

Spring 2020 CFAES Faculty Meeting Q&A

Teaching and Learning/Student Related:

Q: When will a decision be made on the fate of fall classes?

A: Per President Drake's COVID-19 update on April 30, the current tentative goal is to have an announcement on plans for fall semester by mid-June.

Q: Will CFAES allow incoming students to defer their fellowships for a semester if we are online in the fall?

A: In cases where students have been awarded college fellowships and they are able to make reasonable progress towards their degree, we would encourage them not to defer enrollment solely because courses are online. If there are concerns about a student who has been awarded a fellowship enrolling in courses this fall (in the case that courses were to be online), or if deferment of a college awarded fellowship might be needed for any reason, please contact [Kayla Arnold](#) as soon as possible.

Q: Has CFAES received information from the Graduate School about possible deferment of University Fellowships under an online or hybrid fall scenario?

A: No, however we are looking into this and will provide further information as soon as we have it.

Q: Incoming graduate students are asking the GSC if they should plan to move to Ohio for fall. If we are online, some would prefer to save rent money and stay at their parents' house, do courses online and then move here in the spring. How should we advise these students?

A: If it is decided that courses will be online for the fall semester, we do not see an issue with advising students to make the decision that they feel is best for them (as long as students are not needed to be on campus to make progress towards their degree). We hope that students do not feel extra pressure to be in Columbus if they have no obligations to be.

Q: Will graduate students in the final year of University fellowships (Presidential Fellowship and SROP) be eligible for an extension of the fellowship if they have been unable to finish their research due to virus restrictions?

A: The Graduate School has not yet made a statement about how they would handle fellowships in this situation. We will share more information as soon as we can.

Q: If a grad student is very nearly done with their lab research and can complete it in isolation will they be able to obtain a research exemption?

A: If a student needs access to a lab to perform research that is needed to complete their degree, we request a research exemption is filled out by their graduate advisor with specific details about the circumstances. Generally, we will be supportive of research that can be performed under social distancing guidelines (understanding that there may be prioritization of certain research in some facilities). We do understand the importance of these situations and are working to minimize negative impacts to graduate students during this time.



Q: Will the College consider granting summer research exemptions to undergraduate students who have received research awards from the College or University; if so, when should we apply?

A: The faculty mentor should complete an exemption request as soon as possible for any research that could be performed under the current guidance.

Q: If a grad student has a college/university fellowship with funds for conference travel how long can these funds be extended? If conferences are canceled can the funds be used for other purposes?

A: Please reach out to the specific office that manages the travel funds that were awarded to the student, as this answer may vary. For SEEDS related funds, please contact [Melissa Burant](#). For fellowships administered by the college (or with general inquiries), please contact [Kayla Arnold](#). If you are unsure where the funding is from, please contact your specific graduate program coordinator who can assist in finding the appropriate information.

Q: When will Summer and Autumn 2020 student housing move-in and possible refund policies be announced?

A: We anticipate announcements on plans for fall semester by mid-June. Only students with a previously approved exception are eligible to live in University Housing this summer. At this time there has been no change to the housing process for new students enrolling for Autumn 2020. University decisions about Autumn enrollment will determine move-in and housing policy.

Q: Will there be restrictions on admitting international students, postdocs, scholars?

A: At this time there are no admissions restrictions for international undergraduate students. The college has not imposed any restrictions on admitting international students, postdocs, or scholars, nor do we plan to do so. Our college highly values the international perspective and will continue to look for ways to support international research and education.

Q: How does the college/university anticipate numbers of international students and scholars will change?

A: It is likely that we will see fewer international undergraduate students enroll in the fall of 2020. However international students represent a relatively small proportion of CFAES undergraduate enrollment.

The college has been tracking total graduate enrollment numbers, as well as enrollment of international students. At this point we have only seen a slight decrease in enrollment from last year, but we are continuing to monitor graduate enrollment numbers as well as other engagement with international scholars. If you have questions related to international graduate students, please contact [Kayla Arnold](#). For questions related to international research, please contact [Poppy Thornton](#).

Q: Are additional support structures being planned for existing and future international students? What is the status of international programs in the college? Will there be a search for a new director for the IPA Office?

A: Our intention is to work very closely with Vice Provost for Global Strategies and International Affairs, Gil Latz, and the Office of International Affairs to ensure international students have the support they need as we go forward.



