

Provost Update to Senate June 25, 2020

EXTENSION OF PROBATIONARY PERIODS FOR TENURE TRACK FACULTY

- I am happy to report that the Board of Trustees at its June 2nd meeting approved the *Faculty Handbook* change recommended by this body earlier this spring allowing us to extend the probationary periods of tenure-track faculty due to extraordinary circumstances.
- Earlier this month, letters were sent to these 41 faculty laying out their new probationary periods and review schedules.
- I also am happy to report that the Board of Trustees approved the 10 tenure cases considered by this body this academic year.

RECENT AWARDS

- The U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) has awarded NCSSS a five-year, \$3.2 million grant under the Scholarships for Disadvantaged Students program. The SDS Program increases diversity in the health professions by providing awards to grant scholarships to students from disadvantaged backgrounds who have financial need, including students who are members of racial and ethnic minority groups. NCSSS will use the funds for its MSW programs. Dr. Sabatino is the Principal Investigator.
- Dr. Rao (Biology) was awarded a National Institute of Health (NIH) (through a Purdue subaward) \$367,713 for a project titled “Rapid Generation of Covid-19 Vaccine Candidates.”
- The University has been notified by the Templeton Religion Trust that it expects to award over \$2,170,246 in July to the University for Dr. Vaidyanathan’s (Sociology) project titled “Global Research on the Aesthetic Dimensions of Science.”
- The University has been notified by the Templeton Religion Trust that it expects to award \$234,370 in October to the University for Dr. Bermudez’s (Architecture and Planning) project titled “Cognitive-Aesthetic Effects of Sacred vs. Secular Architecture on Believers: A Neurophenomenological Exploratory Study.”
- Dr. Young (History) was awarded a Luce/American Council of Learned Societies (ACLS) Fellowship.
- Dr. Stieber (Modern Languages and Literatures) was awarded an ACLS Fellowship.
- My own research group in Physics just got a \$375k award from the NSF to upgrade the detector at CMS in CERN
- Congratulations to all!
- These are huge wins for the university and our educational and research programs and is due in large part to who we are as a community.

PLANNING FOR TEACHING IN THE FALL

- Fall instructional planning is underway as we prepare for a blended teaching environment

next semester. (My June 2 letter announcing the formation of this working group can be found [here](#).)

- The larger working group consists of 10 subgroups of 40+ faculty and staff. The memberships of the subgroups, their charges/tasks, and the agendas for the weekly meetings held thus far can be found [here](#).
- The subgroups have made considerable progress. Some highlights include:
 - Providing feedback for changes to the [Academic Calendar](#).
 - Publishing definitions for [instructional terminology](#).
 - Developing a common Blackboard template, including an embedded syllabus template. The syllabus template has been updated to include new components, including contingency planning.
 - Developing responses to Academic Area FAQ for Faculty and Academic Area FAQ for students that are scheduled to be published as early as June 24th. More FAQs will follow over the coming weeks.
 - Expanding the Center for Teaching Excellence staffing to include instructional designers and instructional coaches.
 - Developing training that is scheduled to become available after July 4; there will be the opportunity to participate synchronously or asynchronously.
 - Developing guidelines for instruction to provide consistency across the student experience.
 - Forming recommendations for the safe delivery of instruction in laboratories.
 - Demonstrating use of simulations to supplement the experiential learning that might be impacted in the fall for nursing, social work, psychology, and education students.
 - Considering best practices for performing and studio arts via information gathering from other universities/colleges, organizations, and faculty surveys.
 - Soliciting feedback via a survey on students' level of comfort to return to campus. The survey is scheduled to be distributed on June 25.
- McMahan 112 and McGivney 106 have served as the pilot classrooms for a technology upgrade aiming to allow both on-campus and distance learning simultaneously. We are ready for trial runs. Work is progressing on the remaining Enrollment Services classrooms, with the expectation that the 80 largest classrooms will be completed by August 17. This will allow the faculty to be trained in the classrooms before the beginning of the fall semester on August 24.

Moving Forward on Research

- Last month, I gave the University Research Operations Committee (UROC) the charge to develop plans for supporting the needs for restarting both on-campus and off-campus research operations.
- UROC itself was subdivided into three working groups: Empirical Sciences and Engineering, Humanities and Library, and Professional Programs and Performing Arts.
- The working groups have collaborated on and endorsed the implementation of a framework to allow the University to move from Phase 0 to Phase 1 of its research restart.

- The details of Phase 1 of the restart plan, including guidelines in this phase, can be found [here](#).
- The phases of the research reopening process will not change the status of student employment on campus, which is decided via a different process.
- This process is also independent of the instructional planning process, but both groups are guided by the same information and should be working in tandem when dealing with classroom use and safety.
- The hope is that the University will be able to move to Phase 2 in the next couple of weeks, depending on the progress made in the District of Columbia.