**Best Practices for Supporting Scholarship during Response to COVID-19 Pandemic**
Advisory Council on Scholarship Subcommittee Report, November 2020

## Executive Summary

Provost Rivera-Mills asked the subcommittee to compile a report on best practices within institutions of higher education for supporting scholarship during the response to the COVID-19 pandemic for the University Promotion and Tenure Committee. In brief, this report identifies best practices within the promotion and tenure process, as well as ways of providing support for faculty as they pursue their research agendas, and in communicating the availability of these changes and resources to faculty. To determine best practices the subcommittee informally surveyed faculty and administrators at peer institutions and reviewed a variety of institutional policies and professional organization recommendations. The methodology, subcommittee roster and bibliography are provided within Appendices 1-3.

Promotion and Tenure/Merit. The subcommittee found two broad trends in the area of promotion and tenure review, as well as the merit process. The first was the provision of opportunities for faculty to document interruptions to their scholarship as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Some institutions have asked faculty to include a Covid Impact Statement with their P&T or salary review materials. Several have emphasized the need to provide detailed documentation of pandemic-related disruptions, such as time spent transitioning to teaching in a new modality, shifting service or teaching responsibilities, publication delays, funding losses, or illness. The second was to provide guidance for how evaluators (including outside reviewers in the tenure process) should consider disruptions to scholarly productivity. Best practices in this area include giving weight to the impact of the pandemic on working conditions and personal circumstances, "counting" accepted papers at cancelled conferences or scheduled exhibitions and performances in the visual and performing arts that could not be completed, and providing the option for junior faculty to stop the tenure clock while taking steps to ensure that those who elected to do so are not held to a higher standard of scholarly productivity.

Research Support. Many of the institutions we contacted pointed to new programming or resources developed in response to the challenges created by the pandemic. We also took note of several innovative steps already implemented on our campus. Examples include data sharing, intensified efforts to provide research feedback among on-campus colleagues, repurposing of available internal funds to support research, and encouragement of collaborative, cross-disciplinary research. Several campuses have also instituted policies designed to provide flexibility for graduate students conducting research. The subcommittee also found valuable guidance for adjusting community-engaged scholarship in ways that accommodate community interests, resuming in-person human-subject research, and reopening of laboratory and studio spaces. In broad strokes, these approaches emphasize safety and the necessity of balancing the needs of scholars with the well-being of community partners, research subjects, students, and colleagues.

Communication. A communications strategy that informs faculty of the resources available to assist them in pursuing research amid the pandemic, as well as any changes in policies and expectations, was another key best practice. A number of institutions frame this in the context of a "ramping up" of scholarship that encourages both new and ongoing research and creative activity. In fields where the pandemic offers opportunities for new kinds of scholarship, including cross-disciplinary collaborative work, such possibilities can be emphasized as a means of furthering research activity. It is important to employ as many avenues of communication as possible, including public (virtual) forums, announcements at meetings, email, social media, and other online platforms.

Additional Considerations. Beyond the specific examples listed here, many of the informants, as well as several of the policy statements provided by professional organizations, stressed the need to develop a culture of flexibility in response to the pandemic. Covid has and will impact faculty in a variety of ways, both personally and professionally. Universities will face the challenge of assessing the scholarly productivity of faculty equitably while taking these circumstances into account. This approach will need to last several years, given the knock-on effects of the pandemic on scholarship.

There was also some divergence about whether to adopt a one-year stopped clock provision across the board, while giving pre-tenure faculty the ability to opt out, or to provide it only on request. Some informants expressed a concern that if delaying tenure consideration was not the default option, some junior faculty might be hesitant to take it for fear that it will carry a stigma or create unfair expectations for additional productivity. Others noted the pre-pandemic evidence that those who stop the tenure clock see a reduction in earnings over the long term. (See here for example: https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2012/06/14/study-finds-those-who-stop-tenure-clock-earn-less-those-who-dont ).

Of greatest concern is emerging evidence of disparities in the effect of the pandemic on female faculty and faculty of color and of the cumulative effects for female faculty of color. Multiple converging factors are contributing to these notable disparities, including increased needs for in-home instruction of school-aged children, daycare closures, disproportionate morbidity and mortality rates within populations of color, and persisting cultures within academia of demanding extraordinary service from members of these populations in service as mentors.

