

Professor Jean Morrison, University Provost and Chief Academic Officer

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**TO:** Charles River Campus Faculty

**FROM:** Jean Morrison, University Provost and Chief Academic Officer 

**DATE:** April 16, 2020

**SUBJECT:** Extension of the Probationary Period for Tenure-Track Faculty Due to COVID-19 Disruptions

The COVID-19 outbreak has required us to think through a host of complex issues in recent weeks. Among these is the tenure clock for our probationary faculty, many of whom have experienced significant disruptions to their research, scholarship, and creative work, in addition to the increased stress we are all experiencing. The COVID-19 pandemic is an extraordinary circumstance that justifies an extension of the normal tenure review period articulated in the Faculty Handbook.

In recent weeks, after consultation with the Faculty Council and Council of Deans, President Brown and I have concluded it is appropriate to extend the tenure clock for probationary faculty due to this unprecedented situation. Earlier this week, the University Council voted to approve an amendment to the Faculty Handbook that does the following:

- Provides for an automatic one-year extension to the tenure review period for all BU faculty currently in the probationary period. This a one-time extension that only applies to current probationary faculty who are scheduled to receive their tenure decision **after** May 15, 2020. Any current probationary faculty who do not wish to utilize the extension can opt out and proceed with their current schedule; and
- Ensures that the one-year extension due to COVID-19 does not count toward the maximum allowance of two years of extensions provided for in the Faculty Handbook.

Tenure cases that have been submitted for consideration this year will continue as normal, with decisions announced by May 15, 2020. Faculty with upcoming tenure dates should consult with their senior colleagues and dean to determine when they should come up for tenure.

We hope that this accommodation helps to provide some necessary relief. I would like to extend special thanks to the University Council Committee on Faculty Policies for its thoughtful work drafting the new Handbook language and for the quick turnaround in submitting it for approval. I would also like to again thank our faculty for your work in continuing to provide a world-class education to our students. I know that the move to remote teaching has been disruptive and continues to require significant effort. You have more than risen to the occasion, and the results

are borne out each day in the dynamic, creative new approaches you've brought to teaching and in the connections you've maintained with your students. We hope that this news reduces your stress during this hectic time and wish you continued health and success in your work.

Cc: Robert A. Brown, President  
University Leadership Group