Faculty-Related COVID-19 Policies and Practices at

Top-Ranked Higher Education Institutions in the United States

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Abstract

Researchers, agencies, associations, and faculty members have almost unanimously agreed that without intervention, the COVID-19 pandemic will have severe impacts on the advancement of faculty from historically minoritized groups, including women and racially minoritized faculty members. While recommendations abound, less empirical work has focused on how U.S. higher education institutions have responded to the pandemic. This policy review uses publicly available data from top-ranked colleges and universities (*N*=386) to examine the kinds of interventions institutions have put in place to respond to the pandemic. We found tenure delays and pandemic impact statements to be the most commonly implemented interventions, with some variation by institutional type and institutional mission. We consider implications of this work for policy and practice as well as for equity in academe.

Keywords: COVID-19, policies, practices, equity

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The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted the academic work environment, from transitions to virtual learning and increased administrative and service duties to massive disruptions to research and scholarly activities. These impacts have been uneven, with women's research productivity decreasing more substantially compared to men, primarily due to women's increased caregiving responsibilities during this time (Amano-Patiño et al., 2020; Belikov et al., 2021; Deryugina et al., 2021). Racially minoritized faculty members have also experienced significant stress and disruptions to their academic work due to the pandemic's disproportionate impact on Black, Latinx, Asian, and Indigenous communities and ongoing racial injustice (Belikov et al., 2021 Clark et al., 2020; Crooks et al., 2021; Davis et al., 2022; Gonzales & Griffin, 2020). These findings reflect a larger body of research showing that biases play a significant role in the underrepresentation of women and racially minoritized faculty members (Griffin, 2020; Laursen & Austin, 2020; Stewart & Valian, 2018).

Higher education institutions made some efforts to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on faculty. Institutions put in place tenure delays; allowed faculty members to document the impact of the pandemic on their teaching, service, and scholarly activities; and established workload modifications for faculty members with caregiving responsibilities, among other interventions (Gonzales & Griffin, 2020; Misra et al., 2020). However, the extent to which these policies and practices have been adopted and the specific provisions that surround their implementation remains unclear.

With this gap in mind, the goal of this policy review study is to understand the kinds of faculty-related policies and practices institutions have put in place because of the COVID-19

pandemic. We draw from publicly available data about policies and practices from top-ranked U.S. colleges and universities (*N*=386) per the *U.S. News and World Report*'s rankings of national universities[1]. We also consider the key institutional contexts (i.e., institutional type, mission) associated with each of these interventions and trends in policy provisions and implementation criteria.

Understanding pandemic-related interventions for faculty members is important for several reasons. The pandemic has clearly illustrated the nexus of work, life, and family and its relationship to diversity, equity, and inclusion in the academy (Clark et al., 2020; Gonzales & Griffin, 2020; Malisch et al., 2020). Fortifying equity therefore requires a better understanding of the kinds of interventions institutions used to help faculty members navigate this nexus. Relatedly, understanding the extent to which certain institutions put in place certain policies will help us both assess the effectiveness of policies and illuminate new ways to make higher education more responsive to the unique experiences of historically minoritized faculty members in the long-term.

Literature Review: The Impact of the Pandemic on Faculty and Policies and Practices Thought to Mitigate Its Effects

Evidence of the pandemic's disruptions to faculty careers has emerged in the literature. Across the board, the pandemic rendered labs, archives, performance sites, international travel, and other scholarly sites inaccessible (Clark et al., 2020). Faculty workloads, particularly as related to teaching and service, also increased (Deryugina et al., 2021; Gonzales & Griffin, 2020; Misra et al., 2020). For instance, online teaching often requires more preparation and many

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[1] https://www.usnews.com/best-colleges

faculty members reported increased time spent on student advising and mentoring over the course of the pandemic (Gonzales & Griffin, 2020; Misra et al., 2020). Campus service related to pandemic safety protocols and other "return-to-campus" efforts also increased workload, undermining time for research (Misra et al., 2020). Cumulatively, it is not surprising that faculty research has taken a hit, in that these types of activities may seem less pressing compared to the more immediate needs of campus administration and students (Deryugina et al., 2021).

However, these impacts have not been felt equally: women's research productivity fell precipitously during COVID-19 (Amano-Patiño et al., 2020; Cardel et al., 2020; Deryugina et al., 2021; Muric et al., 2021; Oleschuk, 2021). For example, Ciu et al. (2021) discovered that two months after the lockdown began in the United States, women academics' productivity fell by 13.2% compared to men, with wider gender productivity gaps for faculty members at highly ranked universities and at the assistant professor level. Although the number of submissions to journals in various disciplines increased overall since the pandemic began, numerous studies show that the number of submissions authored by women, and especially papers with women as sole authors or first-authors, dropped overall (Andersen et al., 2020; Carpenter et al., 2020; Lerchenmuller et al., 2021; King & Frederickson, 2021; Muric et al., 2021; Oleschuk, 2021; Squazzoni et al., 2021). Other studies showed similar drops in grant submissions (Amano-Patiño et al., 2020). Studies also showed qualitative evidence of the pandemic's impact on women's careers. For example, Kim and Patterson (2021) analyzed 1.8 million tweets from 3,000 political scientists and found that during the pandemic, women academics tweeted less about scholarly accomplishments compared to men, with implications for scholarly visibility.

