Reflections on Institutional Equity for Faculty in Response to COVID-19

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Feminist scholars have long documented the complex, multiple ways in which academic institutions reproduce gender inequalities (National Academy of Sciences 2007). In times of crisis, institutional commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion may be sidelined (Tulshyan 2020). As institutions of higher education navigate the impacts of COVID-19, the need for gender equity projects is more urgent than ever. As members of the University of Massachusetts (UMass) ADVANCE team, we focus on institutional transformation by cultivating faculty equity through collaboration in three arenas – research, community building, and shared decision-making. In this reflection paper, we describe the role of a gender equity program at one large, public, research-intensive university in addressing the institutional response as the pandemic rapidly changed our community. Funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF), ADVANCE Institutional Transformation (IT) grants fund systemic solutions to increase the participation and advancement of women and underrepresented minorities in science and engineering faculty. Since 2001, ADVANCE-IT grants have funded interdisciplinary faculty teams to address gender equity issues at their universities through institutional solutions, including evidence-based interventions to improve climate, policies, and opportunities for women and underrepresented minorities. But, how do we support faculty in ways that are equitable and foster inclusion when the very nature of faculty work has shifted, and the future of higher education is uncertain?

Amid an abrupt shift to online operations, our university rapidly responded to faculty concerns with a mind towards equity. We suggest that key to our university's response to COVID-19 has been coordination across campus units, paired with a shared commitment to sustainable equity. Efforts to achieve institutional gender equity are often met with deep ambivalence or resistance (Acker 2000; Austin and Foxcroft 2010; Hearn 2000; Stewart and Valian 2018; van den Brink and Stobbe 2014). Scholars note that true, lasting institutional transformation requires both

structural and cultural change: "Understanding, buy-in and support from grassroots organizational members regarding the need for activities of culture change are just as important as strong support from institutional leaders and senior organizational members" (Bilimoria, Joy, and Liang 2008:436; cf. Bird 2011; Rosser and Chameau 2006). Structural changes without popular support do not get implemented, and popular supports without formal structural support do not lead to long-term changes; both types of change are necessary. In our case, a formal structural response to COVID-19 came quickly from the University Provost after consultation with senior administrators and faculty liaisons, most notably the faculty union. While many ADVANCE programs have historically found it difficult to embed structural change due to the lack of leadership buy-in (Bilimoria et al. 2008; Rosser and Chameau 2006), UMass leadership changed tenure, promotion, and review policies; adapted teaching expectations and evaluations; and formally recognized intensified caregiving demands. ADVANCE then invited administrators to participate in a virtual panel on faculty evaluation in response to COVID-19, during which documentation emerged as a central faculty concern. The Provost followed up with the addition of an optional Pandemic Impact Statement for faculty to include in their annual reviews, likely be extended to personal statements for promotion and tenure cases, and ADVANCE created a best practice tool on evaluating faculty equitably during the pandemic, as well as organizing trainings for both faculty members and evaluators in Fall 2020. These policy adjustments by institutional leaders reflect the urgent equity priorities central to the mission of ADVANCE.

Academia must enact responses to COVID-19 that will retain and promote diverse women faculty who are already disadvantaged in their institution. We suggest that the continual role of ADVANCE will be ensuring that rapid structural shifts lead to deep, cultural change, embedding the current administration's commitment to equity into the institution. We view our role moving forward as fostering buy-in from other community members, including College Deans, department chairs, and committees tasked with evaluating faculty, to ensure the effective implementation of policies across organizational levels, such that policy becomes practice. After outlining relevant literature on gender equity in higher education, we present our university case study, including next steps and ongoing challenges for the UMass ADVANCE team. We aim for this reflection to inform equity programs and diversity efforts in higher education more broadly as we navigate this current moment.

Gender Equity and Institutional Transformation in Higher Education
Universities are gendered organizations, with discrimination against women embedded in the structure and culture of institutions (Acker 2006; Britton 2017). This is especially true in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), where women represent a statistical minority across faculty ranks in most disciplines (Stewart and Valian 2018; Fox 2001). Organizational structure includes the distribution of power and authority through bureaucratic hierarchies and policies that uphold normative practices and cultural values (Acker 1992; Britton 2017). In STEM, power and authority are disproportionately concentrated in the hands of white men (McIlwee and Robinson 1992). Culture includes images, symbols, and ideologies that justify and legitimize organizations (Acker 1992), and STEM culture is traditionally masculine, with gender status beliefs shaping ideas about competence and leadership abilities (Ridgeway 2011). Organizational structures and culture are mutually reinforcing, with gender implicated to create continual patterns of inequitable treatment for women. The "chilly climate" for women STEM faculty (Hall and Sandler 1982; Britton 2017) is "at best bothersome and at worst hostile and

excluding" (Bystydzienski and Bird 2006:5). Features of the chilly climate include inequitable work allocations, biases in evaluation and reward procedures, and policies that penalize women's greater family responsibilities (Bilimoria and Liang 2014; Fox, Sonnert, and Nikiforova 2009). The chilly climate is exacerbated for women who face intersecting systems of oppression including race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, nationality, age, and/or ability (e.g. Collins 2000; Branch 2016; Zambrana 2018; Turner 2002; Ong, Smith, and Ko 2018; Cech and Pham 2017).

