Welcome to the second Academic Affairs Communiqué, designed to address questions being raised by faculty and others in our campus community.

1. **Is there any discussion of possible extensions of the tenure-track clock due to the interruptions of our work and personal lives from the coronavirus?**

   Yes! As per CRR 310.025 - *Extension of Probationary Period for Faculty on Regular Term Appointment, Section B*, we have a process for faculty to apply for an extension of the tenure-track probationary period in extenuating circumstances. **We fully recognize that the reprogramming of academic activities due to COVID-19 represents extenuating circumstances.** This reprogramming may mean longer preparation times for instruction; reduced access to data, equipment/instruments, research facilities/studios, etc.; changes in qualitative data collection methodology (e.g., the March 24th announcement by the Vice Provost for Research); and additional administrative assignments or responsibilities. We also realize faculty may experience additional unexpected personal burdens, such as the responsibility for schooling children at home and taking care of elderly and/or sick family members.

   For currently employed UMSL tenure-track faculty who feel their progress has been affected by COVID-19, **those scheduled to apply for tenure and promotion in 2020-21 should file their requests for an extension by June 1, 2020.** Those scheduled to apply for tenure after 2020-21 should file their extension requests no later than June 1st of the year in which they are scheduled to apply.

   All of those in the approval chain for these requests (e.g., Department/Unit Chairs, Deans, the Provost) are expected to **exercise generosity** with respect to granting these approvals for extensions.

2. **I am an Assistant Professor scheduled to go up for tenure and promotion in the upcoming academic year. Is UMSL considering changing the deadlines for faculty to submit their initial Factual Record to the Department Chair (currently June 1st)?**

   For the 2020-21 Tenure and Promotion process and other faculty reviews, **in general** the timeline is expected to move forward as scheduled. **However, we have started the discussion with the Faculty Senate Chair and ATP Committee Chair to push back the deadline** for tenure-track faculty to submit their initial factual record as well as for
the Ad Personam Committees to submit their final report. Details are expected to be announced next week.

3. I've seen some universities have changed all of their classes to “pass/fail” grading. Is UMSL considering doing the same?

The COVID-19 crisis finds our faculty, staff and students at the University of Missouri–St. Louis encountering unprecedented challenges on all fronts of their lives. As we endeavor to transition to new course delivery formats and feel the impact of uncertainty at many levels, we seek to extend the greatest possible consideration for students while maintaining the continuity and quality of our courses. Extending the timeline for undergraduate students to select a Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory grading option provides students with a choice for completing the term that best suits their individual needs. With the support of the Faculty Senate, UMSL has extended the deadline for students to request to move courses to that grading basis. A detailed description of the process is attached.

4. I know that many of our students struggle to make ends meet even at the best of times. Is there any type of emergency fund for students to which I can contribute?

Yes. We have a Triton Emergency Assistance Fund that is accepting donations to assist our students at this difficult time. Just click to access the donor form, and choose to donate to either the Triton Pantry Fund or the Triton Emergency Assistance Fund. Donations to the Triton Emergency Assistance Fund provide the most flexibility for our Student Social Services to deliver support as needed. UMSL Student Social Services works to assist students with basic needs insecurity and to connect them to resources they might need outside of academic support. Please refer any students who identify a need to the Student Social Services webpage and ask them to select the appropriate option on the right hand side of the page.

5. I felt embarrassed in a Zoom meeting the other day when one of my kids burst into my home office. I am unsure if I should apologize to my colleagues who were in the meeting.

Apologies should not be necessary! In our UMSL family, everyone should be understanding that many of our colleagues are encountering unprecedented and unexpected challenges with providing care to children and other family members.

6. With the Missouri Governor’s statewide social distancing order, will this affect my research that involves conducting in-person interviews?

Possibly. Check the policy for COVID-19 and Human Subjects Research on the IRB website that was circulated by the Vice Provost for Research on March 24th.
7. Will UMSL extend the final course drop date for students?

The requirement for students to submit documentation of exigent circumstance to withdraw from courses after the 12th week of the semester **through the last day of class** will be lifted for Spring 2020 by order of the Provost. Faculty signatures will be required as usual for the late drops, but no request for documentation from students is needed. This process is already handled through an online workflow and will continue in that format.

Once again, know that the work you are doing to continue to transform lives during these challenging times is **greatly appreciated and matters more than ever** as we are in this together. As Interim Chancellor and Provost Sobolik said in her Tritons Together Message to the UMSL Community on March 26, 2020, **apart does not equal alone**.

Sincerely yours,

**Marie T. Mora**, Associate Provost for Academic Affairs, and

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