Overwhelmingly, gender-related differences in academic productivity are rooted in the disproportionate amount of care work women do. Although faculty parents of all genders

reported less time for research, women reported spending more time on childcare compared to men over the course of the 2020-2021 academic year (Cardel et al., 2020; Deryugina et al., 2021; Yildirum & Elsen-Ziya, 2021). Women who parent children with disabilities described substantial stress during this period, revealing the important ways that gender, caregiver status, and ability can shape faculty experience (Schneider et al., 2021). In addition, women academics were more often responsible for providing eldercare to parents or other older loved ones, resulting in being "sandwiched" between simultaneous eldercare and childcare duties (NASEM, 2021). All said, studies showed care work during the pandemic, and beyond, takes different forms and substantially impacts the productivity of women academics.

The pandemic also differentially impacted women academics based on other aspects of context, including field/discipline and appointment type. Women in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM), where women are historically underrepresented, encountered unique obstacles due the entrenchment of bias and the chilly climate within their fields/disciplines (Misra et al., 2020). For example, studies show that because many women in STEM were the "only" or one of few within their departments, colleagues and department leaders often did not recognize or provide support for caregiving burdens as compared to women in fields/disciplines with a greater representation of women (NASEM, 2021). Moreover, faculty members in contingent roles (e.g., teaching-focused or clinically focused), more likely to be women, particularly in STEM, encountered greater stress related to shifting teaching to virtual formats as well as economic precarity related to pandemic budget cuts (NASEM, 2021).

Although less empirical analysis is available about the impact of the pandemic on the productivity of racially minoritized faculty across genders, there are numerous reasons to believe that they too were disproportionately impacted by the pandemic. Communities of color

experienced higher levels of COVID-19 infections, which may mean that faculty from these communities took on unexpected caregiving and/or financial responsibilities for members of their families (Clark et al., 2020). Widespread protests for racial justice that emerged during the pandemic also heightened the sense of racial battle fatigue and stress among faculty of color, particularly Black faculty (Crooks et al., 2021). Women of color, who experience challenges at the intersection of their race and gender, may be at particular risk for career impacts, including but not limited longer time to promotion or no promotion at all, increased burnout, and ultimately increased departure (Clark et al., 2020; Gonzales & Griffin, 2020; Duncan et al., 2020). As Gonzales and Griffin (2020) argued, "COVID-19 presents distinct challenges to differently situated faculty members, calling attention to and potentially widening individual and institutional equity gaps" (p. 2).

Recommended Interventions

Outside of popular press articles that highlight institutional efforts to respond to the pandemic (e.g., Flaherty, 2020, 2022), there has been little to no examination of the uptake of pandemic-related faculty interventions. Yet, recommendations in this area abound. In this section, we review and summarize the limited literature on institutional responses and consider experts' recommendations about how institutions might respond to the pandemic (Table 1 provides a summary of the problem each intervention is intended to address). Overall, we observed that recommendations have been focused on seven areas of institutional policy and practice: funding supports; suspension of teaching evaluations/holistic teaching evaluations; workload modifications; tenure delays; pandemic impact statements; training and guidance for campus evaluators; and modifications to promotion and tenure criteria or language.

Emergency Funds for caregiving. Multiple researchers and experts have called for institutions to create new, or augment existing, sources of financial support for faculty members experiencing pandemic-related challenges related to caregiving. Often, researchers have called for direct financial aid or subsidies to faculty for caregiving (i.e., childcare and eldercare) and/or augmented, on-campus childcare services (Cardel et al., 2020; Clark et al., 2020; Cui et al., 2021; Gibson et al., 2020; Oleschuk, 2020). These types of interventions are relatively straightforward, yet institutions may vary in the extent to which they have resources to provide them, and can require some time and effort to establish them (as in the case of daycare centers).

Suspension of teaching evaluations and/or holistic teaching evaluations. The shift to virtual course delivery massively disrupted student learning (Department of Education, 2021), raising concerns that students would harshly evaluate faculty members in unfair or prejudicial ways (Gonzales & Griffin, 2020). As such, many researchers have called for institutions to remove teaching evaluation scores from annual reviews or promotion or tenure reviews (especially during specific time periods in which the pandemic impact was the most severe), and/or incorporate alternative metrics of teaching quality (e.g., peer observations) into their evaluations (Clark et al., 2020; Gonzales & Griffin, 2020; Malisch et al., 2020; Oleschuk, 2020). Such calls come in the larger context of gender and racial biases in student evaluations of teaching (Kreitzer & Sweet-Cushman, 2021; Mitchell & Martin, 2018; Peterson et al., 2019; Storage et al., 2016) and an overall movement towards more holistic teaching evaluation strategies (Gillman et al., 2018; O'Meara & Templeton, 2022; Stewart & Valian, 2018).

Workload modifications. For many faculty members, especially those with children, finding time for research was the greatest challenge during the pandemic (Deryugina et al., 2021; Krukowski et al., 2021). Another issue that has emerged during the pandemic related to

workload is the increased time faculty members spend on administrative work and student teaching, advising, and mentoring (Cardel et al., 2020), tasks which were already taken up disproportionately by women and racially minoritized faculty members (O'Meara et al., 2021). For these reasons, some experts recommend that institutions and/or departments find ways to give faculty members their time back, for instance, through course or service releases or the allocation of teaching or graduate assistants who can help faculty members with administrative tasks (Gibson et al., 2020; Gonzales & Griffin, 2020; Oleschuk, 2020).