Organizational culture preserves exclusionary structures in academia without scrutiny of their existence or validity (Sturm 2006). The organizational logic of STEM fosters a masculine ideal scientist as fully devoted and unencumbered by outside (familial) obligations (NAS 2007; Morimoto and Zajicek 2014). Cultural assumptions about the ideal scientist are embedded into structures of higher education evidenced, for example, by narrow indicators of academic excellence and tenure and promotion policies (Sonnert and Holton 1995; Bailyn 2003). Institutional faculty evaluation practices seem gender-neutral but nonetheless depict white, middle-class men as the "neutral and objective standard" (Nentwich 2006). Evaluation criteria disadvantage women and women from underrepresented racial minority groups most of all, with women of color less likely than white women or men of any racial group to be awarded tenure (Leggon 2006; Lisnic, Zajicek, and Morimoto 2018). While all academics with families must navigate competing demands of work and childrearing, women have particular difficulty negotiating tenure clock demands with the "biological clock" of childbearing (Hochschild 1975), and many institutions resist policies designed to pause tenure clocks during parental leave.

The understanding that chilly climates exist and need to be thawed informs efforts to promote gender equity in STEM (Britton 2017; Stewart and Valian 2018). The underrepresentation of women faculty is no longer framed around individual competencies or choices of women, or the "women as deficient" model (Rosser 2004). Instead, achieving women's full participation in academia requires an institutional perspective, one critically examining multiple levels of practices, cultural norms, and underlying structures (Ely and Meyerson 2000). Improving women's representation is insufficient, but institutions must also upend gender and racial hierarchies for women to feel fully included and supported, creating equal opportunities for them to achieve on par with men (Branch 2016; Fox 2001; Stewart and Valian 2018).

Despite shifts towards institutional solutions, gender equity projects face challenges due to the unique structure and culture of academia, as programs within gendered settings can be experience simultaneous resistance and transformation (Clark, Bauchspies, and Nawyn 2019). Universities are bureaucratic organizations with fragmented authority structures, a combination making institutional change difficult to achieve (Bird 2011; Ely and Meyerson 2000; Valian 1998; Sturm 2006; Austin and Laursen 2015). Men may view gender equity programs as a threat to their careers, potentially perceiving women's advancement as undermining their relative advantages in power, pay, or status (Acker 2000; Cockburn 1991). Promoting groups on the basis of identities also conflicts with the deeply held academic value of meritocracy (Bagilhole and Goode 2001; Lamont 2009). Finally, with Titles VII and IX outlawing gender discrimination in the workplace and education, respectively, gender inequality may be perceived as a thing of the past, previously addressed by academia (van den Brink and Stobbe 2014).

In response to documented challenges to institutional equity, the U.S. National Science Foundation has funded the ADVANCE program since 2001 to increase the participation and advancement of women and underrepresented minorities in academic science and engineering careers. ADVANCE Institutional Transformation grants fund institutional solutions to empower women STEM faculty to fully participate in their careers (Stewart, Malley, and LaVaque-Manty 2007; Rosser 2004). The five-year awards support the development, implementation, and evaluation of innovative systemic change strategies within a single higher education institution. While ADVANCE-awarded institutions have not been uniformly successful, many ADVANCE awards contributed to concrete changes to advance women in science (Bilimoria et al. 2008; Morimoto and Zajicek 2014; Zippel and Ferree 2019). A continual tension for ADVANCE is pairing support for individual faculty with interventions targeting institutional mechanisms reproducing inequalities (Morimoto et al. 2013). And while ADVANCE recently made dismantling intersecting systems of oppression a central focus of solicitations and awards, the program historically privileged gender, thereby centering the experiences of white, middle- and upper-class women scientists (Hunt et al. 2012).

In our case, these tensions have been somewhat alleviated by current university leadership already-sensitized to equity issues by a climate survey in 2016, which publicly identified a number of issues. While some previous leaders were less likely to recognize how gender and racial inequities limit faculty careers, the Chancellor, Provost, and current STEM Deans recognize and are willing to address these issues. Successfully implementing change through ADVANCE requires broad institutional commitment and embrace of equity and inclusion (Bilimoria et al. 2008; Hardcastle et al. 2019). Additionally, along with ADVANCE, the faculty union proved essential in serving as conduit between individual faculty and the administration, allowing individuals to feel heard in the implementation of larger interventions. In many ways, the fragmented university authority structure worked favorably, with various campus units partnering to quickly enact policies. Nonetheless, we address remaining tensions as we continue navigating the impact of COVID-19 on faculty.

Context: UMass ADVANCE and COVID-19
UMass ADVANCE was midway through its second year of its IT award on March 11, 2020 when the university shifted all operations online in response to COVID-19. UMass is a large research-intensive, doctoral-granting public university. Women comprise approximately 40% of all Department Chairs and Deans, comparable to other land grant universities. The Deans of both the College of Natural Sciences and the College of Information and Computer Science are women, although women make up a smaller proportion of Chairs in STEM departments. Among tenure-line faculty members, men and women faculty typically have similar chances of earning tenure and promotion to Associate Professor, but women are less likely to be promoted to Professor than men, and achieve promotion to Professor more slowly than men. UMass ADVANCE focuses on retaining and supporting diverse faculty through research collaboration, inclusive community, and shared governance (see Misra et al. 2017). UMass ADVANCE maintains a visible presence on-campus through faculty workshops, working closely with Deans and department chairs on best practices, and also interacting with the faculty unions and university offices, including the Provost's Office, to make policy and procedure recommendations. ADVANCE Principal Investigators meet monthly with the Provost's Office to

discuss priorities around equity and inclusion, including ways to collaborate on other initiatives spearheaded by the administration.

As COVID-19 disrupted our campus community, UMass ADVANCE focused on ensuring faculty equity and inclusion in institutional responses.[2] As we will describe, the initial, structural changes made by campus administrators included attention to equity concerns. This orientation reflects the active presence of an ADVANCE-IT program on campus for almost two years, including our regular meetings with the Provost, as well as the writing and execution of the grant requiring earlier coordination of interests and investments of institutional stakeholders (Morimoto et al. 2013). While our team did not directly determine the university's response to COVID-19, a broad goal of ADVANCE awards is to subtly shift day-to-day operations and ways of thinking with a mind towards equity (Fox 2008). Since the initial announcement of policy adjustments, ADVANCE has collaborated with campus units, including the Provost's Office, to facilitate follow-up implementation and share best practices. We aim for continued attention to equity in short-term adjustments and their long-term impacts on faculty careers. We seek to help create transparency and implement practices that will ensure equitable structures and an inclusive campus culture for diverse faculty. In the remainder of this paper, we use our institution as a case study to outline best practices for institutional responses to COVID-19, and describe challenges and future directions for our program.