Key efforts outlined below provide potential tactics to support BSU faculty adversely effected by the pandemic and to advance Goal 4 within Destination 2040: Our Flight Path 2019-24 Strategic Plan that states:

> *As a public research institution, our University recruits and retains outstanding faculty and staff who engage in scholarship—of discovery, integration, application, and teaching—that garners national and international recognition, attracts external resources, and improves lives.*

Best Practices Identified:

## PROMOTION AND TENURE:
### Documentation of interruption to scholarship

- Provide faculty a mechanism for documenting effect of pandemic on scholarship
    - Such as inclusion of Covid Impact Statement with tenure and/or merit file
- Emphasize to faculty the importance of documentation
    - To report sub-optimal working conditions that may have been differentially experienced, such as availability of research lab access or research participants and caregiving responsibilities
    - To make outside reviewers aware of effects
    - For equitable evaluation that can consider differences of circumstances when making cohort comparisons
    - In case recall fades over time regarding the effects of the pandemic
- Indicate to faculty to include:
    - Changes to courses, including delivery modality, grading, and attendance
        - estimating the number of work hours per week that were required to implement and execute these changes
        - listing challenges such as technology availability (student and faculty) and training attended
        - listing additional teaching responsibilities that arose due to issues such as isolation or quarantine of GA or illness of a colleague
        - listing additional student needs and how these were addressed such as students requiring advising for changes in course delivery, increased absenteeism, physical and mental health concerns, loss of economic stability
    - Disruption of paid or unpaid leave (sabbatical, Fulbright, etc.)
    - List of additional mentoring responsibilities, challenges in mentoring students completing Honors or master's thesis, creative project, or doctoral dissertation
    - Estimate of time required to close lab, place in-person human subjects research on pause, re-start scholarly activity, such as the time to create lab schedules and detail safety protocols
    - List of contributions made to the pandemic response within the university or larger community
    - Detailed amount of time they were unable to access research facilities/research participants/computing resources/studios, or venues for creative endeavors/performances
    - Detail of disruption to scholarly productivity due to suspension of research travel, visas, access to research funds
    - Clear explanation and documentation from publisher of delays in publication due to increased time for review
    - Detailed loss of funding due to redirection by sponsor to COVID-19 efforts
    - Extensive detail including estimate of number of hours/week necessary to pivot research agenda due to pandemic

- o List of funding diversion for PPE
- o Explanation of difficulty of collaboration due to COVID

## Instruction for evaluators to consider disruption of scholarly productivity
- Inform evaluators to consider the circumstances of the working conditions of the individual, such as reduced access to research participants or facilities, and caregiving responsibilities
- Inform evaluators to consider short-term and long-term effects of the pandemic when making decisions
- Inform evaluators to accept for consideration conference papers for accepted presentations when the conference had been cancelled in response to the pandemic
- Inform evaluators of visual and performing arts to accept for consideration gallery show or performances cancelled due to the pandemic
- Inform evaluators that sabbatical activity/paid leaves are not to be evaluated adversely due to pandemic-related issues
- Inform evaluators that faculty who selected to delay tenure considerations are not held to a higher standard of scholarly productivity
- Provide detail to external reviewers of campus restrictions that were implemented including closure of research labs, libraries, and clinical facilities, and of requirement to move to remote learning modalities

## Adjustments to P&T and merit expectations/approach
- Decrease service expectations
- Stop tenure clock, extend tenure period (opt in or opt out)
- Use rolling average for assessing research output (e.g. five years) for merit
- One on one approach: department chair and P&T chair meet with each pre-tenure faculty one on one to discuss the tenure process, changes due to Covid and the barriers specific to that individual related to current times
- Provide mechanism for request for accommodation (see BUFM Merit Memo and Cover as example at end of Bibliography)

## Adjustments to teaching
- Change teaching schedule for caregivers
- Modify course offerings so that people have the same prep in the spring as in the fall
- Reduce teaching load


## RESEARCH SUPPORT:
## Creation of new programming/resources in support of scholarship
- Institute archival Data Sharing: collect archival data that faculty have where the possibility exists to combine/share with other faculty members (possibility for generation of new studies)


