



# OFFICE OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

April 10, 2020

To: Deans, Department Chairs, and Faculty

From: James Paul Holloway, Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

Re: Extension of probationary period (“tenure clock”) due to COVID-19

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has created extraordinary circumstances that may seriously impact productivity for faculty at the University of New Mexico (UNM). This problem is particularly critical for tenure-track faculty working toward promotion and tenure to associate professor, in the mandatory and specified timeframe, as outlined in the UNM Faculty Handbook. COVID-19 has significantly disrupted academic and personal life, including the transition to remote instruction, the ramping-down of research laboratories, the closure of K-12 schools in New Mexico, changes in childcare arrangements, and restrictions on travel. Following consultations with the UNM Committee on Governance, UNM Academic Freedom and Tenure Committee, and with the endorsement of the UNM Faculty Senate Operations Committee, I am enacting an *automatic one-year extension* to the probationary period (“tenure clock”) for all currently appointed UNM tenure-track faculty who are not presently under review for tenure and promotion. The extension affects the length of the probationary period. This measure is in accordance with recommendations of multiple faculty professional associations including the American Sociological Association and the American Association of University Professors.

Tenure-track faculty will have the following options:

- extend the probationary period by one-year, which will also extend the timeline for their tenure and promotion review to associate professor by one year,
- maintain the current schedule for mid-probationary review, while retaining the one-year extension of the timeline for their tenure/promotion to associate professor review, or
- opt-out of the one-year extension and continue the probationary timeline as planned.

Eligible faculty are all tenure-track faculty (main, HSC, branch) who are in the probationary period of their appointment during Spring 2020 semester but not currently undergoing tenure/promotion review during the 2019/2020 academic year.

Eligible faculty may choose to opt out of the extension. In order to opt out of an automatic extension of the mandatory timeline, faculty must notify their department chair and dean, in writing:

- Eligible faculty who will be reviewed for promotion and tenure in the 2020-21 academic year must notify their chair/director and dean by May 1, 2020, if they wish to *opt out* of the extension.

- For all other eligible faculty, requests to opt out of an extension of the timeline for the mid-probationary review may occur anytime up until the beginning of their mid-probationary review year. Requests to opt out of an extension of the timeline for promotion/tenure should be made by May 1 of the academic year preceding their originally scheduled promotion and tenure review.

Upon receiving written notification from the faculty member, the dean will notify Academic Affairs of the faculty member's decision to *opt out* of the automatic extension. A faculty member's extension of the probationary period due to COVID-19 is separate from other provisions within the Faculty Handbook (e.g., C215 parental leave, C210 sick leave).