Supporting Faculty: A Campus Response
Our case study results from information compiled through informational interviews, both formal and informal conversations with campus stakeholders, official university memos and communications, information from relevant workshops, and the authors' first-hand experiences and observations from the last five months. This essay offers both a recounting of the COVID-19 response by members of the ADVANCE team and the ways in which ADVANCE became involved as the response evolved, building on the momentum of university administration. Our involvement included hosting a virtual panel of administrative leaders and creating a tool to address the impacts of COVID-19 on faculty. The COVID-19 crisis has been fluid, with new and occasionally contradictory information occurring on a daily basis. As such, our case study represents the landscape from when it was written. We expect that the response to COVID-19 will continue to evolve, leading to new approaches.

COVID-19 has amplified many pre-existing inequities in academia, creating distinct challenges to differently situated faculty members (Anwer 2020; Gonzalez and Griffin 2020; Douglas-Gabriel 2020; Zahneis 2020). Given our mission, UMass ADVANCE has been closely following the university response to COVID-19 for faculty concerns. We present an overview of pivots and adjustments UMass made for faculty in response to COVID-19, and describe how these steps may inform further adjustments and programming. We suggest that a critical aspect of UMass's response has been structural changes in policy and procedure that reflect a culture that recognizes challenges faculty face under the pandemic. We maintain that addressing structure and cultural culture simultaneously is key to enacting institutional transformation.

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[2] While other campus units importantly addressed student learning and wellbeing, ADVANCE concentrates on supporting faculty.

On March 19, 2020, eight days after faculty were informed they must move all operations online, the Provost, Dr. John McCarthy, emailed all faculty identifying a number of key concerns resulting from discussions with faculty union leadership. The Massachusetts Society of Professors[3] (MSP) had conveyed to the Provost's office faculty concerns about how the disruptions might affect how they are evaluated. Following this email, McCarthy released a memo (see Appendix A) with a series of concrete policy changes developed in consultation with the MSP. The timing of the memo release was key to addressing faculty questions promptly, and its content began to alleviate faculty concerns about whether or not the administration would consider the impact of COVID-19 in their future evaluations. In informational interviews, various campus leaders acknowledge that the Provost's memo involved a collaborative effort involving many campus stakeholders and groups including the Provost's Office, MSP, the Office on Faculty Development, and the Faculty Senate. This joint effort represents an important best practice for other universities working on COVID-19 concerns, as top leadership buy-in ensures structural changes, and transparent communication and trust across units maximizes input from diverse voices.

In the next three sections, we focus on the Provost's memo, as it represents a central institutional response to faculty and indicates the administration's awareness of relevant gender equity issues. Key elements included: recognizing disruptions to research, teaching, and service as inevitable, acknowledging the impact of caregiving, establishing tenure and promotion changes, suspending teaching evaluations, changing course structure to online or hybrid formats, and establishing emergency funds for childcare and technology. While policy change happened quickly, we see our role with ADVANCE as centering equity in the ongoing response and implementation of policy adjustments. Implementation often comes at a local level, and we are developing programming aimed at college and department leaders. We are focused on long-term institutional changes, such that the impact of COVID-19 will be acknowledged throughout the course of faculty careers.

Changes to Tenure, Promotion, and Review
The Provost's first action item in his memo immediately changed the timing of decisions on tenure, reappointment (usually pre-tenure), or continuing appointment (non-tenure-track faculty and librarians). Recognizing the enormous number of new and unexpected tasks of faculty, the Provost stated, "It is unreasonable to expect that normal progress can be made in all areas of faculty activity: research, teaching, and service." The statement explicated the many ways research productivity might be impacted, including reduced access to labs, travel cancellations, and suspension of research with human subjects. With productivity being crucial to faculty evaluation at research-intensive universities, and women STEM faculty already navigating gender biases in evaluation processes, the Provost's decision to delay tenure could mitigate the negative effects of COVID-19 on women. While almost all research has been somewhat disrupted by COVID-19, editors of academic journals have noted women have already submitted fewer papers in 2020 compared to previous years (Kitchener 2020), while articles by men have relatively increased (Cui, Ding, and Zhu 2020; Fazackerley 2020).

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[3] MSP represents librarians, tenure track faculty, lecturers, extension faculty, clinical faculty, and research faculty.

The announced tenure delay was an automatic one-year delay for all pre-tenure faculty members, meaning faculty members had to affirmatively *ask* to be reviewed on schedule. Thus, faculty members whose work is proceeding as normal can request to be reviewed at the normal time. Automatic delays of this sort tend to have an equalizing effect wherein it is outside of the norm to be reviewed on schedule, rather than the opposite. The Provost went on to make an unusual addendum to this; once a faculty member is tenured, the promotion salary increment would be made retroactive to when they were supposed to begin the tenure process, thus, ensuring they do not face an economic disadvantage from delaying their tenure. The Provost made the same automatic one-year delay available to faculty who were pre-tenure and needed to be reappointed through the tenure-decision year.

Non-tenure-track faculty and librarians who were up for continuing appointment were granted the option to delay their continuing appointment review. However, this option did not come with the same automatic timing, based on the assumption that these groups' career progression might be less based on research, and thus less disrupted. Even if delaying their continuing appointment decision, the semester counted for their progress toward promotion in rank, allowing them to receive more money and additional job security.