Tenure delays. A tenure delay, or a "stop-the-clock" policy, offers pre-tenure faculty members the option to delay when they are evaluated for tenure. In the wake of the pandemic, many researchers have called for institutions to offer COVID-19 tenure delays (Clark et al., 2020; Gonzales & Griffin, 2020; Oleschuk, 2020). Advocates call for tenure delay policies wherein faculty members are automatically granted a delay (often referred to as "opt-out"). This opt-out version is thought to reduce some of the cultural stigma associated with taking a tenure delay (Gonzales & Griffin, 2020), essentially "norming" the behavior and reducing administrative barriers that might otherwise dissuade faculty members from using the policy (O'Meara et al., 2022).

At the same time, tenure delays (regardless of the pandemic) are widely critiqued. As related to tenure delays after the birth of a child, studies suggest that women take the extra year off as intended, whereas men use their "extra year" to be more productive, shirking their responsibilities as fathers and having the overall effect of ratcheting up the bar for tenure (Antecol et al., 2018). Other studies have found that faculty members who use tenure delay policies incur salary penalties (Manchester et al., 2013). This has led some to argue that gender-neutral work-life policies like tenure delays do little to enhance women's representation in

academe. In the context of the pandemic, advocates raise concerns that some faculty members, more likely to be men without children, will not need a tenure delay and will reap the rewards of attaining tenure sooner, while others, more likely to be women with children, will experience delays that will shape pay and access to opportunities (Deryugina et al., 2021; Gibson et al., 2020; Malisch et al., 2020). Understanding the extent to which tenure delays have been implemented, by whom (e.g., Smith et al., 2022), and the provisions associated with such policies is therefore important for understanding how equity can be promoted and sustained within higher education.

Pandemic impact statements. Many advocates have called for the introduction of COVID-19 impact statements, or statements written by faculty members to describe how the pandemic changed, altered, or disrupted their research or scholarly activities; teaching and advising; or service commitments. For instance, multiple scholars recommend that faculty members should be provided with opportunities to document areas where their teaching or advising workloads increased because of the transition to online learning; how lab closures forced a faculty member to shift to secondary data analysis; or how caregiving duties limited capacity for research activities (Clark et al., 2020; Mickey et al., 2022; Squazzoni et al., 2021). The goal of pandemic impact statements is to provide context to why faculty research, whether in terms of level of productivity or selection of topic, may look different during/post pandemic as compared to prior to the pandemic. Evaluators then review impact statements during annual reviews; promotion and tenure; and/or within other evaluative processes, as discussed in next section (Clark et al., 2020; Misra et al., 2020; Squazzoni et al., 2021).

Training and/or guidance for campus evaluators. Although pandemic impact statements may offer context, experts warn that without training for evaluators, the information

provided in such statements may activate bias rather than mitigate it (Malisch et al., 2020). That is, faculty members who use pandemic impact statements to document their pandemic-related challenges may share information that evaluators find uncompelling and thus may be used against them during evaluations. To address this issue, some institutions have put in place training for evaluators (e.g., tenure and promotion committees) on how to fairly assess pandemic impact statements (Cardel et al., 2020; Clark et al., 2020). Others have given explicit instruction and information to external reviewers about how to interpret pandemic-related impacts (Cui et al., 2021), for instance, providing information about each university's response to the pandemic (Clark et al., 2020; Malisch et al., 2020).

Modifications to tenure and promotion criteria or language. Recognizing that the impact of the pandemic on faculty careers may be long ranging, a final subset of recommendations focus on modifying faculty evaluation criteria altogether. For example, advocates warn that lab closures and lack of access to research sites may cause faculty members to fundamentally shift their research methods or data sources; delays in book publishing and article reviews may mean that the benchmarks for achieving tenure or promotion are no longer realistic (Gibson et al., 2020; Squazzoni et al., 2021). Advocates have therefore called on institutions to modify or change tenure and promotion criteria, for instance, to focus on quality of work rather than quantity or to include alternative metrics for impact such as community impact or inclusion in policy (Cardel et al., 2020). Likewise, some advocates have called upon institutions to make contributions to teaching and service count more in evaluation processes (Cardel et al., 2020; Clark et al., 2020; Malisch et al., 2020)

Overall, the extant literature offers many recommendations for how institutions can address different kinds of pandemic-related equity issues. However, the extent to which

institutions have adopted and implemented these interventions, and their impact, remains to be seen. For instance, although University of Massachusetts Amherst has emerged as a leader on these issues and has been quite transparent about its faculty equity efforts (e.g., Clark et al., 2020; Misra et al., 2020), it is an exception rather than the rule. We lack understanding of which institutions have adopted policies and whether recommendations have translated to policy and practice. Furthermore, prior studies show that institutional responses to faculty work-life challenges often differ by institutional type (e.g., research intensive versus more teaching-focused) (Berheide et al, 2020; Hollenshead et al., 2005; Wolf-Wendel & Ward, 2006) and that support for faculty equity efforts also vary depending on mission (e.g., minority-serving institutions and women's institutions compared to historically white institutions) (Allen et al., 2022; NASEM, 2021). As such, responses to the pandemic may also vary as a result of institutional type and mission.