Budget and Hiring Pause:

Q: Michigan State University higher administrators have taken pay cuts to offset their budget crisis; would OSU and CFAES consider a similar plan if it would help protect low-income staff members from furlough?

A: Current projections show that if we have a 5-10% budget cut we would not need to explore furloughs. Furloughs or pay cut decisions would be made at the university level, not the college. HR has been asked to explore furloughs, as well as other options, but they have not been presented to the Deans at this time.

Q: RE: Budget - what is the Dean's best guess, 5%, 10%, or 20%; how does she plan to address that? What is the budgetary shape of the college overall?

A: Luckily, CFAES entered fiscal year 2020 and this crisis with a strong financial situation overall. The university requested plans from each college for 5%, 10%, and 20% budget cut scenarios. We submitted those plans on May 1. We are currently anticipating cuts will be in the 5-10% range. Managing a 5-10% cut will include savings through attrition, limiting capital spend and reductions in operational spend (travel, supplies, services, equipment). Managing a 20% cut would require a more aggressive approach to the items above as well as evaluating organizational and programmatic investments.

Q: Is the Dean going to maintain the current structure whereby revenues from credit hours go back to the units that produced them (will the incentives remain the same for units)?

A: The budget allocation process for academic departments is still under review. Although the general fund allocation will likely be different in the coming year, we want to continue to incentivize units with regard to credit hour generation.

Q: The state is projecting a 20% budget cut across all its departments/agencies. Would this affect OSU? If so, what and when? Would this affect employees' salaries?

A: State cuts do not directly translate to cuts for OSU. However, we do know we will be impacted by the 20% cut of the Ohio Department of Education budget, which is where our state funding for higher education comes from. This could impact the remainder of fiscal year 2020 as well as fiscal year 2021. Budget cuts will be handled as outlined in the question above.

Q: If we have been told to prepare for up to a 20% budget cut and not to hire anyone, what is the rationale (i.e., why is it critical to be hiring new administrators (e.g., an Associate Dean for Inclusion and Diversity) right now, when we apparently are all just trying to survive?

A: It is important to note that we are experiencing a hiring pause, not a hiring freeze. A freeze would not permit any positions to move forward, the pause allows for exceptions to move ahead with positions that are critical to our current needs.

The Assistant Dean for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) is a critical position for our college for various reasons:

- DEI is one of our top values as a college



- The college is in a position, now more than ever, to make major strides in this area
- These types of situations (COVID) also exacerbate issues of equity, especially amongst our students.

Q: How will any budgetary change affect the capital projects budget?

A: Funding for CFAES capital projects generally comes from funding CFAES sets aside in our budget for capital projects (centrally or at the department level), philanthropy, and the biennial State capital bill. The university is carefully evaluating all capital projects. With input from CFAES on priorities, many projects will be paused or deferred to protect funds until we know more about our budget situation. Our ability to budget for capital spend in the FY21 budget will be very limited.

Q: How will the Dean ensure that compression and equity issues are improved during a period when funds typically available for faculty raises will not likely be available?

A: The University has not yet released guidance for salary programs for next year.

Q: Where are we in the process of developing a system allowing us to apply for loss recovery?

A: Associate Deans Anne Dorrance and Gary Pierzynski developed a spreadsheet to capture loss data. That spreadsheet has been sent to department chairs for further distribution. This is not an application for insurance or cost recovery, we are simply capturing the data to account for the impact and have the data to use as needed.

Q: Is there a possibility of relaxing fiscal rules related to the college's share of release time? These extra dollars back to faculty members during this crisis would be a big help to sustain staff and programs.

A: Not likely. We will be taking a budget cut and therefore must explore all options for conserving resources collectively.

Q: Purchasing guidance: there are added steps besides providing the typical who, what, where and why? Are the extra steps necessary even though the dean approved research exceptions to these projects and explained the what, where and why? It seems that some faculty received research exemptions, yet they cannot buy supplies/services to conduct the approved research. My question is: are the added steps necessary and if a request is rejected then approved research cannot be conducted thus, we are back to square 1. These 2 steps seem counter intuitive.

A: Expenditure requests related to an approved research exemption should include a copy of the approved exemption in the eRequest. This will tie the two together and help with clarity for the expenditure approval process.

