

2 April, 2020

Dear President McConnell, Provost Miranda and Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs Bush,

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues to create new and uncharted life and work challenges, we encourage you to consider the long-lasting effects it will have on the careers of faculty and staff at Colorado State University. As faculty and staff manage the transition to remote work, emergency instruction and shutting down of labs, they do this from home, in family and resource structures that vary immensely, allowing each person differing quality of time and space for work. Data from our Institutional Research and Planning office show that gender disparities already exist on the faculty, as well as in other employee groups, and the pandemic will likely exacerbate some of them. For example, for women, it might lead to spending more time managing domestic responsibilities and care for family members (Lachance-Grzela and Bouchard 2010; Daminger 2019). Leadership must be thoughtful and intentional, even at these early stages of the pandemic, to avoid promoting inequalities as outcomes that could persist for the lifetime of a career.

One tool available to tenure-track academics who are experiencing a negative productivity shock is to stop the tenure clock. This tool provides much needed flexibility and can improve successful transitions to associate professor with tenure. However, there can also be negative consequences. For example, women who stop the clock have reduced salaries relative to people who go up for promotion earlier (Manchester et al. 2013). Additionally, even gender-neutral tenure clock-stopping policies, such as recently implemented at CSU, can benefit men to the detriment of women (Antecol et al. 2018).

Non-tenure track faculty (NTTF) members face similar challenges during this pandemic, but additionally lack stopping the clock as a potential, even if not always ideal, pathway forward. Women make up 58% of the NTT faculty at CSU, but only 39% of the tenure track faculty, making supporting NTT faculty members an important issue of priority for the Council for Gender Equity on the Faculty (CoGEN).

Staff at the university include a broad range of positions, some of which will be greatly impacted by a likely university-wide budget constriction. Although the purview of CoGEN is centered on faculty, we also strongly advocate for gender equity to remain front and center when decisions are being made that could affect all employees, including staff.

Recommendations

Tenured and Tenure-track faculty members: We recommend that faculty members close to promotion apply for tenure and promotion to associate or full as planned before the COVID-19 pandemic, and that other faculty members fully consider options, and pros and cons, prior to making decisions to request a clock stoppage or not, with specific attention to equitable outcomes for the uniqueness of each particular case. In addition, we recommend dialogue between the administration and committees making tenure and promotion determinations to ensure additional expectations are not imposed and all decision making is appropriate.

Non-tenure track faculty members: A great deal of thought has gone into impacts on the more vulnerable non-tenure track members of the faculty, and rather than reiterating them all here, we

recommend reading through the suggestions made by the organization [Tenure for the Common Good](#). We particularly support their recommendation that annual reviews be postponed if they are in process for this year, and that appointments be extended by a year.

Furthermore, at all levels of the tenure and non-tenure track promotion process (tenure and promotion committees, department heads, deans, etc.) there should be an acknowledgement that productivity could be affected for multiple years to come. Immediate impacts are likely to be largest for people engaged in moving courses on-line mid-semester Spring 2020, and for anyone whose research involves being on campus or working with people. Additionally, the variance in productivity during and following Covid-19 is likely to be substantial, and acceptance of that greater variance in these world-changing times will help prevent existing gender gaps from widening.

Staff & university-wide: A broader and longer-term issue is how the university will manage the budget constriction that is likely to come. We recommend that the university be strategic and deliberate in changes in personnel and programs. When individual units are required to reduce expenses, minoritized personnel can be hit hardest. By taking advantage of the broader vantage point upper administration has, patterns that increase inequities can be perceived in a way they cannot locally, and then addressed immediately, for example simply by asking for explanations surrounding unit-level decisions.

We appreciate the need to manage this crisis decisively and effectively, and know that you have the best interest of the institution and its people in mind. To reiterate, we feel that it is crucial to keep equity at the forefront of decisions at this time of crisis, and to pay attention to individual circumstances and support flexibility. We hope you can incorporate our perspectives into your decisions.

Sincerely,

The Council for Gender Equity on the Faculty
(formerly the Standing Committee for the Status of Women Faculty)

- Antecol, H, K Bedard and J Stearns. 2018. Equal but inequitable: Who benefits from gender-neutral tenure clock stopping policies? *American Economic Review* 108:2420-2441 <https://doi.org/10.1257/aer.20160613>
- Daminger, A. 2019. The cognitive dimension of household labor. *American Sociological Review* 84:609-633 <https://doi.org/10.1177/0003122419859007>
- Lachance-Grzela, M and G Bouchard. 2010. Why do women do the lion's share of housework? A decade of research. *Sex Roles* 63:767-780 <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11199-010-9797-z>
- Manchester, CF, LM Leslie and A Kramer. 2013. Is the clock still ticking? An evaluation of the consequences of stopping the tenure clock. *ILR Review* 66:3-31 <https://doi.org/10.1177/001979391306600101>