Table 1

Pandemic-Related Equity Problems and Recommended Interventions

Equity Problem	Recommended Intervention(s)	Citations
Rapid shift to online teaching may negatively impact teaching evaluations (which are already biased against women and racially minoritized faculty).	Suspension of teaching evaluations and/or holistic assessments of teaching; Pandemic impact statements.	Clark et al., 2020; Gonzales & Griffin, 2020; Malisch et al., 2020; Oleschuk, 2020
Increased pandemic-related advising and teaching and emotional labor, activities in which women and racially minoritized faculty were already more likely to engage.	Workload modifications; Tenure delays; Pandemic impact statements; Modifications to promotion and tenure criteria or language.	Cardel et al., 2020; Clark et al., 2020; Gibson et al., 2020; Gonzales & Griffin, 2020; Oleschuk, 2020

| Interruptions to research due to lab closures, lack of access to research sites/archives, performance sites, etc. | Tenure delays; Pandemic impact statements; Training and/or guidance for campus evaluators; Modifications to promotion and tenure criteria or language. | Clark et al., 2020; Gonzales & Griffin, 2020; Oleschuk, 2020; Misra et al., 2020; Squazzoni et al., 2021 |
| Interruptions to research due to increased caregiving duties (e.g., school and daycare closures; eldercare duties, illness of family members) | Funding supports; Workload modifications; Tenure Delays; Pandemic impact statements; Training and/or guidance for campus evaluators; Modifications to promotion and tenure criteria or language. | Cardel et al., 2020; Clark et al., 2020; Cui et al., 2021; Gibson et al., 2020; Malisch et al., 2020; Oleschuk, 2020 |

Methods

Given the need for empirical inquiry into pandemic-related equity interventions for faculty, this policy and practice review drew from publicly available data from U.S. universities. Hollenshead et al.'s (2005) study of faculty work-life policies broadly guided the thinking and design behind our work. In this study, the researchers examined the presence of different kinds of faculty work-life policies, analyzing the kinds of policies deployed at different kinds of institutions. Our study builds on this research, focusing explicitly on the faculty-related policies and practices (i.e., the interventions) used by institutions to adapt to the pandemic.

We created a database using publicly available data from several different sources. We created a list of the 386 institutions in the United States considered to be top-ranked universities, according to the 2021 *U.S. News and World Report* rankings. We focused on the top-ranked institutions because research shows that academic leaders tend to look at and emulate the behaviors of top-ranked institutions when formulating policy and practice (Hazelkorn, 2015), particularly in the context of faculty workload and rewards systems (O'Meara, 2007) and family-

friendly policies and practices (Hollenshead et al., 2005). Thus, we expected some degree of similarity among top-ranked institutions when it comes to pandemic response. We furthermore anticipated that policies and practices taken up by top-ranked institutions might become the "standard" institutional response. Next, we identified each institution's Carnegie Classification (i.e., doctoral university with very high research activity [formerly known as a Research 1 institution]; doctoral university with high research activity [formerly known as a Research 2 institution], or a doctoral or professional university [formerly known as a Research 3 institution]) and identified institutions with special missions (i.e., historically black college or universities [HBCU]; women's colleges and universities [WCUs], and other minority-serving institutions [MSI][2], as compared to historically white institutions [HWIs][3]). Understanding Carnegie Classification and mission differences is important because literature shows that policy and practice uptake vary by institutional type and mission (Allen et al., 2022; Hollenshead et al., 2005) and that institutional culture(s) are largely predictive of the norms and expectations associated with faculty work (Wolf-Wendel & Ward, 2006). Thus, to the extent that institutional types and missions vary among top-ranked colleges and universities, we anticipated variation in response.

We then reviewed websites associated with each of the 386 institutions to determine whether the institution had put in place any COVID-19 related interventions. Our data collection took place primarily during fall 2021, and we continued to update and review policies and practices into spring 2022. Utilizing data scraping techniques (Saurkar et al., 2018) we searched

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[2] Other minority serving institutions include Hispanic-Serving Institutions, Tribal Colleges and Universities, and Asian American and Pacific Islander Serving Institutions. We separated HBCUs from MSIs as many MSIs receive that designation based on demographic enrollment as opposed to mission.

[3] Historically white institutions refers to institutions with a student population historically and contemporarily composed of a majority of white students. The term acknowledges the ways in which historical and societal racialization shapes these trends (Duran & Jones, 2020; Smith et al., 2007).

and reviewed each institution's website (e.g., the websites of the provost or academic affairs, faculty affairs, COVID-19 response pages, and/or human resources) to understand faculty-related policies put in place in response to the pandemic. We specifically searched each institution's website for the seven recommended policies and practices (emergency funds for caregiving; suspension of teaching evaluations/holistic teaching measures; workload modifications; COVID-19 tenure delays; pandemic impact statements; training and/or guidance for campus evaluations; modified tenure and promotion criteria or language) identified in the literature. We coded each institution as either having the policy or practice or not. Examples of the kinds of policies coded are included in Appendix A. We then did a descriptive analysis of the total percentage of institutions overall that had each policy or practice in place, broke down the percentage by institutional type (Table 2) and mission (Table 3), and provided an aggregate analysis of the number of total policies and practices put in place by institutional type and mission (Table 4).

Findings

We present our findings by the total percentage of institutions that have published policies or practices and then break out each policy or practice by institutional type and mission.

Emergency Caregiver Funds

About 14% of institutional websites indicated that additional or supplemental caregiving funding was provided during the pandemic. A greater percentage of very high research institutions (29.8%) offered this resource compared to high research institutions (9.5%) and doctoral and professional institutions (1.6%). Among mission driven institutions, 0% of HBCUs, 0% of WCUs, and 9% of MSI institutions provided emergency caregiving funds. Just under 15% of HWIs provided emergency caregiving funds.

