MEMORANDUM

DATE: October 15, 2015 (Revised October 16, 2015)

TO: Deans, Directors, and Department Chairs

FROM: Sarah Mangelsdorf, Provost and Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs

RE: Tenure-clock extensions for illness or disability: note modified guidelines and procedures

As you know, Faculty Policies and Procedures allows probationary faculty to request extensions of the tenure-clock in cases involving the birth or adoption of a child, significant elder care obligations, or other circumstances – including medical circumstances – beyond the control of the faculty member that significantly impede progress toward tenure. Requests for the birth or adoption of a child go directly from the faculty member to the provost; requests for other reasons are made to the provost and are approved by the University Committee on the recommendation of the department chair and the department’s Executive Committee. (Please see Faculty Policies and Procedures, chapter 7.04.)

In cases of faculty making requests based on illness or disability, it is important to maintain the confidentiality of the faculty member making the request. In such requests, the department chair should work with the school/college Divisional Disability Representative (DDR) to request medical information that would support the request. That information is to be shared only with the DDR. The DDR will share with the chair/director/dean and executive committee only what is essential for them to know to make a final determination on the tenure clock extension. Any confidential information should not be discussed or commented on outside of closed session. No information or question regarding the disability, medical condition, or medical information, however slight, should be mentioned/posed to any other party or to the person requesting the leave except through the DDR. (Please see http://www.secfac.wisc.edu/Rule_waivers.htm, “Guidelines for Submitting Requests for Rule Waivers -- Tenure Clock Extensions, Leaves of Absence, Conversions, Dual Roles,” on the Secretary of the Faculty website.)

The point of the guidelines is to ensure that faculty members making requests are clear that personal and sensitive information will not be shared with colleagues who will eventually be making decisions about tenure and promotion.

If you have any questions about the policy on tenure-clock extensions, please contact Michael Bernard-Donals, Vice Provost for Faculty and Staff (michael.bernarddonals@wisc.edu, 262-9314), or Steve Smith, Secretary of the Faculty (sof@secfac.wisc.edu). You can also contact Barbara Lanser, the university’s Disability Coordinator/Employment, for questions about confidentiality or the accommodation process (barbara.lanser@wisc.edu, 263-2407).

A list of the Divisional Disability Representatives can be found here: http://www.oed.wisc.edu/divisional-disability-representatives.htm

CC: Barbara Lanser, Disability Coordinator/Employment (OED)