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- Use identified journal editors to create faculty writing groups where journal editors work one on one with faculty to improve academic writing/paper submissions
- Create support groups for faculty/students whose research has been impacted/disrupted due to COVID
- Provide virtual brown bag research presentation series for faculty to present their research and get valuable feedback
- Create networking system similar to speed dating for research collaborations
- Bring researchers together for very focused meetings
- Faculty Survey on research needs
- Support collaborative, cross-disciplinary research
- Hold, support virtual conferences, workshops, seminars
- Provide online sign-ups for on campus lab space/equipment so faculty are not there at the same time and do not have to be present on campus to determine if equipment/space is in use
- Roll forward of previous year internal grants/travel monies/professional development funding that were unused due to Covid
- Create new grants/expand existing grants for virtual conferences and equipment
- Create faculty mentoring program
- Use Twitter to help find small weekly virtual conferences to help keep up networking and research dissemination

## Adjustments to graduate student policies and expectations
- Extend academic deadlines for graduate students, such as candidacy expiration dates
- Increase allowance of the number of terminal graduate (reduced tuition; post 90-credit hours) semesters of registration
- Encourage/permit modification of dissertation topics
- Extend graduate funding

## Resumption of community engaged research
- Utilize a remote self-assessment survey to guide the conversation with community partners on conducting activities remotely
- Discuss together with community partners how decisions will be made and plan for re-engaging in research together
- Engage all parties in developing protocols to ensure safety, confidence, and trust
- Work together to determine if the project will be a go, no go, pause or pivot
- Resist making assumptions that you know what is best for the community partner
- If project is a no go, learn what the implications will be for the community partner
- Determine whether scholarship can be developed from lessons learned
- If project is paused, determine whether there are new activities such as data analysis, writing, proposal submissions, and/or planning that can be underway
- If the decision is to pivot, ensure that a new IRB approval is submitted if necessary

## Resumption of in-person human subjects research programs (high risk populations) (recommendations align with BSU current practice)

- Allow in-person contact with human participants with approval from IRB and/or upper administration
- Provide guidelines based on CDC recommendations
- Require any changes to method of data collection be reviewed and approved by the IRB
- Provide guidelines for pre-screening of participants prior to entering lab and use of PPE
- Adjust method of data collection in cases where participants are unwilling to complete in-person procedures
- Move to online survey completion when possible
- Conduct traditional in-person interviews, using virtual means (ex. WebEx, MS Teams) when possible
- Create process for getting approval to have students involved in the in-person contact with participants
- May need to require an adjustment to the procedures to ensure that researcher/student are not within 6 feet of the participants for longer than a few minutes (limit exposure to 10 mins) with breaks between close proximity
- University and/or department provide PPE for use by PI and students
- Create a separate IRB review board that handles reviewing COVID-19 related research

## Reopening of research facilities

- Reopen all laboratories, studios, and research spaces in a staged approach, based on risk assessments
- Before returning to campus, all faculty, staff and students complete pledge acknowledging their responsibilities
- Complete a research-specific online training module before returning to campus
- Require approval before returning to research to campus
- Identify/provide priorities/needs to gradually recover the momentum of research

## COMMUNICATION:

- Provide guide to "ramping up" research, scholarship and creative activities, framed for the feel of "advancing" scholarly work.
- Make key elements easily accessible: links to library resources, forms, COVID-19 testing, and FAQs all in the "Ramping Up" guide
- Provide Research News link highlighting the research at the institution that is addressing COVID-19
- Provide link to specific COVID-19 funding opportunities
- Provide mass e-mails and individual e-mails to specific faculty members based on knowledge of their research area/need
    - Examples of e-mail content to include:
        - Circulation of policies
        - Encouragement of attendance at or viewing of recorded virtual:

- - Conferences or research training opportunities
  - Research colloquiums
  - Guest researcher lectures
- Announce via Faculty/College meeting
- Use Events Calendar to list/organize upcoming webinars, town halls, information sessions to support research, and to announce pilot programs supporting researchers during COVID
- Post on research office pages:
  - Recorded town halls on research
  - Active social media with latest news links
  - COVID resources links
  - Postings encouraging faculty to set up one-on-one Zoom appointments to discuss research funding and support needs during the pandemic

Appendix 1

## Methodology for Report

Subcommittee members compiled information through correspondence and discussions with professional colleagues at peer and aspirant institutions and by collating information from websites. Discussions held at two Advisory Council on Scholarship meetings provided additional insight.

