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AFUM Update

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Jim McClymer

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AFUM UPDATE

www.AFUM.org or www.AFUM.info

3/20/2020

Jim McClymer, AFUM President

Dear Colleagues,

AFUM has been engaged in collaborative work with UMS to best respond to the unprecedented challenges caused by the pandemic. While more work remains to be done, AFUM and UMS remain committed to working together to solve problems as they arise.

Below are updates on important issues raised by our members. Remember, our colleagues are a great resource during this professionally and personally challenging time. Before we review recent efforts do note that the Delegate Assembly scheduled for April is postponed.

DELEGATE ASSEMBLY and AFUM OFFICERS

Vice President Jamie Moreira

At its March meeting, the AFUM Executive committee charged the Elections Committee, consisting of chapter presidents, to make a decision regarding the Delegate Assembly and, if necessary, to develop a processes to keep AFUM running if elections are not held in April. In collaboration with UMPA and ACSUM, we decided to postpone the DA until an unspecified date. We also voted unanimously to extend the current executive officers until such time as a DA can be held, but in any event not later than September 30. The Elections committee also approved a motion to provisionally accept the Treasurer's 2020-21 budget, again pending formal approval at a Delegate Assembly. The budget provides for no increase in AFUM portion of dues.

The Elections Committee and the Executive Committee will reschedule the DA as soon as practical. Notification will be sent as soon as we can confirm a date.

SPRING 2020 COVID-19 ISSUES

Student Evaluations of Teaching (SET)

For the Spring 2020 semester, the results of the Student Evaluation shall not be placed in the personnel file or used for any negative action. Neither will signed comments be placed in the personnel file.

For purposes of evaluation, reappointment, or promotion, or tenure that includes the Spring 2020 semester, the University shall consider all work evaluated to have been completed in 1 fewer semester. This provision does not change any contractual deadlines.

TENURE CLOCK

While our AFUM Collective Bargaining Agreement allows a tenure stream faculty member to stop their tenure clock for some reasons, and to request it for “other exceptional life events”, this pandemic creates the need to extend the ability for tenure stream faculty to initiate an extension of the probationary period.

AFUM and UMS agree that faculty may initiate an extension to their probationary appointment for a year. Initiation occurs by notifying the appropriate administrator. For faculty planning to apply for tenure in Fall 2020 the latest you can initiate the extension is September 15, 2020. This applies to any tenure-stream faculty employed during Spring 2020.

The maximum of two-years extension still holds. If this is an issue for you and you are due to apply for tenure this Fall please contact your AFUM Chapter leadership.

Our new contract also provides for restarting the tenure clock if you later change your mind by notifying the appropriate administrator and peer chair in a memo. The appropriate administrator is often a chair or director.

HEALTHCARE:

Wellness: With our health care system under stress from the pandemic, and the Governor’s order prohibiting non-urgent medical procedures, AFUM is working with UMS to find a way to extend Level 1 status. Discussions still ongoing.

Rx refills: The Maine Superintendent of Insurance issued a [directive](#) to allow early refills of most prescriptions. It took a few days for CIGNA to enact this directive. AFUM is extremely concerned that inappropriate restrictions are still being imposed. It is our hope that UMS and CIGNA will reverse course and honor the directive and focus on the needs of our members. Discussion is ongoing.

In order to have early refill you or the pharmacy must call CIGNA and request a refill early waiver. If you are denied please contact your AFUM chapter Leadership and the EBS.

While we fully intend that CIGNA and UMS provide early access to refills, there is legitimate concern with shortages. While there is no actual toilet paper shortage, it is difficult for many to find. Replace TP by lifesaving drugs in this story and it is easy to see how fear can make the worst case scenarios real. If you need an early refill by all means, if you can hold out or take fewer months, please consider doing so. Also push your pharmacy to provide Rx by mail or drive-by pickup. You can also use CIGNA Home Delivery for the duration of this situation.

SABBATICALS

Initiating discussions on impact of COVID-19 on Sabbaticals. Please contact your AFUM chapter leadership with your concerns.

BrightSpace

AFUM is continuing to work with UMS and the campuses on the transition from BlackBoard (BB) to BrightSpace (BS). These efforts have slowed down in recent weeks but discussion between local AFUM leaders and the appropriate people on each campus has been initiated. The plan was to back up BB, have faculty choose what they want to migrate then have it migrated. For those things that don't migrate, staff would assist or create alternative "equivalent" structures. As we get through the coming weeks, discussions will resume.

AFUM has also be working to develop ways of conducting needed business during this challenging time and provide the following advice.

PEER REVIEWS:

Meetings: Peer Committees should use Zoom or other technology to conduct peer reviews.

Deadlines: While it is important that effort be made to meet deadlines related evaluations, if extenuating circumstances develop in which a delay is needed you may request an extension, notify your Department Chair and Peer Chair. This is another area in which AFUM and UMS are working cooperatively so that extensions will be easily granted. If issues arise please contact your Chapter Leadership.

Peer Committee Signatures:

Peer review letter signatures options (The CBA states that all members of a peer committee must sign letters.)

An email to peer chair from members authorizing the chair to sign for the. "p.p." is an abbreviation of the Latin word *Per Procuracionem* meaning by the agency of, or on behalf of. When you are asked to pp a letter it means that you should sign the letter on behalf of another. Just write pp and then your own signature in place of where theirs would be written and then write who you are signing for. (Peer committees should decide if email approvals are to be submitted with file or kept by chair as back up. Some programs may choose to have one email string that all faculty "sign" electronically so there is transparency and that can be forwarded with peer evaluation letter and file or stored as back up depending upon peer committee policies.)

Signatures can be added to Word documents and PDFs if people have necessary software and know how.

Signatures can be scanned or photographed and sent in to peer committee chair for inclusion on document.

You can also use a shared Google Doc. To sign, you can go to insert on the ribbon and insert a drawing, new. If you have a touchscreen or iPad you can draw your signature or insert an image

of a saved picture of your signature from several choices.

In Isolated Solidarity,
Jim