Teaching Evaluations

Teaching evaluation-related interventions came in two areas: the suspension of student teaching evaluation scores from spring 2020 in faculty evaluation processes and the integration of holistic teaching evaluation measures into faculty evaluations. Just under 21% of institutions indicated that they had allowed faculty members to omit spring 2020 student teaching evaluations from faculty evaluation, including 37.3% of very high research institutions, 20.4% of high research institutions, and 4.6% of doctoral and professional institutions. Twenty-two percent of HWIs, 0% of HBCUs, 0% of WCUs, and 15.2% of other MSIs omitted teaching evaluations for spring 2020. Around 13% of all institutions incorporated holistic teaching measures into faculty evaluation, including 30.7% of very high research institutions, 6.6% of high research institutions, and 1.6% of doctoral and professional institutions. A little over 14% of HWIs, 9% of MSIs, 0% of HBCUs, and 0% of WCUs implemented holistic teaching measures.

Workload Modifications

Just over 26% of all institutions encouraged workload modifications for faculty members experiencing increased caregiving demands during the pandemic. A greater percentage of very high research institutions (58.3%) had published policies or practices related to faculty workload compared to 15.1% of high research institutions and 5.4% of doctoral and professional institutions. Around 29% of HWIs, 10.9% of MSIs, 0% of HBCUs, and 0% of WCUs encouraged workload modifications.

Tenure Delays

Some 60.1% of institutions in our sample had a published COVID-19 related tenure delay policy. There were also patterns by institutional type: 97.7% of institutions categorized as very high research production offered a published COVID-19 tenure delay policy, compared to 59.2%

of institutions with high research production and 22.5% of doctoral or professional universities. About 63% of HWIs, 52.2 % of MSIs, 20% of HBCUs, and 25% of WCUs had a tenure delay option for faculty members.

Of the 232 institutions with some form of COVID-19 tenure delay policy, there was some variation in whether policies were opt-in or opt-out. 62.1% of all institutions had an opt-in approach; 37.9% had an opt-out policy. Among very high research activity institutions, most (55.8%) utilized an opt-in approach, while 44.2% implemented an opt-out tenure delay approach. Of the institutions classified as high research productivity, 63.5% used an opt-in approach and 36.5% used an opt-out approach. Among those classified as doctoral or professional universities, 86.2% used an opt-in approach, and 13.8% used an opt-out approach. Fifty-eight percent of HWIs, 91.7% of MSIs, 100% of HBCUs, and 100% of WCUs had an opt-in approach.

Pandemic impact statements

Approximately 30% of institutions implemented a pandemic impact statement into some aspect of their faculty evaluation process(es), including promotion and tenure dossiers, annual review, and/or merit review procedures. Of very high research institutions, 66.6% introduced this policy, compared to 19.2% of high research institutions and 4.6% of doctoral and professional institutions. About 33% of HWIs and 26% of MSIs implemented a pandemic impact statement, while no HBCU or WCUs carried out this intervention.

Training and/or guidance to campus evaluators

Less than 5% of all institutions indicated putting in place training or guidance for campus evaluators on how to effectively evaluate faculty during the pandemic. We found this policy to be present at 11.5% of very high research activity institutions, 1.6% of high research activity institutions, and none of the doctoral and professional institutions. Zero HBCUs, WCUs, or other

MSIs provided training and guidance for campus evaluators, while 5.2% of HWI institutions

rendered this policy.

Modified tenure and promotion criteria

Less than 1% of all institutions modified their tenure and promotion criteria, for instance,

to signal to faculty that quality rather than quantity would be rewarded in light of COVID-19

disruptions to research. Three very high research activity institutions (0.02%) implemented this

policy, none of the high research activity institutions included it, and one doctoral and

professional institution had this intervention in place (0.08%). Just under 4% of HWIs

implemented this intervention, while 0% of MSIs, HBCUs, and WCUs put such policies in place.

Total number of COVID-19 interventions implemented by all institutions

Overall, the average number of interventions in place for all institutions was 1.6. Doctoral

and professional institutions averaged 0.5 interventions per institution, high research activity

institutions averaged 1.02 interventions, and very high research institutions averaged 3.3

interventions. By mission, HBCUs averaged .2 interventions, WCUs averaged .25 interventions,

other MSIs averaged 1.16 interventions, and HWIs averaged 1.75 interventions.

We found that 41.2% of total institutions had 0 interventions in place, 46.3% had 1-4

interventions, and 12.5% implemented 5-7 interventions (Table 4). Disaggregating by institution

type, 79% of doctoral and professional institutions had zero interventions, 19.3% had 1-4

interventions, and 1.7% had 5-7 interventions. Among high research activity institutions, 41.6%

had zero interventions, 53.6% implemented 1-4 interventions, and 4.8% had 5-7 interventions.

Among very high activity research institutions, 3.1% had zero interventions, 65.9% had 1-4

interventions, and 31% applied 5-7 interventions. When disaggregating by mission, 80% of

HBCUs had zero interventions and 20% had 1-4; 75% of WCUs had zero interventions and 25%

had 1-4; and 45.7% of other MSIs had zero interventions, with 47.8% deploying 1-4

interventions and 6.5% putting in place 5-7 interventions. Among HWIs, 39% had zero

interventions, 47.5% had 1-4 interventions, and 13.5% had 5-7 interventions.