The list of institutions includes the following designated per Carnegie Classifications as similar to BSU as:
- Public
- Doctoral University, High Research Activity (R2)
- Research Doctoral: Comprehensive Programs, no medical or veterinary school
- High undergraduate enrollment

17 similar institutions to BSU:
- Bowling Green State University
- College of William & Mary
- Idaho State University
- Kent State University
- New Mexico State University
- North Dakota State University
- Northern Illinois University
- Old Dominion University
- University of Akron
- University of Alaska, Fairbanks
- University of Maine
- University of Memphis
- University of North Carolina at Greensboro
- University of Puerto Rico – Rio Piedras
- University of Rhode Island
- University of Texas at San Antonio
- Western Michigan University

Information also was obtained through websites and/or correspondence with faculty, chairs, and administrators at the following:
- Bates College
- Colby College
- Georgia State University
- Illinois State University
- Illinois Urbana Champaign
- Indiana University Bloomington

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- Kansas State University
- Miami University of Ohio
- Michigan State University
- Missouri State University
- Missouri University of Science and Technology
- Ohio State University
- Ohio University
- Purdue University
- Temple University
- University of Alabama at Birmingham
- University of Georgia – Athens
- University of Illinois at Chicago
- University of Illinois Urbana Champaign
- University of Louisville
- University of Massachusetts at Boston
- University of Miami
- University of Northern Iowa
- University of Southern Maine (USM)
- University of Texas at Tyler
- University of Wisconsin – Oshkosh
- Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
- Western Michigan University

Additional institutions are included in Bibliography

Appendix 2

Subcommittee Membership

Adam Beach, Dean of the Graduate School and Professor of English
Jocelyn Bolin, Professor of Educational Psychology
Delaina Boyd, Associate Vice President for Community Engagement
James Connolly, George and Frances Ball Distinguished Professor of History, Director Center Middletown Studies
Mary Jo Germani, Department Chair of the Department of Speech Pathology and Audiology
Jayanthi Kandiah, Interim Dean of the College of Health, Associate Dean of Academic Affairs and Professor of Nutrition and Dietetics
Tarek Mahfouz, Associate Dean of the College of Architecture and Planning and Professor of Construction Management
Christopher Mangelli, Director of Research Integrity
Susan McDowell, Vice Provost for Research
Erik Nesson, Associate Professor of Economics
Robert Sammelson, Department Chair of the Department of Chemistry
Carolyn Shue, Professor of Communication Studies

Appendix 3

Bibliography


Documentation of interruption to scholarship/
Instruction for evaluators to consider disruption of scholarly productivity

https://www.umass.edu/advance/sites/default/files/inline-files/UMass%20ADVANCE%20COVID-19%20Tool%20August%2017%202020%20Final.pdf

https://www.pnas.org/content/pnas/suppl/2020/06/17/2010636117.DCSupplemental/pnas.2010636117.sapp.pdf?fbclid=IwAR1UmoVYqwwqYxnVrTFgPtO9Yj3SOj3LCWwM7QyxAY_dOAwpvlXKx8sCwrw


Adjustments to P&T and merit expectations/approach

https://www.mla.org/About-Us/Governance/Executive-Council/Executive-Council-Actions/2020/Statement-on-COVID-19-and-Academic-Labor

https://www.historians.org/news-and-advocacy/aha-advocacy/aha-statement-on-historical-research-during-covid-19-(july-2020)#:~:text=%E2%80%9CSustaining%20historical%20research%20during%20the,increased%20access%20to%20online%20databases%2C


Creation of new programming/resources in support of scholarship

https://wmich.edu/research/covid-info-research


Communication of support for research

https://web.uri.edu/research-admin/uri-research-covid-19-update/

https://keepresearching.uncg.edu/

https://umaine.edu/return/research/
https://www.niu.edu/divresearch/covid/index.shtml

http://research.utsa.edu/#_ga=2.35949088.1222049095.1601998300-1885420002.1601998300


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https://www.bgsu.edu/provost/center-for-undergraduate-research-and-scholarship/curs-online-symposium.html

## Resumption of community engaged research

https://keepresearching.uncg.edu/guide-to-ramping-up/appendix-g-guidance-for-ramping-up-community-engaged-research/

https://msu.edu/together-we-will/_assets/pdfs/Additional%20Guidance%20for%20Engaging%20with%20Partners%20and%20Public%20Events_FINAL%20PDF.pdf