Q: Tuition revenue will be affected by the number enrolled, but also the mode of instruction, correct?

A: Yes - there is a difference in online tuition. For more detailed information, Tuition and Fee tables are available on the Registrar website. However, the academic year 2020-2021 fee tables are not published at the present time. Specific questions may be directed to [Pat Whittington](#).



Q: What are the implications of the different budget models for the current hiring freeze particularly with regards to currently "empty" faculty positions?

A: It is not a "freeze", we have moved forward with a number of positions, particularly faculty lines. We are, however, required to seek approval from the Office of Academic Affairs for each exception. A 5-10% cut would allow us to continue to consider exceptions as we are doing now, larger budget cuts would require us to evaluate further. Our intent is not to penalize priority areas but also to carefully consider our actions and not just fill vacancies because there is an open line.

Q: How are you envisioning the cuts will be passed on to individual units?

A: We are working closely with department chairs to determine the impact. Each department has been asked to plan for cuts of 2%, 5%, and 10% for planning purposes.

Q: Will approved new faculty hires be honored?

A: Under the hiring pause, the university is reviewing all positions where an offer had not been extended prior to March 27, regardless if the search was ongoing or not. Therefore, faculty positions must follow the exception approval process before they can proceed.

Q: When will decisions be made about hiring lecturers for Autumn classes?

A: When we have a better view of what autumn semester is going to look like as well as our budget situation.

Q: Do we need to get permission to extend somebody's contract that was already in the works before COVID?

A: Yes.

Research:

Q: Currently we are paying students and postdocs to work on sponsored projects, but the work is not being done. Has CFAES heard anything from AFRI or NSF about possible completion grants? I heard this might be a possibility. If not, will CFAES consider allowing faculty with affected grants to submit for competitive SEEDS funding to complete these studies?

A: We know that USDA-AFRI and other federal granting agencies have been formally asked to provide supplemental funding to cover situations where the funds are expended before the work has been completed. At this point, we have not heard of any new programs but are optimistic. Consideration of redirecting SEEDS funding will not be made until after we know what the federal programs are going to do.

Q: When should we apply for faculty summer research exemptions for work that would begin in July?

A: Please submit now.

Q: Research losses due to COVID: is there a template to use for reporting? Is there a timeline to submit losses? Would there be payment for losses to PI? IF so, timeframe for payment to complete the project. Would this be communicated by dept or college leadership?



A: Associate Deans Anne Dorrance and Gary Pierzynski developed a spreadsheet to capture loss data. That spreadsheet has been sent to department chairs for further distribution with a request to have initial data returned by May 21. This is not an application for insurance or cost recovery, we are simply capturing the data to account for the impact and have the data to use as needed.

Q: Is there a unified way to address different sponsors on how to deal with research delay (due to COVID) from current grants: Does CFAES or Office of Research deal with all sponsors on behalf of PIs? It is known sponsors will have different recommendations. Some may grant no cost extension. Others will not. Is this being addressed by OSP with info from PIs?

A: No cost extensions are considered on a case by case basis. A request for a no-cost extension must be made by OSP for each project and there is no unified way to do this for an individual PI or for a given funding agency.

Q: Will we be held to following the Governor's standards regarding research going forward, or will there be more latitude to grant exemptions or open research based on an objective assessment of risk?

A: Yes, we will follow the Governor's orders. However, given the exemptions from his order we are able to continue some research under that umbrella, both agriculture and environment and natural resource research. We keep forging ahead to obtain further exemptions for critical work. We do, however, still need to monitor and consider all of the health and safety issues carefully.

Q: I asked for 2 exemptions that are very similar, I need to add for two other projects that are very similar but at different locations (Jackson and Wooster), should I send 2 exemptions or one?

A: Submit only one exemption for the two new locations using the language from the previous exemption request.

Q: Has CFAES considered 1) funds to help cover expenses of getting labs running after being shut down and/or 2) helping coordinate between departments - for instance if a lab in SENR, FABE, and food science all have instruments by Metrohm that need servicing, if we work together we might be able to get a discount from the company either through a "bulk" service or by just sharing cost of travel for the service engineer.

A: To date we have not considered either of these ideas, but we will explore options.

Health and Safety:

Q: Even if the University decides on live classes, will CFAES allow faculty with underlying health conditions to provide their course online in the fall if COVID-19 remains a threat in Ohio?

