

September 9, 2020

MEMORANDUM

To: Faculty Colleagues

From: Maryanne Reed
Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs



Re: 2020-2021 Faculty Responsibilities, Evaluation Standards, Procedures and Calendar

This annual memorandum addresses faculty responsibilities, evaluation standards, procedures, and the evaluation calendar. This memo serves as a resource and comprehensive roadmap for the path to evaluation, retention, promotion and/or tenure, and post-tenure review. As we all know, neither progress toward tenure and/or promotion nor the final decision on either is guaranteed; however, we provide meaningful support at every step. The University's goal is to create conditions that help you succeed and to make the journey to that success both meaningful and manageable. We hope that by pointing out these resources early we will empower you with all the information you need to chart your own best path forward.

The following pages outline faculty responsibilities and explain the importance of evaluation. All faculty members are encouraged to become familiar with this information. In addition, faculty should refer to the following resources on the [WVU Faculty website](#) to guide them through the evaluation process:

- [Calendar for Annual Review 2020-21](#)
- [Faculty Evaluation, Promotion, and Tenure Guidelines](#)
- [WVU Faculty Adjustments for COVID-19](#)

Faculty Responsibilities and the Importance of Evaluation

For faculty, teaching, research, and service are the three pillars upon which a successful career is based. Performing in these areas is only a start; demonstrating and documenting performance and establishing a reputation in the field are essential to successful evaluation. We have many programs to support professional development, which can be found on the [WVU Faculty](#) home page. Individual colleges and departments also offer resources to support research and scholarship; check with your chair and your dean for more information about what might be available to you.

We encourage you to provide evidence of the *effectiveness* of all of your teaching, not only through the student evaluation process, but in a variety of other ways, such as those identified in the [WVU Procedures for Faculty Appointment, Annual Evaluation, Promotion, and Tenure](#) document. Such evidence could include peer evaluations, review of syllabi, and other information

about course content and student success. It could also include conference presentations on teaching or adaptation of a course or technique at another institution. Positive empirical evidence of student learning outcomes is important, as well.

As student evaluations remain a vital platform for students to voice their opinions about their classroom experience, the Provost's Office will continue to require that students complete the standard Student Evaluation of Instruction (SEIs) for their courses. Those results will be loaded into Digital Measures as usual.

However, given the sudden shift to remote delivery in Spring 2020, faculty were provided the option to request the [removal of SEI results](#) from specific courses. Faculty members who chose to remove SEIs for a course still must provide evidence that documents their excellence in teaching for Spring 2020.

Engaging in research, discovery, creation, and the deepening of knowledge is key to one's career in academia. Disseminating your research, performances, creations, and discoveries through publication or exhibition is essential to test ideas, to participate in the growth of knowledge, and to fulfill your responsibility to your discipline. Each discipline has its own culture and expectations of dissemination. Your chair and faculty peers will be able to help you understand the culture and expectations of your unit, your college, and the University. Keep in mind that work in any discipline can only be evaluated for the purpose of tenure or promotion when it is documented. The guidelines in [Academic Freedom, Professional Responsibility, Promotion and Tenure](#) includes crucial guidance on documentation of work, standards, procedures, and the faculty evaluation calendar.

Research, scholarship, and creative activity are critical to the mission of the University and to maintaining our current [R1 Carnegie status](#). These activities infuse instruction and public service with rigor and relevance and validate the concept of the teacher-scholar. We need your help to break down the disciplinary and organizational silos that often inhibit interdisciplinary and collaborative work. We encourage you to be our allies in charting a new path forward for WVU. Our state's and world's problems do not limit themselves to a single discipline, and many solutions will only be discovered by working together across disciplines, colleges, campuses, buildings, and labs.

We recognize that the current pandemic crisis may have caused disruptions to faculty in their teaching, research/scholarship/creative activity and service goals. Furthermore, while we remain committed to recognizing and rewarding high standards of excellence in all three mission areas, we also recognize that faculty, by necessity, may be spending more time on their teaching and less time on research and service.

