

To: Department Chairs and Program Directors, College of Arts and Science

From: Cindy D. Kam, Dean of Faculty, College of Arts and Science



Subject: Guidance in Reviewing COVID-19 Impact Statements

Date: October 6, 2022

Per the [2022-2023 Guidelines and Call for Recommendations for Promotions and Reappointments](#), faculty may now submit an optional COVID-19 impact statement.

Purpose

The pandemic affected faculty members in significant yet distinct, in more and less visible ways. The COVID-19 impact statement is intended **to provide candidates with the opportunity to contextualize their contributions in research, teaching, and service.** The relevant excerpt from the *Guidelines* follows:

Covid-19 Impact Statement (Optional)

- Candidates may choose to discuss the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on their research and teaching within their Statement of Endeavors.
- Alternatively, candidates may instead append a COVID-19 Impact Statement (2 pages maximum) to their internal Statement of Endeavors (this will be shared internally at Vanderbilt only). The statement may explain major pandemic-related hindrances in research or creative expression; grant progress; publication, production, or exhibition; or teaching. Such hindrances may be related to travel restrictions, institutional closures, supply chain disruptions, caregiving burdens, illness, etc.

Guidance for Tenure, Promotion, and Reappointment Reviews

The primary purpose of the impact statement is to contextualize the candidate's research, teaching, and service. The COVID-19 impact statement can be used to contextualize the research choices, opportunities, challenges, and trajectory of a candidate. It can be used to contextualize the teaching choices, efforts, opportunities, challenges, and contributions of a candidate. It can be used to contextualize choices and opportunities as they relate to service to the department, College, university, or profession writ large.

The COVID-19 impact statement does not alter the standards for tenure, promotion, and reappointment. These standards are set forth in the *Faculty Manual* and the *College of Arts & Science Rules and Procedures*. The statement cannot be used to excuse a candidate's inability to meet the standards for tenure, promotion, and reappointment. The presence (or absence) of a statement must not be used negatively in a review. The material in a statement should be carefully considered and treated neutrally in the course of interpreting the candidate's accomplishments in research, teaching, and service.