



November 18, 2020

Dear Professional Standards Committee colleagues:

The Department of Sociology & Anthropology reviewed our departmental evaluation criteria in light of the recommendations put forward in the August 18<sup>th</sup> PSC memorandum. We decided that no explicit COVID-related changes are needed at this time. Having recently revised our departmental guidelines for evaluation, we feel our current guidelines feature sufficient flexibility and a range of teaching and professional growth criteria for excellence, allowing us to evaluate files fairly and compassionately, even during these challenging times.

For example, our department's criteria for teaching excellence highlight a critical, holistic analysis of a range of sources, from the faculty member's own self-assessment to colleague visits and evidence of periodic revision. We note in our standards that our consideration of SET take into account the current literature on bias given that we read and interpret them in the broader context of a range of sources of evidence of teaching excellence. We will continue to consider criteria for teaching excellence in a holistic manner given COVID-19's many disruptions, including careful consideration to the time required of candidates to ensure ongoing student learning during the transition to virtual learning.

In terms of our department's evidence for professional growth, our departmental standards include a range of possible engagements, from peer-reviewed scholarship in a range of publication types (i.e., books, articles, chapters in edited volumes) to public scholarship and presentations at professional conferences and service to professional organizations. Our tiered approach does require that evaluatees have at least one publication in Tier 1 as primary author and evidence from all three tiers for tenure consideration and at least one publication from Tier 1 and evidence from all three tiers in cases for promotion to full professor. We decided that our expectations remain reasonable and fair in spite of COVID-19 disruptions in our lives, especially since a wide range of professional growth measures are welcomed by our department, including submission of grant proposals, refereeing books and articles, and participating in conferences.

Although we believe our requirement of one publication from Tier 1 for tenure and promotion to full remains reasonable and fair, we want to emphasize that our department's current evaluation standards already demonstrate our broader

commitment to substance over quantity, as well as our explicit recognition that some work can be brought to fruition quickly while other projects require extensive preparatory work or time in the field. Our standards make clear that candidates must make the case for the substance of their scholarly production, and we will continue to be attentive to the myriad ways that the COVID-19 pandemic has upended our personal and professional lives as we evaluate candidates in this area during the coming months.

As a department, we are keenly aware of the ways in which travel bans and social distancing restrictions make new data collection challenging, for instance, and ways in which faculty are being asked to restructure their courses, assignments, and pedagogies, providing extra support for students managing new stressors. We are aware that COVID-19 has amplified inequalities of race and gender and impacted faculty with caregiving responsibilities acutely given continued school closures and remote schooling demands on faculty parents. Many faculty members in a range of circumstances will find it challenging to perform teaching, research, advising, and service as they might have done during “normal times” before COVID-19’s onset. We will remain attentive to these challenges we, and our department colleagues, face in the months to come, as well as their longer-term impacts over the coming years.

We appreciate this opportunity to reflect on how we might modify our departmental evaluation criteria given the pandemic. We remain confident that our recent revisions to our departmental standards contain sufficient built-in flexibility that will be helpful to evaluatees and department members in the months to come. Please let us know if you have further questions for us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Gareth Barkin', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Gareth Barkin (on behalf of the department)  
Chair, Department of Sociology & Anthropology