In Spring 2020, to ensure our tenure-track faculty are not impeded in their progress, the Office of the Provost granted an automatic one-year extension to the tenure clock for all tenure-track faculty members who are currently not in their critical year. Tenure-track faculty were required to "opt-out" of the automatic extension if they did not want to move back their critical year. As the pandemic continues, faculty are eligible for an additional tenure clock extension. Details are outlined on the [WVU Faculty Adjustments for COVID-19 webpage](#).

For the upcoming academic year, faculty were given the option to request an [adjustment of their distribution of effort](#) to reflect the increased amount of time devoted to teaching and mentoring of students as a result of this changed learning environment. The redistribution of effort also may reflect changes in research or service loads as a result of altered circumstances.

We also have asked academic leaders across campus to exercise flexibility in evaluating faculty research for Academic Year 2020-21, depending on the extent and type of disruption experienced and documented by each faculty member. Again, we encourage faculty to provide a narrative explaining any impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on their teaching, research/scholarship/creative activity and service in their annual file. See the [COVID-19 Revised Annual Evaluation Guidelines](#) on the [WVU Faculty Adjustments for COVID-19](#) webpage.

Annual Evaluations and Promotion and Tenure

As you begin to put your record of success together, please be mindful that those making decisions about your annual evaluation, promotion, or tenure have only the evaluation file you put together for reference. Provide your individual story; tell and document your successes through your file, recognizing that this record will be the **only** basis for your evaluation. The evaluation file is now entirely electronic, through [Digital Measures](#). You must complete your story by uploading documents to your Digital Measures profile prior to December 31, 2020. If this is not completed, your annual review will be rated “unsatisfactory,” a rating mandated by the requirement that achievements be documented in your file and without such documentation your undocumented contributions, no matter how compelling, will not be evaluated. We encourage you to update your file throughout the year to assist you in documenting your narrative and help build your file efficiently.

While annual evaluations play a very important role in documenting your progress toward tenure or promotion, they also provide significant guidance for faculty members to improve future performance in response to honest feedback and professional development strategies. In addition, annual reviews serve as tools for faculty development at all ranks and are important in post-tenure review. The annual review also is the basis for performance-based salary increases and for the [Salary Enhancement for Continued Academic Achievement](#), for which fully promoted faculty members are eligible.

In an institution of our size and complexity, procedures are important, especially in our evaluation process. First, it is important to remember that this process should be rigorous but also developmental. Second, college and school-wide committees must be representative of various departments and programs and be as diverse as possible. Third, for evaluations to have meaning, deans, chairs and committee members must distinguish between “excellent,” “good,” “satisfactory,” and “unsatisfactory” in the annual review process. Fourth, deans and chairs should work to ensure that proper procedures are followed by committees at the departmental and college levels and that the evaluation procedures are consistently and professionally applied.

For your information, the [WVU Faculty website](#) houses [a list of approved college/school evaluation guidelines](#) and the dates when those guidelines were approved or accepted by the

Provost's Office. Any guidelines not listed or any guidelines with dates that differ from those on the attached list should not be used during this year's review process. During the coming year, while many of these documents are being revised to conform to the present [Procedures](#) document, they will continue to be operable as long as they do not conflict with the University document itself.

For those of you who may be interested, Dr. Melissa Latimer, Dr. Presha Neidermeyer, Dr. Louise Veselicky, Mr. Chris Staples and I will offer several virtual faculty development sessions directly addressing the annual review, promotion, and tenure process. Sessions will be announced through WVU ENEWS and promotional emails to the WVU faculty listservs as well as shared on the WVU [Faculty and Leadership Development](#) website. Additional material relevant to the annual evaluation process will be distributed at these sessions. This includes information about annual review letters, external review letters, evaluation file inventories, and whether, when, and how to indicate a change in your areas of significant contributions. This material is available to interested faculty upon request.

Please feel free to contact Dr. Melissa Latimer for development resources available to faculty, as well as Dr. Presha Neidermeyer, the Office of the Vice President for Health Sciences, or the Office of the Campus President at either the Keyser or Beckley campuses with questions about the annual review and/or the promotion and tenure review.

Best wishes for a productive and rewarding 2020-2021 academic year.