## Resumption of in-person human subjects research programs (high risk populations) (recommendations align with BSU current practice)

https://usm.maine.edu/orio/collaborative-institutional-review-board-1

## Reopening of research facilities

https://research.illinois.edu/return-onsite-research-and-scholarship

https://research.osu.edu/office-of-research-launches-research-recovery-committee/

https://research.osu.edu/news-events/coronavirus-and-your-research-program/staged-approach-to-returning-to-on-campus-research/

VCR Message

Restricted Lab Access

https://www.ora.miami.edu/index.html

https://www.ora.miami.edu/compliance/responses-to-covid-19/index.html

https://research.iu.edu/coronavirus/index.html

https://www.uakron.edu/research/ora/ora-research-and-covid-19

Prioritizing COVID research

https://www.uic.edu/research/research-impact/

Updates from funding agencies

https://www.ora.miami.edu/index.html

https://www.ora.miami.edu/compliance/responses-to-covid-19/index.html

Graduate advisor guidance

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q6XP3qnvMVA

https://grad.ucdavis.edu/resources/coronavirus-updates-and-guidance/covid-19-mentoring-and-advising-practices

https://gradschool.cornell.edu/about/covid-19-graduate-school-information-2/covid-19-graduate-school-updates/faculty-information/mentoring-during-disruption/

https://rackham.umich.edu/covid-19/guidance-for-research-and-scholarship-during-covid-19/

https://grad.uw.edu/wp-content/uploads/Research-Guidance-during-COVID-College-of-Education.pdf

TO:        Unit Faculty

FROM:      , Director

RE:        Disruptions in Productivity in Scholarly Activity and Service Due to COVID-19

DATE:      September 1, 2020

The MOU of August 12 ([www.bgsu.edu/provost/faculty-affairs/collective-bargaining-agreement/regarding-disruptions-in-productivity-in-scholarly-activities-and-service-due-to-the-covid19-pandemic.html](www.bgsu.edu/provost/faculty-affairs/collective-bargaining-agreement/regarding-disruptions-in-productivity-in-scholarly-activities-and-service-due-to-the-covid19-pandemic.html)) specifies the following:

NOW THEREFORE, the Parties agree as follows:
1.  Academic units, colleges, and the University shall account for these disruptions in their evaluation of all BUFM by appropriately tempering expectations in terms of scholarly/creative activity and service.
2.  At the first stage of the merit, promotion, reappointment, and tenure processes for the 20-21 review year, chairs/directors will advise each BUFM that reasonable accommodations will be made in their evaluation due to the COVID-19 pandemic and that each BUFM should also specify in writing to their merit committee and chair/director what reasonable accommodations they believe are fair given their specific circumstances.

In the interest of clarity, consistency, and transparency within the bounds of this broad framing, the College recommends the following practices:

**Candidates**
Candidates should use the attached boilerplate memo to explain specific circumstances and propose reasonable accommodations. The boilerplate has three parts:
*   a standard introductory paragraph
*   a section in which to describe specific circumstances, i.e., how the pandemic has disrupted specific research/creative projects and/or service duties and the impact of that disruption
*   a section in which to propose reasonable accommodations

The second part is key: specific information about disruption and impact will provide reviewers—both faculty committees and FADs—with a substantive basis on which to temper expectations appropriately and consider reasonable accommodations.

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DATE:

TO:       Unit Merit Review Committee
           Unit Head
           Dean

FROM:   Candidate

RE:       Disruptions in Productivity in Scholarly Activity and Service Due to COVID-19

For the 2020-2021 review cycle, the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) of August 12, 2020, establishes that each BUFM should specify in writing to their merit committee and chair/director what reasonable accommodations they believe are fair given their specific circumstances. The purpose of this memo is to
- provide a concise explanation to reviewers of my specific circumstances, i.e., how COVID-19 has disrupted my productivity in specific research/creative and/or service activities and the impact of that disruption during this review period, and
- specify in concise terms what I consider reasonable accommodations

**Explanation of specific circumstances**: how COVID-19 has disrupted specific <u>research/creative activities</u> during this review period and the impact of that disruption
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**Explanation of specific circumstances**: how COVID-19 has disrupted specific <u>service activities</u> during this review period and the impact of that disruption
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**Proposed reasonable accommodations**:
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