

## **Academic Policies Resolution Related to the Impacts of COVID-19 Pandemic on Faculty at JMU**

Whereas, there has been a pandemic since March 2020 which has created many [obstacles to faculty performance](#) and has had cascading effects on faculty career progress,

Whereas this pandemic continues to impact faculty members differently based on both visible and invisible factors including, but not limited to, their need to do research in the field, their caregiving responsibilities, their previous experience with on-line teaching, their experience of having COVID-19, caring for others with COVID-19 or who are in quarantine, and/ or the personal emotional impact arising from the loss of a colleague, friend, family or community member, to COVID-19, and the uneven impact the pandemic has had on BIPOC faculty,

Whereas the differential impacts of the pandemic must be documented in our institutional memory to contextualize future faculty evaluations and prevent existing inequalities from deepening,

Whereas planned educational leaves were canceled,

Whereas incidences of mental illness have increased; this is often "invisible" and unnamed.

Whereas JMU strives to recognize and foster faculty excellence and success even when facing extraordinary circumstances,

Whereas adjustments to first, third year, and annual evaluations, workloads, and leave all merit individual consideration in light of these circumstances,

### **First, Third Year and Annual Evaluations**

Whereas, the Faculty Handbook explains that Annual Evaluation guidelines "shall be developed by the full-time faculty members of each academic unit" and "may be modified by the AUPAC with the agreement of a majority of the academic unit's full-time faculty members" (III.E.4 paragraph 4) and with approval by the AUH, college dean, and university provost,

Whereas existing departmental annual evaluation criteria may not be appropriate for use during the pandemic,

Whereas the Faculty Handbook states that annual evaluations should consider “any aspects of a faculty member's conduct that impacts performance, positive or negative,”

Whereas faculty members have had to adapt all course work to new modalities, have had to take on new and shifting care-giving responsibilities, and may have had to quarantine or have become ill themselves.

Whereas the pandemic has impacted faculty scholarship, interrupted research agendas, limited access to labs during the lockdowns, and negatively impacted productivity.

Be it resolved that the Faculty Senate strongly advises each department’s part-time and full-time faculty to consider how faculty members’ time to devote to teaching, scholarship, and service has been negatively impacted by new work-life demands of COVID-19.

Be it resolved that the Faculty Senate strongly advise each department to solicit part-time and full-time faculty input on annual evaluation guidelines that recognize how specific working conditions were impacted by COVID-19 for the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 academic year.

Be it resolved that the Faculty Senate strongly advises each department’s part-time and full-time faculty to clarify and communicate in writing how they will adapt their annual evaluation standards in relationship to teaching, service, and scholarship.

Be it resolved that the Faculty Senate strongly advises each department to explicitly solicit a COVID-19 Impact Statement from each faculty member to include with their annual evaluation materials, and any future tenure and/or promotion materials.

Be it resolved that that the AUPAC of each department communicate with faculty members who are not yet tenured about ways in which the T & P timeline might be adapted to fit the circumstances of the pandemic and in accordance with directives coming from the Provost’s office.

Be it resolved that the inclusion of student evaluation data be included in evaluation considerations only with the approval of the faculty being evaluated.

## Workload

Be it resolved that AUHs review faculty workloads and make adjustments to workload distributions where appropriate based on the impact of the pandemic on an individual without overburdening other faculty members. Possible adjustments could include a semester where they have the opportunity to teach in 8-week blocks, to be awarded a course release, or a combination of block classes, online classes, and/or a course release.

## Educational Leaves

Be it resolved that departments continue with the same leave schedule established before the pandemic once academic leaves are restored.

Be it resolved that those who had their educational leaves cut short by the pandemic in Spring 2020 have the opportunity to make up for this loss through discussions with their AUH on how to best do so. This could include a semester where they have the opportunity to teach in 8-week blocks, receiving a course release, or a combination of block classes, online classes, and/or a course release. The goal is to find a way to recoup the 8-week loss of leave time without overburdening other faculty members.

## No Permanent Pandemic Changes in Policy Without Faculty Approval

Be it resolved that no changes implemented to accommodate the demands of the pandemic be retained after the pandemic subsides without express discussion and approval of such changes by the full faculty.

## Time Frame

Be it resolved that this resolution covers Spring 2020, AY 20-21 and AY 21-22. If the impacts of the pandemic are still relevant to the AY 22-23, the Faculty Senate can vote to extend this resolution.