) If you decide that you would like to request an extension, please send a letter making the request and referencing the COVID-19 extension to the Office of Faculty Affairs.

2) **Presentations/Conferences Cancelled**

If you were scheduled to present a paper at a conference or meeting to fulfill a portion of your probationary plan and that conference or meeting was cancelled due to COVID-19, the documentation of the invitation and/or program for the event should be included in your PAF and will serve as evidence of the fulfillment of that element of your probationary plan.

3) **Student evaluations** required under both the CFA CBA Article 15 and APM 322 will be conducted as usual this semester. These student ratings of instruction will provide faculty with feedback and will provide the University with student assessment of the virtual semester.

The Student Ratings of Instruction were scheduled and will be conducted according to the email distributed by Katie Dyer, Chair of the SRI Task Force, on March 16, 2020.

A letter will be placed in each faculty member's PAF that will note the circumstances of the Spring 2020 semester and will emphasize that the purpose of student ratings of instructions is to assist faculty. This letter will also confirm for future reviewers of the file that assessment of teaching effectiveness does not rely solely on a single semester's student ratings.

4) **Peer evaluations** required under both the CFA CBA Article 15 and APM 322 will be conducted this semester but with some adjustments that recognize the changes to the Spring 2020 semester and offer guidance on how these evaluations may be accomplished. In addition to providing feedback for faculty and information for the University on the virtual environment, the peer evaluations will provide an opportunity for faculty members to support and acknowledge colleagues in their efforts to continue student progress this semester. (See attached document entitled Peer Evaluation Guidelines Spring 2020.)

5) **Lecturer 3-year reviews** and **range elevation applications** will be completed as scheduled. PAFs have been scanned and loaded on Interfolio to provide secure electronic access for review committees and administrators.

Additional topics have been included in the COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions for Faculty (FAQs for Faculty) that is available on the Faculty Affairs web page at <https://www.fresnostate.edu/academics/facultyaffairs/>. The FAQs will be updated regularly to provide the most current information.

Please let me know if you have any additional questions or concerns. Thank you again for all that you are doing to ensure that this semester is as productive and meaningful an experience as possible for our students and your colleagues.

Best regards,

Marsha L. Baum
Associate Vice President for Faculty Affairs

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