Finally, the Provost noted he would issue forthcoming guidance about the potential adverse effects of the semester in research, teaching, and service to departmental and college personnel committees who review tenure, promotion, and reappointment or continuing appointment cases. The guidance would not only point to the disruptions to faculty work, but would also recognize special contributions made by faculty to support the campus community during the pandemic, including advancing online teaching or additional service. Michelle Budig, Vice Provost for Faculty Development, described this as "rewarding faculty for things they did outside of the box" during the Spring 2020 semester. The Provost emphasized that the unexpected and very intense work faculty were doing would be recognized in assessing annual faculty reviews, as well as personnel decisions such as promotion, tenure, or continuing appointment. The Provost further mentioned he would develop relevant language for letters soliciting external reviews. However, as we will describe below, *how* these policies will actually be implemented in practice remains an ongoing, key priority for ADVANCE.

Changes to Teaching
Next, the Provost's memo announced the suspension of standardized student teaching evaluations. Eve Weinbaum, President of MSP, noted that the union and other campus administrators had recognized the biases built into student teaching evaluations well before the onset of COVID-19. When COVID-19 hit during contract negotiations, Weinbaum says "the discussions kind of became wrapped together" around teaching evaluations. Students already evaluate women faculty more harshly for failing to meet gendered expectations, and these extraordinary teaching circumstances may further exacerbate gendered and racialized teaching evaluation bias (Sprague and Massoni 2005). Women and women of color faculty also have hidden workloads as they are more likely than men to provide informal mentorship and emotional support to struggling students (Goodwin and Mitchneck 2020).

Given the abrupt shift to online learning, the Provost did not want negative evaluations to impact faculty progression. He noted that ad hoc evaluations could occur through Center for Teaching

and Learning or the Office of Academic Planning and Assessment, but would be given to the faculty member, not kept by the university to be used in assessment. This allows faculty to benefit from student feedback, without worrying the semester's disruption would negatively impact their personnel decisions. Along with this, the Provost changed Pass/Fail grading, in conjunction with the Rules Committee of the Faculty Senate, to allow students to decide whether to retroactively go pass/fail or not. Only grades benefitting students' GPA would be counted toward their GPA for the semester, further reducing the likelihood of negative teaching evaluations. Overall, the Provost's message reflected the concerns brought to MSP by many individual faculty members, and committees and working groups, and recognized faculty concerns as based on real teaching disruptions. It remains to be seen whether this adjustment will lead to long-term cultural change towards more holistic teaching evaluations.

Recognition of Intensified Caregiving Demands
Finally, we wish to highlight a third element of the Provost's memo: recognition of family and caregiving demands which may exacerbate negative impacts on faculty work. Shifts in childcare, eldercare, and household labor from COVID-19 place particular burdens on women (Minello 2020). The Provost noted, "Even high achievers, such as our UMass Amherst faculty, have limits, as they balance exceptional demands at work and home, particularly with schools closed." By declaring faculty members "high achievers" while also acknowledging their increased demands due to school and childcare center closings, the Provost effectively avoided any impression that faculty facing caregiving demands are less excellent than their colleagues, particularly women faculty members who already face gender bias. Additionally, with COVID-19 taking disproportionate health and financial tolls on racial minority and immigrant communities in the US, faculty of color - especially Black faculty and Black women - are more likely to be coping with family illness, unemployment, or the loss of loved ones (Gould and Wilson 2020; Eligon et al. 2020).

The university provided emergency funds for faculty caregiving assistance, including both eldercare and childcare. This was over and above existing paid care leave (for partners, parents, siblings, and children) offered through the existing union contract. Weinbaum said the union immediately negotiated around emergency childcare costs, under the assumption that childcare centers would remain open and be an option for faculty working at home. MSP had been working towards a pool for eldercare funds for over twenty years, and the crisis finally allowed such a fund to be agreed upon. The MSP Emergency Relief Fund also includes technology to support remote teaching or research including equipment like modems and routers, web cameras, new course software, or special programs for remote teaching. These funds will remain available as part of the new one-year contract beginning July 1, 2020. Often the burden of addressing work-life balance falls on individual faculty members (Anwer 2019). And, as Anwer outlines in this special issue, the pandemic only furthers the neoliberal ethic of "individualizing" people's work and life experiences (Anwer 2020). Addressing caregiving, and allocating funds to alleviate this burden, shifts some of this burden the institution and makes what is often "invisible" labor part of the conversation.

UMass ADVANCE: Continued Dialogue and Looking Forward
In the weeks following the Provost's memo release, UMass ADVANCE principal investigators met regularly with campus administrators, including the Provost, Associate Provost for Equity

and Inclusion, Vice Provost for Faculty Development, and various College Deans, to discuss ways to support faculty, especially diverse faculty. Various campus units noted the need to support individual faculty navigating deep disruptions to their work and the new organizational structures implemented by the Provost. The Associate Provost for Equity and Inclusion and Vice Provost for Faculty Development hosted sessions in May and June under the series title of "Supporting Faculty Resilience," with over 500 faculty registering to participate in the various workshops. ADVANCE participated in the series by hosting a session for faculty to convey their concerns about COVID-19 impacts on their careers to the Provost, as well as the Deans of Natural Science and Engineering. ADVANCE shared its concerns (also held by some administrators) that the university would not remember the impacts of COVID-19 when assessing and evaluating faculty beyond the 2020-2021 academic year, and emphasized documentation as an urgent policy change.