Limitations

An important caveat before discussing the findings is that the institutions we examined

may have COVID-19 related policies and practices which were not published on institutional

websites and/or we were unable to locate them at the time of our review. For that reason, we

stress that the data in this study reflects the presence of published COVID-19 policies or

practices rather than the objective provision of them. Next, because our sample focused on top-

ranked universities, we did not examine policies/practices at community colleges or primarily

undergraduate institutions. These kinds of institutions employ a majority of higher education

faculty members, and thus our study and its implications may not apply to faculty members

working in these contexts. Another limitation is that we captured in a quantitative way the kinds

of policies and practices deployed by institutions. In doing so, we are not able to speak in-depth

to the mechanics of implementation around certain policies (e.g., specific policies related to

which evaluators receive the pandemic impact statement or what kinds of impacts faculty

members are allowed to discuss in a pandemic impact statement). We also recognize that

institutions deployed policies and practices outside of the seven that we identified in the

literature and subsequently searched for; while our goal was to capture the extent to which

recommended interventions had been taken up, we recognize we did not capture the full breadth

of potential institutional approaches. Additionally, we note that these data represent policies and

practices at a certain point in time, specifically fall 2021 and spring 2022. We recognize that

policy and practice development in this area is ongoing and therefore data should be interpreted

Table 2

COVID-Related Faculty Policies and Practices at Top-Ranked Institutions, by Institution Type

Policy or Practice	Doctoral/ Professional Institutions (n=129)	High Research Institutions (n=125)	Very High Research Institutions (n=132)	Total (n=386)
	%	*%*	*%*	*%*
Provided emergency funds for caregiving	1.6	9.5	29.8	13.6
Suspended teaching evaluations for spring 2020	4.6	20.4	37.3	20.7
Incorporated holistic teaching measures into faculty evaluation processes	1.6	6.6	30.7	12.9
Encouraged workload modifications for faculty impacted by the pandemic	5.4	15.1	58.3	26.3
Published one-year COVID-19 tenure delay policy (opt-in or opt-out)	22.5	59.2	97.7	60.1
Opt-in COVID-19 tenure delay policy	86.2	63.5	55.8	62.1
Opt-out COVID-19 tenure delay policy	13.8	36.5	44.2	37.9
Added pandemic impact statements to faculty evaluation processes	4.6	19.2	66.6	30.1
Provided training or guidance for campus evaluators on equitable COVID-19 evaluation	0.0	1.6	11.5	4.4
Modified tenure and promotion criteria or language	0.08	0.0	0.02	0.03

COVID-19 POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Table 3

COVID-Related Faculty Policies and Practices at Top-Ranked Institutions, by Mission

Policy or Practice	Historically White Institutions (HWI)) (n=326)	Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) (n=10)	Women's Colleges/ Universities (WCU) (n=4)	Other Minority Serving Institutions (MSI) (n=46)	Total (N=386)
	%	*%*	*%*	*%*	*%*
Provided emergency funds for caregiving	14.7	0.0	0.0	9.0	13.6
Suspended teaching evaluations for spring 2020	22.4	0.0	0.0	15.2	20.7
Incorporated holistic teaching measures into faculty evaluation processes	14.1	0.0	0.0	9.0	12.9
Encouraged workload modifications for faculty impacted by the pandemic	29.4	0.0	0.0	10.9	26.3
Published one-year COVID-19 tenure delay policy (opt-in or opt-out)	62.9	20.0	25.0	52.2	60.1
Opt-in COVID-19 tenure delay policy	58.0	100.0	100.0	91.7	62.1
Opt-out COVID-19 tenure delay policy	42.0	0.0	0.0	8.3	37.9
Added pandemic impact statements to faculty evaluation processes	32.5	0.0	0.0	26.1	30.1
Provided training or guidance for campus evaluators on equitable COVID-19 evaluation	5.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.4
Modified tenure and promotion criteria or language	3.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.1

Table 4

Number of COVID-Related Faculty Policies and Practices at Top-Ranked Institutions, by Institution Type and Mission

# of policies and practices (interventions)	Doctoral/ Professional Institutions *(n=129)*	High Research Institutions *(n=125)*	Very High Research Institutions *(n=132)*	Historically White Institutions (HWI) *(n=326)*	Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCU) *(n=10)*	Women's Colleges/ Universities (WCU) *(n=4)*	Other Minority Serving Institutions (MSI) *(n=46)*	Total *(N=386)*
	%	*%*	*%*	*%*	*%*	*%*	*%*	*%*
0	79.0	41.6	3.1	39.0	80.0	75.0	45.7	41.2
1-4	19.3	53.6	65.9	47.5	20.0	25.0	47.8	46.3
5-7	1.7	4.8	31.0	13.5	0.0	0.0	6.5	12.5

as the initial policies and practices institutions put in place. Finally, as noted in similar studies (Hollenshead et al., 2005), we realize that many faculty-related policies and practices may have been initiated at the unit level (i.e., department or college) and thus are not well-captured in a review of central institutional policies.

Discussion

The COVID-19 pandemic has negatively disrupted academic work, particularly for women and racially minoritized faculty members (Clark et al., 2020; Gonzales & Griffin, 2020; Oleschuk, 2021). Despite empirical evidence in this area, our results suggest that on the whole, institutions have yet to fully embrace many of the seven recommendations examined in this study. As such, there may be substantial consequences for equity in the professoriate (Clark et al., 2020; Gonzales & Griffin, 2020).

We observed strong patterns in the policies and practices that seem to be the most, and the least, adopted. The interventions most commonly implemented were tenure delays, followed by pandemic impact statements, while the least implemented were modifications to tenure and promotion criteria or language and training or guidance for campus evaluators. These results present a few tensions. Although the provision of a COVID-19 tenure delay may alleviate some of the short-term research impacts on faculty members, the impact on the pandemic has been ongoing; a one-year extension may not be enough time for faculty to relaunch their research agendas in a meaningful way (Malisch, et al., 2020). As such, modifications to tenure and promotion criteria, for instance, focusing on quality over quantity and alternative measures of impact (O'Meara & Templeton, 2022) and considering a faculty member's productivity in terms of their overall trajectory, will be an even more critical intervention for institutions to pursue. Likewise, if institutions have put in place interventions that extend faculty timelines or allow faculty members to document the impact of COVID-19 on their work, guidance for evaluators is critical for ensuring that faculty members are fairly evaluated (Clark et al., 2020; O'Meara & Templeton, 2022), though our results showed a relatively low percentage of institutions implemented this kind of guidance.

