Date: June 2, 2020

To: Deans

From: Office of the Provost

Re: Tenure Clock Extensions Due to COVID-19

**Background**

The COVID-19 pandemic has created significant challenges for faculty members in all areas of work. In many cases, this may have slowed down the progress of research as well as created additional workloads to rapidly transition in-person classes to an online mode of teaching. Many faculty members are also managing personal challenges created by the pandemic and resulting social distancing measures. Given these circumstances, it is expected that tenure-track faculty will face challenges in meeting the normal progress toward tenure.

In recognition, the Board of Trustees has passed a by-law change that allows all current tenure-track faculty to request a one-year extension to their tenure clock. As of April 29, 2020, the following language has been adopted into the By-Laws of the University of Connecticut:

“*Given the disruptions presented by the COVID-19 pandemic and how they impact scholarly productivity, faculty holding tenure-track appointments are offered a one-year extension to the tenure clock. This extension shall apply to tenure-track faculty members who were employed by the University on March 1, 2020 and whose tenure case is scheduled to be reviewed in the 2020-2021 academic year or later. The Provost’s Office shall implement a procedure for eligible faculty to request the extension. Faculty members shall receive only one tenure clock extension between March 1, 2020 and December 31, 2020, regardless of the reason(s) for which a faculty member may qualify for an extension*.”

**Procedures**

Eligible tenure-track faculty members who would like to request a one-year extension to their tenure clock should complete the attached form. Once completed, faculty members should submit this to their Department Head who will then forward the request to their respective Dean. Deans will be responsible for tracking submitted requests and providing information on eligible faculty members who have requested one-year tenure extensions to the Provost’s Office by July 20 and November 30. Faculty members must submit their request form to their Department Head for this period of disruption no later than January 15, 2021. Deans should submit any requests received from November 30 through January 15 to the Provost’s Office by January 18.  The Provost’s Office will be responsible for providing the information to Human Resources.

**FAQ**

1. **If a faculty member is due to submit materials for third-year review and requests an extension to their tenure clock, will the third-year review be postponed?**

For faculty members hired on or before August 23, 2017, no. Third year review will continue on the original schedule. The third year review is an important tool for providing timely feedback on the progress of faculty members. For faculty members hired prior to August 23, 2017, a substantial portion of the progress was completed prior to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and provides sufficient grounds for the third year review to continue as scheduled.

For faculty members hired after August 23, 2017, yes. Those faculty members hired after August 23, 2017 who apply for the extension will have their third year review postponed accordingly.

1. **If a faculty member requests an extension to their tenure clock, do they receive an automatic reappointment for AY 2021-2022?**

Yes. However, faculty members may still be separated for reasons unrelated to the PTR process.

1. **If a faculty member requests an extension to their tenure clock, are they required to submit materials for review during the PTR cycle starting in August 2020?**

If the faculty member requests the tenure clock extension on or before August 23, 2020, they do not need to submit materials for review during this PTR cycle.

If the faculty member does not request the tenure clock extension by August 23, 2020, they must submit their materials for review during this PTR cycle. If the faculty member later requests the extension, they may withdraw their file upon making the request.

All tenure-track faculty members will be expected to submit their PTR files for review during the PTR cycle starting in August 2021, unless another tenure clock extension is granted.

1. **Is documentation required to support the request for an extension?**

No. Eligible faculty members should complete the form to request an exemption and should send this to their Department Head who will forward it to the respective Dean. No other documentation is required.

1. **If an individual faculty member has not had their progress toward tenure impeded by the pandemic, should they request an extension?**

If an individual faculty member thinks that there has been no impact on their productivity, they can simply continue on their original timeline toward tenure and they should not request an extension.

1. **Can a faculty member request an FMLA-related and a COVID-19-related extension to their tenure clock at the same time?**

Only one extension to the tenure clock can be granted between March 1, 2020 and December 31, 2020. A faculty member cannot receive multiple tenure clock extensions for multiple qualifying events occurring during this period.

A faculty member who has an FMLA qualifying event between March 1, 2020 and December 31, 2020 will be granted the automatic tenure clock extension for such circumstances provided in Article 19.6.I of the AAUP contract. However, if the faculty member also requests the COVID-19 tenure clock extension, the tenure clock extension for the FMLA qualifying event during this period will not count as one of the two tenure clock stoppages permitted under Article 19.6.I.

A faculty member who experienced an FMLA qualifying event before March 1, 2020 or who has an FMLA qualifying event after January 1, 2021 may receive the FMLA-related tenure clock extension in addition to the COVID-19-related extension.

1. **Can a faculty member still submit their tenure dossier to be considered for tenure in the next cycle?**

Yes, faculty members can still submit materials on the usual timetable.

1. **If a faculty member requests a COVID-19-related extension to their tenure clock but then later decides that they are ready to submit materials on their original timetable, will they still be able to do so?**

Yes, faculty members who are granted the extension to their tenure clock can still choose to be considered for tenure in an earlier cycle. Notification of such change should be provided to the faculty member’s Department Head and Dean, with a copy sent to the Provost’s Office.

1. **Will the expectation to receive tenure remain the same?**

The expectations to receive tenure shall be judged the same whether a faculty member elects to take the COVID-19 tenure clock extension or to continue on their original tenure clock. The extension to the tenure clock is provided to support tenure-track faculty reaching these same expectations. However, each field has been impacted differently by the COVID-19 pandemic and some areas of research may rebound more easily while others may have long-term repercussions.  The differing impact in each discipline may be reflected in the expectations for promotion and tenure articulated by each department, School or College and may evolve during the unknown duration of this pandemic.

1. **What if an individual faculty member faces issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic that delay their progress by more than one year?**

At present this resolution addresses the immediate challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic. If there are longer-term impacts, they may be addressed by further Board action in the future.

1. **What if a faculty member has already had their tenure clock stopped twice? Can the faculty member receive a third tenure clock extension for the COVID-19 pandemic?**

Yes, the Provost will approve an additional stoppage of the tenure clock in order to receive the COVID-19 extension.

1. **What if a faculty member does not submit their request form by January 15, 2021?**

If a faculty member does not submit their request form by January 15, 2021, they will not receive the one-year tenure-clock extension related to the COVID-19 pandemic.