The ADVANCE panel titled, "Recognizing the Impact of COVID-19 in Evaluating Faculty," occurred on June 4, 2020. The Provost and two Deans virtually provided faculty with more information about how evaluation of their work would operate in reality. In part, we also hoped through this session to illustrate to the three administrators the anxiety felt by faculty members. We had a total of 134 registrations, with 104 of those registrants from STEM colleges and departments. Those who registered for the workshop could provide questions ahead of time for the panelists. We compiled and summarized questions to the panel beforehand. Key themes among faculty questions included anxiety about assessment and how COVID-19 might increase inequality. For example, caregiving mothers, expressed concern that people less responsible for caregiving might be increasing their productivity while their productivity was lowered. Questions included what guidance would be given to personnel committees around tenure and promotion, and how disparities between women and people of color might be taken into account in personnel cases.

Faculty attending the session mostly wanted to know how to document the impact of COVID-19 on their careers. A key question asked of the panel was: What kind of documentation should faculty keep that can be part of their personnel record to track ongoing impediments to their research and teaching programs, or the added expectations for their mentoring and service work? We had some discussion of including a separate COVID-19 impact statement for personnel reviews, including annual faculty reviews. The primary concern here, was that tenure delays, including additional delays beyond the initial automatic one-year delay, would be implemented fairly, and reflect a flexible understanding of how the pandemic might have variable effects on faculty careers. The ADVANCE team later followed up with our Internal Advisory Board, and the Deans of STEM colleges expressed interest in implementing an impact statement, which would help ensure this flexibility.

While we came to shared agreement that recording impediments to faculty work is critical, establishing procedures around an impact statement, including its implementation, remains ongoing. We communicated ideas to the Provost's Office about how impact statements might appear, passing along resources shared within the national ADVANCE network, as well as conveying faculty concerns that had been shared with the ADVANCE team. On July 7, 2020, the Provost's Office released a second memo (see Appendix B) with guidance on annual faculty reviews for the 2019-2020 academic year; these changes had been bargained with the faculty

union. The memo again reiterated how COVID-19 disrupted faculty research, teaching, and service, acknowledged the intensification of care work, and invited faculty to submit an optional Pandemic Impact Statement with their annual review due this fall, "describing the adjustments you have made, how your work in particular has been impacted by the health crisis, and your contributions to the University's transition to remote work." The memo stated that a new section will be added to the online review form specifically for the impact statement and encouraged individual faculty members to consult with their department chair or head and department personnel committees regarding what to document. It is clear that ADVANCE's pushing has put documentation front and center on the Provost's agenda.

While inclusion of an impact statement is an important, initial structural change, ADVANCE has been further working to ensure that the implementation of this policy is effective, putting policy into practice and establishing cultural norms around acknowledging impacts. To this end, we developed a best practice tool with specific steps for faculty to document the impacts of COVID-19 on their annual faculty review and as a separate pandemic impact statement included in tenure and promotion materials. This document specifies a wide variety of impacts that should be documented, if relevant, including new teaching, advising, and service responsibilities, changes and unexpected challenges in research and creative activities, as well as health challenges, additional caregiving, and other unforeseeable situations that reflect the effects of the pandemic (see Appendix C).

An urgent, remaining concern includes specifying how impact statements will be evaluated in tenure, promotion, and reappointment or continuing appointment cases, including guidance for external reviewers of personnel cases. We have been working toward a plan to train personnel committees in Fall 2020. ADVANCE will be incorporated into the regular training sessions, led by the MSP and the Provost's Office. Additionally, ADVANCE will host Dr. Beth Mitchneck, an expert on faculty evaluation and bias, to specifically address evaluating faculty fairly in the context of COVID-19 at two separate trainings on evaluating faculty fairly, to Heads & Chairs, and to members of Personnel Committees. Key will be training evaluators to consider each person's specific working conditions in evaluating their productivity, as specified through the pandemic impact statement, rather than comparing across faculty with different working conditions (for example, a theorist whose research has continued smoothly, versus a lab scientist who has been locked out of their lab; someone with no care responsibilities versus someone caring for a parent with COVID-19). Additionally, faculty with tenure delays must not be held to higher standards; this requirement has been bargained with the union, and included previously in the contract regarding delays related to caregiving. These sessions will incorporate best practices from the COVID-19 tool developed by ADVANCE. We are confident that training committee members towards sensitivity around how COVID-19 exacerbated inequities among faculty will contribute to our mission of creating long-term cultural changes in our organization.

On June 29th, 2020, UMass released a plan for reopening in Fall 2020. Shortly after the release of this plan, the Provost sent an email to the faculty reiterating his support for faculty as the campus reopens. He noted that no faculty member would be forced to teach face-to-face, and that most courses would be taught online, given the continuing risk of COVID-19. This was a relief to many faculty members, who had concerns about how to teach in-person classes without opening themselves to the risk of illness. However, with many schools in the area considering

partial in-person attendance in the Fall, faculty who remain uncertain how they will care for children at home while also teaching online courses.

In this correspondence, he addressed essential face-to-face and remote course designations, academic calendar and class day/time matrix, and faculty assistance and support with fully remote instruction. He provided new resources for faculty delivering courses in the fall semester. As COVID-19 remains a fluid situation, ADVANCE continues to follow up and meet with administrators, and partner with campus offices to ensure an ongoing institutional commitment to faculty inclusion and equity. Universities must continually respond to the evolving needs of faculty, as further disruptions may require additional accommodations for immediate needs and long-term concerns related to tenure and promotion.

Conclusion
The impacts of COVID-19 will be long-lasting for those in university settings, particularly faculty members, but concern remains across colleges and universities that institutional memory may not last as long. In terms of addressing the equity issues brought about by the pandemic, any institutional short-term memory loss will only further marginalize and hinder the careers of women faculty and faculty from underrepresented racial minority groups - potentially reversing any progress made in recent years. In this paper, we have outlined best practices implemented by our university to support faculty navigating COVID-19. We suggest attention to organizational structure and culture simultaneously will be key to enacting institutional transformation.

