COVID-19 Issues

1. **Unit members being required to work on campus?**
   Response: It is the understanding of the CoP representatives that no faculty member is required to go to campus to teach at this time. As to librarians, none at BSU are on campus now. At FiSU, two volunteered to be regarded as "essential" and are working. The CoP representatives will inquire if librarians are being required to be on campus while other employees have been told to stay at home.

2. **Will faculty (librarians) we required to return to campus this semester?**
   Response: The CoP representatives reported it is accurate that at some campuses (BSU, FrSU, FiSU and WoSU) faculty will be working remotely for the balance of the semester. The representatives are unsure the arrangements concerning librarians.

3. **Librarians working remotely.**
   Response: See the response to #1

4. **Access to faculty/librarian offices.**
   Response: The Provosts explained the process in effect at their campuses. Permission or notice is required for a unit member to be on campus at this time at some universities and faculty at those universities have been informed.

5. **Evaluations currently in progress.**
   Response: The Committee agreed the unit member and evaluators may transmit the materials electronically. Members will be provided the evaluations electronically via their campus e-mail addresses. The members may respond electronically. The recipient of the member's e-mail will acknowledge receipt so the member may be assured the response was received and will be added to the dossier.

6. **Personnel deadlines/response deadlines.**
   Response: The Committee saw no need to alter existing deadlines for personnel actions.

7. **Tenure eligibility (extension of "clock").**
   Response: The Committee saw no need to alter existing deadlines for tenure eligibility.

8. **Spring 2020 day part-time faculty and DGCE faculty evaluations.**
   Response: The Committee agreed that there will be no evaluations of part-time faculty teaching in the day program. In DGCE, instructors who taught ourses that were scheduled to be taught in an online modality shall be evaluated. In DGCE, instructors of face-to-face courses that were then moved to remote instruction will not be evaluated.

9. **Student evaluations for day Spring 2020 semester.**
    Response: The Committee agreed student evaluations will not be conducted for day Spring 2020 courses, and as a result faculty will be held harmless[1] for the lack of student evaluations for the Spring 2020 semester. For DGCE courses, student evaluations will conducted only for courses that were scheduled to be instructed in an online modality, and as a result faculty who were not required to have student evaluations conducted for the Spring 2020 instructional period will be held harmless.

10. **Classroom observations for Spring 2020 semester.**
    Response: Classroom observations will not be conducted in the day program.

11. **Advising obligations.**
    Response: The Committee agreed that faculty should continue to perform advising responsibilities electronically during this crisis period. If the faculty advisor is unable to perform these duties, a professional advisor will assist the student. The CoP representatives confirmed there is no intention to reassign students to a professional advisor.

12. **Service obligations.**
    Response: When considering the evaluation of service obligations, the CoP representatives expressed the view that everybody is doing the best they can. There is no intention to penalize unit members if the committees on which they serve could not meet. There will be a reasonable shift in expectations this semester due to these novel circumstances.

13. **Continuing scholarship (conferences canceled, etc.)**
    Response: If a unit member being evaluated was scheduled to present or attend, but the conference was cancelled, the unit member should inform the evaluators of this, and provide evidence or samples of the work, such as an abstract.

14. **APRs that cannot be completed.**
    Response: The CoP representatives explained that if an APR cannot be completed due to the disruption, the unit member should explain this when being evaluated for the APR.

15. **Refund for canceled university-related travel (conferences, etc.)**
    Response: The universities will address issues of refunds as they determine. The CoP representatives declined to set a policy.

16. **Post-Tenure Review deadline of April 1, 2020.**
    Response: The Committee saw no reason to alter the PTR calendar.

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[1] In this context, "held harmless" is defined as present and future evaluators not drawing negative inferences based upon the absence of student evaluations or classroom observations for the Spring 2020 semester.

17. **Student complaints [how will they be handled?]**
Response: The CoP representatives explained the chair or EO officer (depending upon the nature of the complaint) and unit member will communicate in accordance with university policy, which at this time means they will communicate electronically.

18. **Student access to online remote learning.**
Response: In response to concerns that students do not receive or have difficulty with remote learning, the CoP representatives replied evaluators will consider the circumstances. They also offered that the chief academic officers are concerned and attentive to the fact that students may have technology and internet service issues to address.

19. **Communication with students.**
Response: Professor O'Donnell noted that communication is occurring by e-mail, primarily. Dr. Cardelle commented that some schools are allowing access to software by which faculty send emails that are texted to the students' phones. The replies of the students are received in the unit member's e-mail.

