

Memorandum of Agreement #128

Modification of Scholarly Expectations for COVID-19

In order to promote amicable employer-employee relations, The College of New Jersey (the College) and The College of New Jersey Federation of Teachers, Local 2364, AFT (the Union), hereby agree to the following:

The COVID-19 pandemic (hereafter referred to as COVID-19) has already disrupted the normal course of faculty and librarian scholarship/creative/professional activities and the full impact of this global catastrophe is not known. The College will reassure pre-tenure faculty and librarians that scholarly expectations for tenure and promotion to Associate Professor/Librarian II will be adjusted for the disruptions caused by COVID-19 by taking the following steps¹:

1. The following statement of support for pre-tenure faculty and librarians will be distributed to the campus community and will be endorsed by the Steering Committee, Faculty Senate, TCNJ-AFT, Council of Deans, Provost, President, and Board of Trustees.

TCNJ statement on reappointment expectations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic

COVID-19 represents a major disruption to society, higher education, and faculty/librarian workload. Pre-tenure faculty and librarians are on a 5-year path to earn tenure where their teaching, scholarly/creative/professional activities, and service are evaluated annually. By the time of tenure, faculty/librarians must have established competencies in teaching/librarianship, scholarly/creative/professional activities, and service. The COVID-19 pandemic disruptions threaten the ability of each pre-tenure faculty and librarian to achieve these predetermined levels of competency. Furthermore, such challenges fall disproportionately to faculty/librarians who belong to vulnerable and/or underrepresented groups. Some examples of disruptions include (but are not limited to):

- *Spring 2020 courses were quickly moved online. This required faculty to devote extraordinary amounts of time to their teaching, created an unorthodox teaching environment, and took time away from scholarship.*
- *Scholars lost access to their labs, equipment, software, samples, and data; additionally, purchasing of supplies and equipment will see extensive delays*

¹ CFA developed a plan to achieve this goal using the following guiding principles: (1) pre-tenure faculty and librarians should be supported during this challenging time, (2) the tenure clock is fixed by state law and unlikely to change; however, the criteria used in evaluating candidates for tenure/promotion can be altered, and (3) the modified process should be flexible to accommodate unforeseen impacts on faculty/librarian workload, and it should be as simple as possible.

- *Funding opportunities from private and public organizations may be impacted for the foreseeable future in many areas*
- *The publication process is delayed*
- *Conferences, exhibitions, and performances have been canceled*
- *Many faculty members face new challenges in balancing work and life and in maintaining personal health and well-being. This takes away time normally allocated to teaching, scholarly/creative/professional activities, and service.*

Well over 100 Colleges and Universities across the United States have extended tenure clocks and/or shifted the standards for tenure and promotion to compensate for the transformed landscape in which faculty and librarians are working. The College of New Jersey, along with the other state colleges in New Jersey, has its tenure clock determined by state law. According to the General Counsels at the New Jersey Association of State Colleges and Universities, The College cannot extend the clock unilaterally, but requires statutory relief to do so.

And: [Therefore], members of College governance (Committee on Faculty Affairs, Steering Committee, Faculty Senate, TCNJ-AFT, Council of Deans, Provost, President, and Board of Trustees) are uniting to seek relief for pre-tenure faculty/librarians working under the disruptions created by COVID-19. These campus members are directing Promotion and Reappointment Committees (PRC) who have pre-tenure faculty/librarians to create a “modified scholarly/creative/professional expectations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic” for each pre-tenure faculty/librarian. This document will set forth modified expectations for teaching, scholarly/creative/professional activities, and service and detail how they have been humanely recalibrated to adjust for the COVID-19 pandemic. These documents will be reviewed and approved by the Dean, and they will become part of the applicants’ reappointment materials.

2. The summative review of the reappointment process will be amended for any faculty or librarian who has modified scholarly/creative/professional expectations due to COVID-19 (see #3 below). The reappointment process will be amended to include College Promotion and Tenure Committee (CPTC) review of any summative reappointment candidates who are NOT recommended for reappointment by either the Promotions and Reappointment Committee (PRC) or Dean. This additional review step adds another layer of review to ensure that reappointment standards have been humanely recalibrated to adjust for COVID-19 disruptions. This adjustment will remain in effect through the entire reappointment cycle for any affected faculty or librarians because this situation is evolving and future disruptions cannot be predicted.
3. All Departments and Programs who have faculty/librarians in the reappointment process affected by COVID-19 disruptions (including any faculty/librarians who begin work at the College after Spring 2020) will create modified scholarly/creative/professional expectations. This process applies to every tenure case and every promotion automatically tied to the tenure decision. Given that the full impact of COVID-19 is not known, future disruptions will automatically trigger the steps described below to create a modified set of

standards that helps faculty and librarians adjust to the external disruptions. Modifications of scholarly/creative/professional activity standards will be developed and memorialized in a “modified scholarly/creative/professional expectations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic” document. The following steps will produce this document:

Step 1. The PRC will meet with the pre-tenure faculty/librarians to learn how COVID-19 has specifically impacted their scholarly/creative/professional activity. Given the stress that this pandemic has caused, PRCs are expected to meet with their pre-tenure faculty/librarians and begin work on the modified scholarly/creative/professional expectations document by August 20, 2020. This meeting will provide pre-tenure faculty and librarians tangible evidence of College action to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Step 2. The PRC, in consultation with the pre-tenure faculty/librarian, will draft a “modified scholarly/creative/professional expectations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic” document for each faculty/librarian. This letter between the PRC and candidate will detail how teaching, scholarship/creative/professional activity, and service expectations have been humanely recalibrated to compensate for the COVID-19 disruptions. The expectation is that PRCs will follow the pattern that has been adopted by many institutions in the country, which is extending the tenure clock for one year. Because we cannot extend the tenure clock, PRCs are expected to recalibrate standards to a level of work that could be reasonably completed in 4 years rather than the current period of 5 years. For guidance, PRCs could refer to previous DS that were developed prior to 2014, when the tenure clock at TCNJ was four years.

Step 3. Should any disputes between the PRC and pre-tenure faculty/librarians arise, the Dean will resolve these disputes in the spirit of humanely recalibrating scholarly/creative/professional standards to compensate for COVID-19 disruptions. The Dean must approve the “modified scholarly/creative/professional expectations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic” document. All parties (faculty/librarian, PRC members, and Dean) will sign the document. CFA should be copied on the document. A modified scholarly/creative/professional expectations document (steps 1-3) should be completed by October 15, 2020

Should the pre-tenure faculty/librarian believe that the modifications are inadequate, they can request CFA to review the “modified scholarly/creative/professional expectations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic” document. CFA will prepare an assessment of whether the modification adequately calibrates scholarly expectations for the COVID-19 disruption.

Step 4. The most recent, signed “modified scholarly/creative/professional expectations in response to the COVID-19 pandemic” document and any CFA assessment of scholarly adjustments (if requested by the pre-tenure faculty/librarian) will be submitted by candidates in their “Standard application for reappointment” Section E. “Evaluation Letters/Reports”.

For the College:

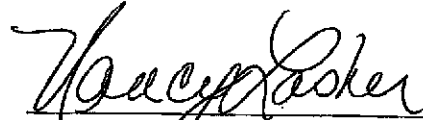


William W. Keep
Interim Provost and
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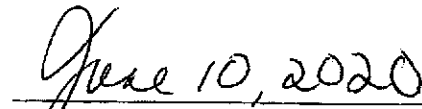
June 10, 2020

Date

For the Union:



Nancy Lasher
President
TCNJFT, Local 2364, AFT



Date