In our case, a formal structural response to faculty concerns around evaluation came quickly in the form of official policy changes by the University Provost in his March memo. While administrators on other campuses have resisted ADVANCE programs and other equity projects (see for example, Morimoto et al. 2013; Rosser and Chameau 2006), UMass leadership partnered with units across campus to adjust faculty evaluations in ways that prioritize equity. Our current Provost has an Associate Provost for Diversity and a Director of Academic Equity and Inclusion, who emphasize these issues, as well as a Vice Provost for Faculty Development, who advocates for faculty. Both of these leaders regularly meet and engage with the ADVANCE team. By attending to these issues quickly and thoughtfully, the Provost's office could assuage the deepest concerns of faculty. Individuals described the Provost's actions as "empathetic," "responsive," and "compassionate," with one ADVANCE team member noting: "It was a pretty amazing moment." The union, MSP, as well as the ADVANCE team, further served as conduits between faculty and administrators, pushing for policy around documentation. The Provost's messaging continued to reflect faculty concerns around disruption to their work in his second, July memo announcing the inclusion of a Pandemic Impact Statement in annual faculty reviews. Having a centralized sounding board for faculty in the form of the union, paired with transparent communication across organizational levels, shaped the university response. At UMass, the fragmented organizational structure worked favorably, as there was a commitment across units to collaborate to divide tasks, support faculty, and remain mindful of equity.

While important policy adjustments have been made, how organizational members react, implement, and support these changes at local university levels remain to be seen. A key component of ADVANCE's strategy broadly is to mobilize systemic change by serving as "organizational catalysts," leveraging knowledge, strategic relationships, and accountability

across domains and levels (Sturm 2006). A crucial role of organizational catalysts is to keep the pressure on, maintaining the institution's focus on gender as part of its core mission. Catalysts also serve as bridge builders to leverage change, and members of the ADVANCE team often operate at the convergence of different domains and levels at the institution, allowing them to bring attention to equity to other units working to support faculty, including the MSP, the Office on Faculty Development, and the Faculty Senate. UMass ADVANCE will continue to focus on applying pressure to transform our institution, while collaborating with stakeholders at other universities to develop best practices. We foresee our role as a campus partner, ensuring that rapid structural shifts will lead to deep, cultural changes, with the current administration's commitment to equity becoming embedded in the institution.

What does this work suggest about how other university administrators should respond? First, it is critical for administrators to have conduits, such as ADVANCE and the faculty union, conveying the concerns of faculty members, letting administrators understand how faculty members' work is affected by the pandemic. Administrators also need trusted partners, such as ADVANCE, which can identify best practices in addressing these concerns in ways that will not reinforce existing inequalities by gender and race. This requires long-term, rather than short-term relationships; in the case of UMass, Amherst, we believe that the response has only been so positive because relationships between different administrative offices, faculty union, and ADVANCE team were established and generally positive.

Fostering buy-in from other community members, including department chairs and committees tasked with evaluating faculty, will ensure the effective implementation of policies across organizational levels in order for policy to become practice. Organizational catalysts are not unique to ADVANCE, and we hope the best practices outlined here can be implemented in many settings. ADVANCE, with backing from the NSF, infuses legitimacy and resources into gender equity, and the need to foster faculty inclusion, equity, and success remains urgent with COVID-19.

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Dear Colleagues,

I am immensely grateful to all of you for your resilience and willingness to assume the extraordinary tasks of moving all instruction, service, and, where possible, scholarly activities to remote and online platforms for the duration of this health crisis. Just one of these efforts under normal circumstances would be arduous, and you are engaged on every front. I recognize your exceptional contributions and I thank you. We have been discussing with our colleagues in the MSP leadership the anxieties that many faculty and librarians share about how their work during this semester will be evaluated. I agree that you have enough challenges serving our students without this additional burden, so I want to set your mind at ease. All of these special conditions have been discussed with the MSP – and often suggested by them – and final language will be developed in consultation with them.

Changes in Timing of Decisions on Tenure, Reappointment, and Continuing Appointment
Given the monumental tasks we face this spring semester, it is unreasonable to expect that normal progress can be made in all areas of faculty activity: research, teaching, and service. The cancellation of conferences and research travel, reduced access to labs, the suspension of human-subjects research, and other factors compound the dampening effects of reduced time faculty have available for research/scholarly activity. Even high achievers, such as our Umass Amherst faculty, have limits, as they balance exceptional demands at work and home, particularly with schools closed. Because of this, and because current conditions may persist into the summer, I announce that all pre-tenure faculty members will be granted a one-year delay of their tenure decision, unless they alternatively elect to be reviewed on schedule. In addition, upon the award of tenure and promotion, the promotion increment in salary will be retroactive to the semester when promotion would have occurred without this one-year delay. The same delay will apply to reviews for reappointment through the tenure decision year ("4.2 reviews"). Reviews for tenure, promotion, and reappointment that are already in progress will continue as scheduled, because they are based on work that was done prior to the current crisis.

Reviews of non-tenure-track faculty and librarians for continuing appointment will also be delayed by one year, if they so choose. The current semester will be credited as service for all other purposes including eligibility for continuous appointment and promotion in rank for nontenure track faculty.

Guidance to Department Personnel Committees and Others
For all faculty and librarian reviews and personnel actions, in consultation with the MSP, I will issue guidance about the potential adverse effects of the Spring 2020 semester in each of the three areas of faculty responsibility. Moreover, this guidance will give weight to any special contributions made to advance teaching and learning during the COVID-19 health crisis, such as the leadership displayed by tech-savvy faculty who are helping their colleagues adapt to this mode of instruction. This guidance will be directed to personnel committees and other levels of review when assessing cases for promotion, tenure, or continuous appointment, AFRs or ARELs,

merit, and any other academic personnel actions. We will also develop relevant language for letters soliciting external reviews.

