Guidelines for Faculty
for the Spring Semester 2020
Stephen F. Austin State University
March 25, 2020

Considering the very rapid and unexpected changes that have been necessary in our operating environment during the Spring 2020 semester, the information below is provided to help guide faculty members, as well as academic unit heads, deans, and other leaders at Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA) during this highly volatile and complex period.

On March 20, 2020, the SFA Board of Regents granted university president Dr. Scott Gordon temporary authority to suspend university policy as needed to cope with the global COVID-19 emergency. Therefore, the references to specific SFA polices included below are for information purposes and context. The guidelines that follow have been approved by Dr. Gordon and therefore supersede SFA policy where applicable.

Service and Research Expectations for Faculty
Many faculty members are faced with childcare issues, enhanced eldercare responsibilities, and many other tasks and responsibilities that relate directly to the COVID-19 crisis. In addition, on extremely short notice, faculty were asked to develop and deliver all SFA courses and labs in a remote teaching format. For courses that have only been offered F2F, this requires significant and continuing dedicated time that would not have been required had it not been for the COVID-19 crisis. Also, for all courses, the instructor of record has become the primary communicator with students in their courses and labs; this is a significant issue because many students are also struggling to adjust to remote formats for course delivery. For these reasons, in faculty performance evaluations for calendar year 2020, service and research expectations for the Spring semester should be limited to essential activities only. In service, for example, this may include continuing to participate in meetings where faculty engagement is critical (in nearly every case such meetings will be conducted remotely). In research and other scholarly activities, there may be circumstances where faculty members can continue to participate in activities that can be conducted with social distancing and other safety guidelines in place. Additional information on internal and external grant-based activities has been posted by the Office of Research and Graduate Programs http://sfasu.edu/academics/orgs/grants-sponsored-programs/announcements

Tenure and Post-Tenure Review
Since COVID-19-related operations can directly impact faculty members' ability to conduct scholarly work and to be engaged in service-related activities in the near term, tenure and post-tenure review periods may be extended by up to two years. That is, tenure-track faculty members who have not yet been considered for tenure will have an opportunity to request up to two years of additional time toward their evaluation for tenure. The opportunity will be presented to faculty early in the Fall 2020 semester. A form to request extensions will be developed and distributed at that time; the form will include input from the faculty member, the academic unit head, and the dean. Faculty members will be informed of the decision well in advance of when tenure portfolios are due for initial review at the department level.

With regard to tenured faculty on post-tenure review for this fiscal year, we are working with the college deans regarding an appropriate extension of the deadlines involved in that process.

Faculty Members on Plans for Assisted Development
Due to COVID-19-related operational changes this semester, faculty members on Plans for Assisted Development may request a six-month extension of the timeline for remediation. A form will be developed and distributed to make such requests to academic unit heads by April 30, 2020; the same process outlined for requests to extend tenure and post-tenure review periods will be followed. Recommendations for approval will be presented to the president, and faculty members will be notified of the decision by May 31, 2020.

Distance Education Stipends
SFA's Distance Education Faculty Competencies and Compensation Policy 7.9
http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/distance-education-faculty-competencies-and-compensation.pdf
states that, provided certain conditions are met, faculty members who develop a fully online course, redevelop an approved existing online course, or teach an online course may be eligible for a stipend. Because of the many COVID-19-related changes in SFA's operations, revenues, and costs, until further notice the university will not be able to provide distance education delivery stipends other than for the delivery of previously-approved online courses in the Spring 2020 semester. Additionally, development stipends will not be available for courses newly developed for online delivery in the Summer 2020 semester. (Those individuals who began the course review and approval process with the Center for Teaching and Learning prior to the COVID-19 crisis will be eligible to complete that process and receive the development stipend.) The administration will consider this issue when we are past the COVID-19 crisis and the university is in a position to make budgeted salary increases. SFA has contracted with Hanover Research to conduct a faculty salary study during the Spring and Summer 2020 terms. The study is to compare faculty compensation by rank and discipline with in-state and national peer institutions. This information, as well as the impact of discontinuing distance education stipends, will be extremely useful for salary decisions when we reach a more stable operating environment in terms of university revenues and costs.

Student Evaluation of Instruction
SFA's Student Evaluation of Instruction Policy 7.27 http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/student-evaluation-of-instruction-7.27.pdf requires that students have the opportunity to evaluate all courses in all semesters. Student evaluations will take place this semester as normal, and faculty are encouraged to use the results appropriately in their teaching plans in the future. However, this semester is so radically different than normal – with many courses shifting to a different delivery format unexpectedly and very rapidly in the middle of the term – teaching evaluation results for the Spring 2020 semester should be considered only within the context of the sudden conversion in modality that has taken place for many courses. This context is critical to consider in the annual performance evaluations for faculty for calendar year 2020 and also for promotion and tenure reviews.

Telecommuting
SFA's Telecommuting Policy 11.27 http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/telecommuting-11.27.pdf is designed for staff members, but it can be used as a general guide for faculty members while working from home or other remote locations. Requests for faculty members to telecommute

during the remainder of the Spring 2020 semester should be made by email (no form is needed) to the academic unit head, whose recommendation should be sent to the dean, and then to the provost. Many requests for faculty members to telecommute have already been submitted through various means. There is no need to resubmit requests to telecommute that have already been approved. Also, please note that Information Technology Services has established a webpage with work-at-home resources and information https://help.sfasu.edu/TDClient/2027/Portal/Home/?ID=59c87174-ca50-40a3-bac7-e5a30e236fb1 and the Center for Teaching and Learning has highly relevant information at the Keep Teaching website https://www.sfactl.com/keep-teaching

_____ 3-25-2020
Steve Bullard, Provost and VPAA
(Signature and Date)

_____ 3-25-2020
Scott Gordon, President
(Signature and Date)