A: Yes, that's part of what has complicated for planning for autumn; different circumstances for different individuals and making accommodations for everyone as needed.

Q: Can you provide us some insight into resuming safe laboratory research (1 person per lab, PPE, etc.)?

A: Information will be forthcoming as part of the University and CFAES guidance on gradually opening some research labs. Stay tuned for more guidance for buildings, labs, etc.



P&T:

Q: Will allowances be made in the college P&T process for poor course evaluations for first- and even second-time online teachers?

A: This is a point of conversation that Associate Dean Kitchel brought to the last Faculty Advisory Council meeting. Also, the university has several actions regarding SEI's from the Spring 2020 semester:

<https://oaa.osu.edu/student-evaluations-instruction-seis-spring-2020>

Q: Why wasn't the extension in the tenure clock for Assistant Professors automatically granted instead of burdening these individuals with preparing an application? We are overburdened with other responsibilities (e.g., adopting our courses to on-line instruction) due to the COVID-19 crisis.

A: The extension is automatically applied, but fundamentally, it is a choice – some people do not want the extension. Also, within that choice actually lies two choices: 1. to take the mandatory extension and 2. to keep the 4th year review at its regularly scheduled cycle or to push back one year. There's been a split in responses to that second question thus far.

For clarity, only faculty being reviewed for promotion to Associate Professor with tenure or having their 4th year review during 2020-2021 had the May 1, 2020 due date. For all other scenarios, you have until April 1 prior to the fall that your TIU would vote on your case to request the extension.

Q: What is the role of the annual review letters from the chair in the P&T process?

A: The annual review letter of the TIU head is one of many pieces of data the committees, the Dean, and the Provost use to assess the overall dossier. Specifically, the TIU head letter is one of the cross-sectional (year by year) views of the candidate; it should include strengths, areas of improvement, and any changes in appointment or expectations. For more information about annual reviews, see:

<https://oaa.osu.edu/sites/default/files/uploads/policies/Faculty-Annual-Review-and-Reappointment.pdf>

Q: When you say the 'next cycle' of P&T will not require vita-generated documents, what dates does 'next cycle' cover?

A: 'Next cycle' is referring to reviews conducted in the 2020-2021 academic year.

Q: It would be nice to have guidance from the college P&T committee about how to document work and events cancelled due to the pandemic in our dossiers at various levels, so this is consistent across the college.

A: There will be a special notation for SEIs and dossiers for this semester to note; Dr. Kitchel has some specific language from OAA that has been shared with dept chairs.

Other:

Q: What is the timeline of the search for a new University President, and will CFAES have input?

A: The Presidential search is ongoing, and we do have a CFAES representative on that committee – Dr. Devin Peterson, FST.

Q: What is the status of the \$15 minimum wage starting in September with grants? Will all grants have to follow that \$15 minimum? Some grants were awarded before this became known and may not have



the funds to do this. Other grant funding is separate from the University, so will this make a difference. The person indicated they understand the concept “as the university goes so does the college and all programs housed within.” However, they indicate some staff might not understand.

A: To the best of our knowledge, the minimum wage change is still moving forward. We support the minimum wage increase but were hoping for a more phased in approach due to the complexities of our college such as the reasons you outlined with grants and the county Extension budgets, which were already in place for the next fiscal year before the increase was announced.

Q: Is the increase of minimum wage for qualifying staff members (announced in September 2019) within OSU stay on track for FY21?

A: To the best of our knowledge, the minimum wage change is still moving forward.

Q: What are all the factors influencing maintaining a hiring pause? I grant that public health is the major one, but I would like to understand which other factors influence when this pause may finish. Hiring staff is critical and has been budgeted in sponsored projects (regardless these projects may be considered critical or not).

A: Budget reductions are a driving factor for the hiring pause. We have had a great number of requests come in that have been carried forward. If there is a position that is critical to your work, you should talk to your department head/unit leader about possibly bringing the position forward for consideration.

Q: Have you heard anything on the status of county fairs this summer?

A: Each county makes its own determination at the local level. We will work with each of them the best we can on a county by county basis.

Q: If we have some ideas for fundraising, who should we talk to?

A: Please get in touch with Keith DiDonato.11

Q: What can we expect for the Farm Science Review?

A: No decisions have been made yet.