Our data indicated patterns by institutional type and to some extent by mission. A greater percentage of institutions with very high research activity put in place more pandemic-related interventions like tenure delays, and also put in place a greater number of cumulative interventions, compared to high research institutions and doctoral and professional universities. Moreover, we did not find that a greater percentage institution with special missions (i.e., MSIs, HBCUs, WCUs) put policies in place compared to historically white institutions (which made up most of the institutions in the sample). We interpret these patterns in a few ways. Much of the

literature on the impact of the pandemic, and therefore associated recommendations, concentrate

on impacts to research and scholarship (e.g., Amano-Patiño et al., 2020; Cardel et al., 2020;

Deryugina et al., 2021), and therefore may be of greater consequence for faculty members

employed at institutions wherein research is most emphasized. In contrast, while the pandemic

has no doubt changed and likely increased teaching and service activities (Deryugina et al.,

2021), these activities have not been disrupted in the same way as research/scholarship (e.g.,

total shutdown of labs). As such, doctoral and professional universities and mission-driven

institutions, where teaching and service are more prominently emphasized (Allen et al., 2022;

Wolf-Wendel & Ward, 2006), may view recommended interventions to be less applicable to

their context compared to research institutions (Hollenshead et al., 2005). These kinds of

institutions may have also been more likely to already have some interventions in place (i.e.,

holistic teaching evaluations). Differences by institutional type and mission may also relate to

resources: doctoral and professional institutions, as well as some mission-driven institutions,

may have fewer resources to address faculty work-life issues (NASEM, 2021), particularly

during the pandemic-related financial downturn, whereas very high research activity institutions

– typically HWIs - may have had more financial and human capital to put in policies and

practices in place (Hollenshead et al., 2005).

One possible interpretation of our findings is that institutions with very high research

activity have been the most responsive and proactive in responding to the pandemic with equity

in mind, as indicated by higher percentage uptake policies and higher average number of

policies. However, past research causes us to be skeptical of this interpretation. First, as noted in

previous studies, it is more likely that competition among elite research institutions drives

institutions to put policies and practice in place, rather than strong commitment to equity and

inclusivity (Hollenshead et al., 2005; O'Meara, 2007). Similarly, the culture and climate within high intensity research institutions dissuades faculty members from using policies (Lundquist et al., 2012; Mason et al., 2013; Sallee, 2012), often to avoid bias against caregivers (Drago et al., 2006; Sallee, 2012). As long as formal and informal expectations around faculty work and productivity remained unchanged (Kelliher, 2021; McClure & Hicklin Fryar, 2022; Mickey et al., 2022), we hypothesize many of the policies and practices institutions have taken up will remain small bandages to the career wounds faculty members have incurred as a result of the pandemic, particularly those from historically minoritized groups for whom the impact has been more pronounced (Malisch et al., 2020).

Recommendations for Future Research, Policy, and Practice

Future Research Recommendations

Several areas of future inquiry emerge. Deeper examination surrounding the mechanics and specific provisions associated with each intervention is needed, for instance, whether pandemic impact statements are required; how and by whom pandemic statements are evaluated; and what should and should not be included in such statements. Similar questions remain related to training for personnel committees and other evaluators; workload modifications; and promotion and tenure modifications. More research on faculty usage of such policies (such as Smith et al., 2022), and the factors that fostered or constrained usage, is needed. Furthermore, research with administrators who have led efforts to put in place interventions might help identify resistances and facilitators of organizational change, as related to the pandemic but also in the context of equity efforts more broadly. Finally, we call upon researchers and institutions to use our sample as a basis for longitudinal research. Researchers should track the extent to which the implementation of certain interventions (and certain combinations of interventions) seemed

to shape the advancement of women and racially minoritized faculty members across different institutional types, for example, by using IPEDS data or other national datasets on faculty demographics.

Policy and Practice Recommendations

We make several recommendations for policy and practice based on our results. We encourage institutions and academic leaders to make their faculty-related policies and practice transparent and publicly available. Policies and practices are only valuable to the extent that faculty members can easily locate, understand, and make use of them (Campbell & O'Meara, 2014) and making such policies and practices visible and transparent can help to reduce stigmas associated with use (Sallee, 2012). Similarly, making aggregate data on usage of policies and practices at an institutional level may also help reduce stigmas and help institutions assess which interventions have been most effective within their own context(s).

Second, we urge institutions who have put in place tenure delays - the majority of our sample - to be mindful in observing the consequences of tenure delays. While intended to be helpful and equitable, tenure delays can be detrimental to women and racially minoritized faculty insofar as they can limit access to leadership opportunities and reinforce pay inequity (Antecol et al., 2018). Institutions should therefore consider how to provide retroactive pay increases for faculty members who take COVID-19 tenure delays (Clark et al., 2020). Additionally, we note that tenure delays apply to only a small number of faculty members, and institutions should therefore be strategic in considering ways to support the career advancement of non-tenure eligible faculty and associate professors whose work has also been disrupted.