20. **Obligations related to students with disability.**
Response: The CoP representatives replied faculty should continue to work with the campus disability resource officer questions concerning accommodations for disabled students.

21. **Tutoring.**
Response: Prof. O'Donnell asked if the schools were providing tutors to students while studying remotely. The Provosts explained that tutoring was being made available at their campuses. In addition, most schools are remotely operating their writing centers.

22. **Pass/fail options.**
Response: The CoP representatives explained the universities that are considering such options will address them through local governance.

23. **Online and remote delivery of lectures.**
Response: Prof. O'Donnell asked if any campus is not permitting both/all options of instruction, and is training being made available to faculty? There is training for Blackboard and Google Hangouts, Provost Cardelle replied. FiSU also is making help desk support available to unit members. The Committee acknowledged the value of sharing the training provided by or prepared at one school with the other schools. Provosts Cardelle and Ismaili both offered to share the links to training that each has utilized.

24. **Will software subscriptions necessary to teach online/remotely be supplied/paid for by the university?**
Response: Provosts Cardelle and Ismaili explained the reactions at their universities, but this is a fiscal issue beyond the range of their authority. It is dependent upon the schools, they replied.

25. Privacy issues for online/remote teaching.
Response: The Association representatives expressed concern of faculty of being "watched." It would be helpful if the provosts could put out something similar to what the Provost at NYU circulated. Prof. O'Donnell stated there is contract language that is applicable, and the union would enforce the language, if required.

26. Academic integrity (tests, final exams, etc.)
Response: Faculty are concerned about students' academic integrity and how to address these concerns. The Provosts explained that FiSU bought some licenses for two departments for specific software. BSU's testing center is trying to address these issues, as well.

27. Office hours.
Response: The Committee agreed office hours may be conducted online during this period of remote teaching.

28. Modes of instruction not adaptable to online/remote teaching.
Response: The Committee acknowledged that faculty are trying alternatives, In some courses, students will be graded upon work performed (ensemble music, for instance) up to the shift to remote teaching. The parties acknowledged this situation is dynamic.

29. Availability of laptops for faculty?
Response: The CoP representatives replied that to the extent this has been a problem for faculty, especially for part-time and DGCE faculty, some schools have been loaning laptops. The faculty member should check at their school.

30. Can faculty take [their] desktop home?
Response: No.

31. Sick leave/administrative leave for FT faculty and librarians.
Response: The Committee agreed this question is presently moot.

32. Sick leave for part-time & DGCE faculty.
Response: The CoP representatives stated these employees are entitled to statutory leave under state law, and may receive benefits under the newly enacted Federal law. The Association replied it does not want to see people off the payroll. The CoP representatives replied the availability of leave all depends upon the particular circumstances.

33. Sick leave bank.
   Response: The Committee acknowledged the parties agreed unit members who belong to the bank do not have to be off the payroll for five days. The usual contract terms will apply in the event the bank is close to depletion. Prof. O'Donnell noted there is only one opportunity for a unit member to join the bank in the fall. He asked if the BHE would consider permitting non-bank members to join the bank earlier. Mr. Cox and Prof. O'Donnell shared the opinion that the parties could waive the contract provision to allow early joining of the bank. Mr. Cox replied he would consult with his principals and reply to Prof. O'Donnell.

34. Virtual governance committee meetings.
   Response: The Committee agrees virtual committee meetings are positive and necessary, and are suitable for governance meetings. The universities and committees need to assure the members of the university community can observe. Furthermore, the Committee sees value in the governance committees being prepared to start working promptly upon the start of the next academic year. They agreed that the universities and local unions should collaborate to be prepared and ready to start working as close to go September first as possible. Department meetings also shall continue virtually.

35. Faculty/librarian searches.
   Response: The Committee observed most searches are nearly complete, those underway will be conducted virtually. Every department has the discretion to decide if a search now in progress will proceed or not.

36. Department chair elections.
   Response: The Committee does not endorse extending the time for elections. The Department should conduct the election electronically by a process it determines.

37. AUC elections at Fitchburg and Worcester.
   Response: The Association will address this issue.

38. Grievances.
   Response: The hearings will be handled electronically unless the hearing participants mutually agree to meet in person. The parties encourage reasonableness in extending deadlines for hearing and responses when requested.

39. Librarians not able to reduce vacation leave by June 30, 2020.
   On March 26, 2020 the BHE agreed to extend the deadline to September 1, 2020.

40. Graduation.
   Response: The Provosts reported that most schools have postponed their ceremonies, and have not yet rescheduled them. This item will remain on the agenda.