Suspension of Spring 2020 SRTIs
The administration of the SRTI is suspended for the Spring 2020 semester. Despite the wonderful and creative work of faculty members preparing to transition their courses to remote instruction in various modes, and although there will be many students who will quickly and smoothly adapt to these new modalities, there is likely to be dissatisfaction among some students about the unusual situation in which we find ourselves. Faculty who wish to do an ad hoc evaluation for their own purposes can consult the Center for Teaching and Learning or the Office of Academic Planning and Assessment for assistance, but the results will be available to the faculty member only and no record will be kept. We will also enlist the help of the faculty in understanding how student learning and student success have fared in remote instruction. Bear in mind that we have a variety of resources in place to help faculty members transition to remote instruction. Please see: provost/disruption-resilient-instruction. Faculty who seek individual help can reach out to: instruct@umass.edu, where they can get support from IT, the Center for Teaching and Learning, and the University Without Walls Instructional Design Engagement and Support Group (IDEAS).

Pass/fail Grading
Grading policy is set by the Faculty Senate, not the administration. At times when the Senate is not meeting, the Senate Rules Committee has authority to act on behalf of the Senate, subject to review when the Senate later meets. My office is in discussions with the Rules Committee about various grading options to help meet the needs of students and faculty. Any policy change will be coming from the Senate office.

Childcare and Technology Support
Under the MSP contract, the University provides various funds to support the professional activities of faculty and librarians including technology replacement and childcare assistance. We will re-budget among these funds to areas of greatest need, such as childcare and technology support, and we will supplement these funds if re-budgeting proves insufficient to meet the need.

In conclusion, please care for your health and safety, and that of your loved ones. Know that your efforts to carry on with educating and serving students in this time of outbreak are powerfully visible and keenly appreciated. In good conscience, I encourage you to pace yourselves with respect to research and service. The time will come to rededicate your commitments in these areas when the current crisis resolves.

With gratitude for all that you do,
John

John McCarthy
Provost and Senior Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
Distinguished Professor

Appendix B

Dear Colleagues:

If you are a faculty member with an appointment at 50% FTE or greater, you must complete the Annual Faculty Report and Evaluation (AFR) and submit it through the online Academic Personnel Workflow System (APWS). Your AFR for AY2019-20 will be due on or before October 15, 2020. Faculty with appointments at less than 50% are not required to submit an AFR. Nonetheless, departments should institute some means of evaluating the performance of those faculty who are not required to submit an AFR whether it be the AFR or some other instrument of the department's choice.

The AFR provides the official record on which many faculty personnel decisions are based, and it is vital to faculty development, both as an opportunity for self-reflection and as a basis for discussion among departmental and other colleagues. In the AFR faculty must document their teaching, student advising, research and creative activities, and service -- as appropriate to their appointment. We also want to encourage faculty to list any faculty mentoring they provided, including peer mentoring, in the service portion of the AFR.

Beginning in the Spring 2020 semester, faculty across the University experienced a significant disruption due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result of the health crisis, all faculty moved their courses online, research facilities including labs and libraries were closed and all student evaluation of teaching was suspended. In conjunction with the disruptions experienced on-campus, many faculty were working out of their homes while simultaneously providing childcare due to closures of daycare facilities and K-12 schooling. Research disruptions, shifts in teaching modalities, limited childcare, and remote work persisted into Summer 2020. As such, we invite you to include a Pandemic Impact Statement with your AFR describing the adjustments you have made, how your work in particular has been impacted by the health crisis, and your contributions to the University's transition to remote work. A new section will be added under the Additional Activities portion of this year's AFR for this purpose.

Faculty, particularly those newer to UMass, should consult with their department chair or head and DPC chair to clarify departmental expectations regarding what should be documented on their AFRs. In addition, having a colleague review a draft of your AFR before submitting it can be very helpful.

AFR deadlines for AY2019-20:

- Faculty submit completed AFR in APWS by October 15, 2020.
- Department head/chair uploads job descriptions for NTT faculty only by October 30, 2020.
- DPC adds its review to each AFR and advances all AFRs to the department chair/head by December 17, 2020.
- Chair/head completes reviews of all AFRs in APWS by January 15, 2021.
- Faculty member responds to DPC and chair/head reviews or releases the AFR without response by January 25, 2021.

- Dean advances to Provost by February 24, 2021.

The AFRs must be completed in the Academic Personnel Workflow System using the online form under the "Create New Submission" tab. You may begin work on it at any time. You can save drafts and electronically "share" your draft with others before finally submitting the form.

Questions can be directed to the Provost's Academic Personnel team at academic.personnel@umass.edu.

Appendix C

WHY DOCUMENT THE IMPACT?

The COVID-19 pandemic immediately impacted faculty members' workloads. Most faculty members have had to do significantly more work, moving courses online, mentoring students in need, reworking university programs and addressing COVID-19 risks, and helping communities manage current realities. At the same time, many faculty members are experiencing damage to their productivity and research record, due to lack of access to labs and facilities, research sites, and research subjects, as well as canceled conferences and inability to travel to conduct research and meet with collaborators.

These effects are exacerbated by differences among faculty. Those with children at home that need care or homeschooling or other family members that need care, face limited work time (research shows that women are submitting fewer journal articles during the pandemic). Women and faculty of color were already burdened by higher levels of mentoring students, which takes on new weight during the pandemic. Faculty of color are more likely to be suffering losses, and providing care for extended family members. Those facing intersectional inequalities, such as women of color, face the highest burdens. Vulnerable faculty members may also be less comfortable drawing attention to COVID-19 impacts.

The impacts of the pandemic will resonate throughout faculty careers for many years. Documenting these impacts helps universities recognize the differential impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic – allowing them to mitigate against unequal outcomes. Documenting the effects of COVID-19 allows universities to assess faculty members fairly, accounting for their different working conditions under the pandemic. Through careful documentation and thoughtful recognition of pandemic impacts in fair evaluation processes, the variable impacts of COVID will be less likely to worsen existing inequalities.