Third, we encourage institutions to take seriously the need for more guidance and training for evaluators. We expect that pandemic impacts will be reflected in both formal pandemic

impact statements as well as informally in curriculum vitae and other materials faculty members submit for evaluation for years to come. Campus evaluators at all levels of review, external letter writers, and others involved in faculty evaluation decisions therefore need concrete guidance and reminders on how they should interpret, make sense of, and ultimately fairly evaluate candidates with this context in mind, and institutions moreover need to put in place accountability mechanisms to ensure that reviewers are following such guidance (O'Meara & Templeton, 2022).

Finally, as we collected data for this study, we noted institutions that had put in place less popular, yet still innovative interventions. For example, some institutions offered faculty members post-pandemic sabbaticals (releases from teaching and service) to jumpstart research productivity, while others invested significantly in faculty wellness and mental health resources. While these practices are promising, we encourage institutions to consider how resources can be routed specifically to those faculty members most in need. For instance, many institutions that received ADVANCE-IT grants created interdisciplinary seed grants programs specifically for women academics (Laursen & Austin, 2020) – such equity-minded interventions may likewise be relevant as institutions emerge from the pandemic.

Conclusion

The empirical evidence on the uneven impact of the pandemic in academe is mounting. and yet our findings indicate that only some of the faculty policies and practices thought to fortify equity and/or mitigate the impact of the pandemic have been taken up across top-ranked institutions. We urge academic leaders and administrators to avoid interpreting these results as a signal that there is nothing that can be done. Instead, we hope leaders and administrators consider our findings to be a call to action. The challenges of the pandemic are many, but such

challenges also present possibilities for reimaging faculty policy and practice, especially as

related to equity, diversity, and inclusion in academe.

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Appendix A

Examples of COVID-19 Policies and Practices

Policy or Practice	Example
Emergency Funds for caregiving	University of Texas at Austin: "Childcare has proved to be a major challenge for faculty members. In response to school and day care closures, the university partnered with organizations to make childcare more accessible. Every faculty and staff member has access to Bright Horizons Back-Up Care. This program helps arrange high-quality care with an in-home care provider or in one of our centers with enhanced COVID-19 protocols. Each eligible employee receives 10 days of Back-Up Care per year. You also have the option to secure care from within your personal network (a neighbor, friend, or babysitter) with a reimbursement of $100 per day up to the 10 days of care available per year."
Suspension of teaching evaluations	Georgetown University: "The University's Guidelines for Submission of Rank and Tenure Applications require that standardized course evaluations be included in the application file, when available. Given the disruptions to academic and personal life caused by the coronavirus—in particular, the cessation of in-person class meetings and the forced transition to remote instruction, this requirement was suspended for Spring 2020, Fall 2020, and Spring 2021. Faculty should follow campus policy. Main Campus, Medical Center, and Law Center faculty may choose whether to include Spring 2020, Fall 2020, and Spring 2021 evaluations."
Incorporation of Holistic Teaching Measures	Binghamton University: "For spring 2020, instructors have been encouraged to modify their syllabi to account for the academic disruption and the shift to remote instruction. Quizzes, assignments and tests completed before the shift to remote instruction should not be re-weighted to change their percentage of the final grade unless students opt in to the changes. For students who opt out, alternatives will need to be offered."

COVID-19 POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Workload Modifications	West Virginia University: "Pandemic-related changes to internal and external service commitments will vary. Faculty members may find that their service activities shift significantly, with some areas of service increasing while others decrease. If a significant portion of their workload varies, faculty members are strongly encouraged to provide a detailed narrative of the ways in which their service obligations have been altered because of the pandemic. In evaluating service, special weight should be given to contributions that advance unit-wide teaching and learning during this period, and to service efforts utilizing the faculty member's expertise that support community responses to the COVID-19 crisis. In evaluating service during this period, committees and unit leaders are urged to give greater weight to the quality and impact of the service work instead of the amount of service provided."
COVID Tenure Delay	Michigan State University: "In Spring 2020, MSU Academic Governance approved a blanket one-year extension for tenure and continuing system faculty and academic specialists. The time from appointment or the last personnel action (i.e., reappointment) minus the extension year will be used for evaluation."
Pandemic Impact Statement	Indiana University: "Individual units may encourage faculty to include COVID-impact statements as part of the annual review or other evaluation processes. These statements give faculty the opportunity to highlight their efforts to respond and adapt in the context of pandemic-related challenges."

Training/guidance for campus evaluators	University of Denver**:** "In evaluating the attached portfolio, we ask that you consider such effects of COVID-19. Please assess the value and influence of the faculty member's contributions, while recognizing the disruptions in those contributions that might have been the result of the pandemic. In evaluating a faculty member's work, please note that some faculty members have accepted a one-year delay in the timing of their reviews for reappointment, promotion, and/or tenure. We ask that you not use higher standards to judge the work of faculty members whose reviews have been delayed than you would use if there were no delay. Faculty members have been invited to write a COVID-19 Impact Statement to describe the effects that the pandemic has had on their work. Such a statement might or might not be included in the portfolio of review materials you have received. The lack of a statement does not mean the pandemic had no effects, only that a faculty member has chosen not to document the effects in their portfolio. In addition, instead of providing the results of student evaluations of courses taught during the pandemic, faculty might substitute a statement about teaching challenges they faced because of the pandemic. Such a statement might or might not also be included in the review portfolio you have received. Importantly, please note that some faculty members, especially faculty members of historically underrepresented and marginalized groups including women faculty, have been affected more than others by the pandemic, as described in the accompanying references. Such unequal effects might not be well documented in statements by a faculty member, but we hope you will nonetheless keep such unequal effects in mind as you assess a faculty member's portfolio."