HOW CAN FACULTY MEMBERS DOCUMENT PANDEMIC IMPACTS?

Many faculty members may feel it is unnecessary to document the impact of COVID-19, since so many people have been affected. Yet, COVID-19 has *differential* impacts; internal and external evaluators may not understand or know the specific context in which faculty members' work was disrupted, depending on where they are located or their own experiences under COVID-19. In addition, over time, people may no longer recognize how disruptive COVID-19 was to faculty careers.

Below are ideas about how to document pandemic impacts through annual faculty reviews, and separate "pandemic impact statements" for personnel reviews (faculty might also list canceled fellowships, conferences or speaking engagements on CVs). These ideas are not meant to pressure all faculty into documenting every possible impact. Documenting should identify impacts that help others understand a person's career trajectory given COVID-19, both in terms of new responsibilities as well as unexpected challenges. Documenting should make relevant but potentially invisible impacts visible.

Drawing on a [PNAS](#) article, we recommend keeping track of the following, and considering how to document these through annual faculty reviews or in pandemic impact statements:

- Identify scope of work during the pandemic. If granted "essential worker" status, what work did it apply to, and what new work was added.
- Document changes to courses, including moving courses online and new technologies. Faculty may identify how many additional hours each week focused on teaching to concretize these effects (e.g., 15-hour/week workload for X course shifted to 30-hour/week workload for 7 weeks).
- Point out specific challenges, such as lack of resources (high-speed broadband, software) for faculty and students, and trainings attended or led.
- Identify additional teaching responsibilities, including course overloads due to personnel changes, retirements, issues with teaching assistants, assisting others with technology, other workload changes.
- Address how advising changed, particularly as students navigated changing requirements. Identify any increases in advising load. Mention any additional support for students experiencing physical and or mental health, economic, and social consequences of the pandemic.
- Document mentoring impacts, including student progress, and additional mentoring time required with students/peers facing pandemic impacts.
- List attending/leading meetings, additional efforts made – any work that would not have occurred during a regular semester. List efforts to move meetings/events online e.g. commencement.
- List additional work needed to develop plans for closing and re-opening of laboratories, including: coordination among research teams, development of cleaning and distancing protocols in the laboratory space, etc.
- Identify contributions to any department, university, professional society, interdisciplinary, or community- engaged pandemic initiative.
- Identify how research or creative work was disrupted. For example, faculty might note loss of:
  o Research time due to increased or changed teaching and service responsibilities
  o Sabbatical time, other paid or unpaid leave (Fulbright, Guggenheim, etc.)
  o If willing and relevant, research time due to health issues or caregiving responsibilities
  o Access to necessary research facilities/labs/ computing resources (including impacts on longitudinal research), studios, or venues for creative works/performances
  o Access to research subjects, animals, cell cultures (including for longitudinal research)

- o Travel and field research opportunities
  - o Funding to support personnel due to travel and visa restrictions or due to research restrictions
  - o Access to internal or external research funds
- Faculty should further note other kinds of impacts:
  - o Additional teaching/preparations
  - o Cancellations of seminars, presentations, visits with collaborators or research teams
  - o Challenges due to increased time for review of submissions for funding or publication
  - o Redirected funding for COVID-19 related topics
  - o Pivoting/changing research agenda due to COVID-19 restrictions
  - o Diversion of funds for PPE
  - o Donation of supplies or personnel time to COVID-19 initiatives
  - o Challenges due to travel/visa restrictions

HOW SHOULD EVALUATORS CONSIDER PERSONNEL CASES?

The Provost has made many changes recognizing pandemic impacts in his tenure/promotion memo. Evaluators, including Personnel Committee members, Chairs/Heads, administrators, and external evaluators, should recognize the contributions faculty have made in various spheres, while considering each person's specific *working conditions*, rather than comparing across faculty with different working conditions. Increased caregiving responsibilities or lack of access to research facilities as a result of the pandemic should not affect assessments of faculty. This should be communicated to external reviewers. Following the contract, **faculty members with tenure-delays must not be held to higher standards.**

While not all faculty may wish to document health or caregiving impacts, reviewers should recognize that the
documentation of caregiving responsibilities or efforts toward homeschooling children (including single parenthood) identifies the disparate impact COVID-19 had on worktime for faculty members. Similarly, documentation of illness, risk of illness (pre-existing conditions, partnership with an essential worker), or loss of loved ones, provides greater context for assessments.

Personnel Committees may write a standardized acknowledgement of pandemic impacts with particular attention to their field and expected disruptions to work for all faculty members. This statement could be inserted at the beginning of each PC memo responding to faculty submission as context for the annual review.

WHAT RESOURCES EXIST FOR ADDRESSING COVID IMPACTS?
- PNAS published an op-ed on evaluating faculty, as well as an online supplement, which we drew on heavily for this brief.

- ADVANCE provides trainings for Personnel Committee members and Chairs/Heads on equitable evaluation in the COVID and post-COVID era.
- The Office of Faculty Development and Associate Provost for Equity and Inclusion provide a wide array of resources that support faculty during COVID-19, including a Resilience series.
- The Office of Equity and Inclusion provides programming, aimed at the needs of members of underrepresented groups on campus.
- The faculty union, Massachusetts Society of Professors, has won a number of excellent provisions and supports, including care funds, technology funds, tenure delays, work credits for UMass faculty.

Through the power of collaboration UMass ADVANCE transforms the campus by cultivating faculty equity, inclusion and success. ADVANCE provides the resources, recognition and relationship building that are critical to equitable and successful collaboration in the 21st century academy. ADVANCE is funded by the National Science Foundation. For more information on ADVANCE go to https://www.umass.edu/advance/.