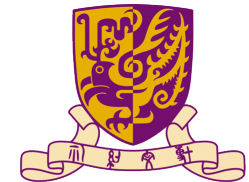


# Impact of Covid-19 on Women in Higher Education

APRU Plus Webinar

**Prof. Mai Har SHAM**  
**Pro-Vice-Chancellor / Vice-President**  
**The Chinese University of Hong Kong**

2 December 2020

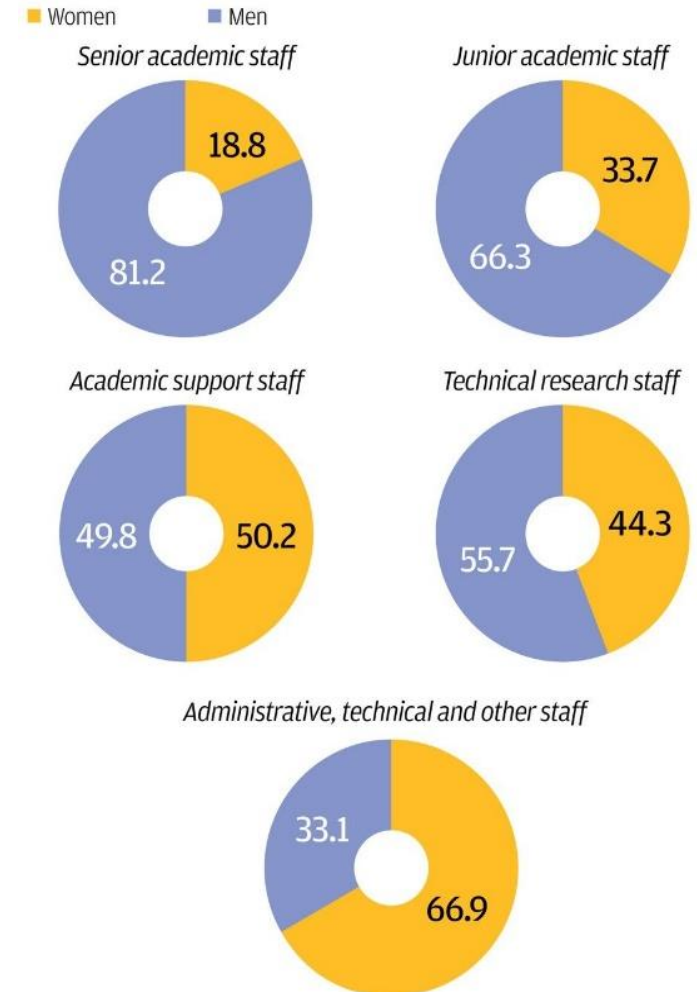


香港中文大學  
The Chinese University of Hong Kong

# Scene in Hong Kong

- Overall female academics: 40.3%
- Senior female academics: 18.8%
- Slightly **less male-dominated in lower ranks**
  - Junior female academics: 33.7%
  - Female academic support staff: 50.2%

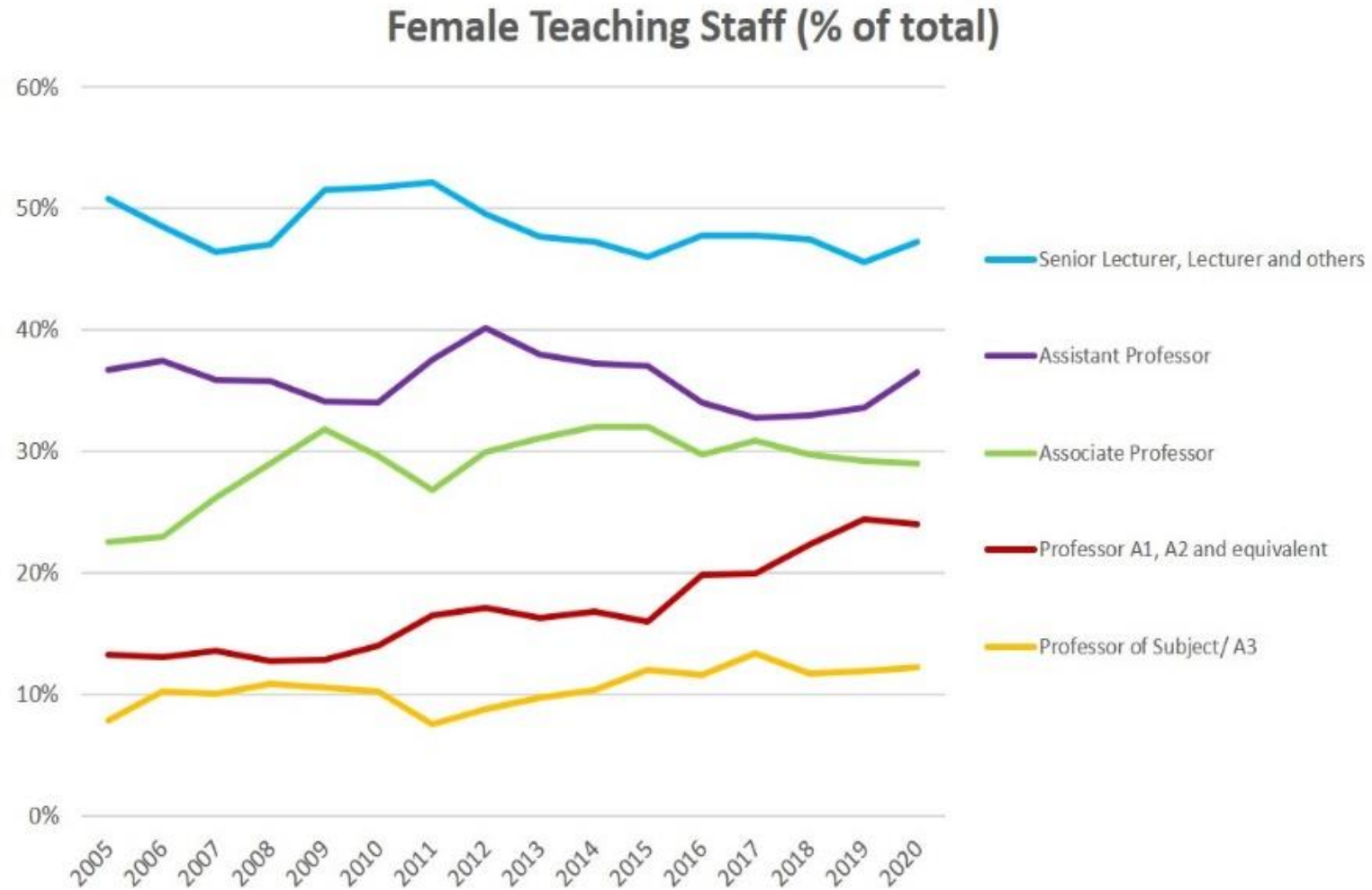
Gender breakdown of different grades in the eight public universities in Hong Kong (%)



(Figures for 2017-18, Source: [SCMP](#), 2018)

# Scene in CUHK

## Female Distribution by Rank



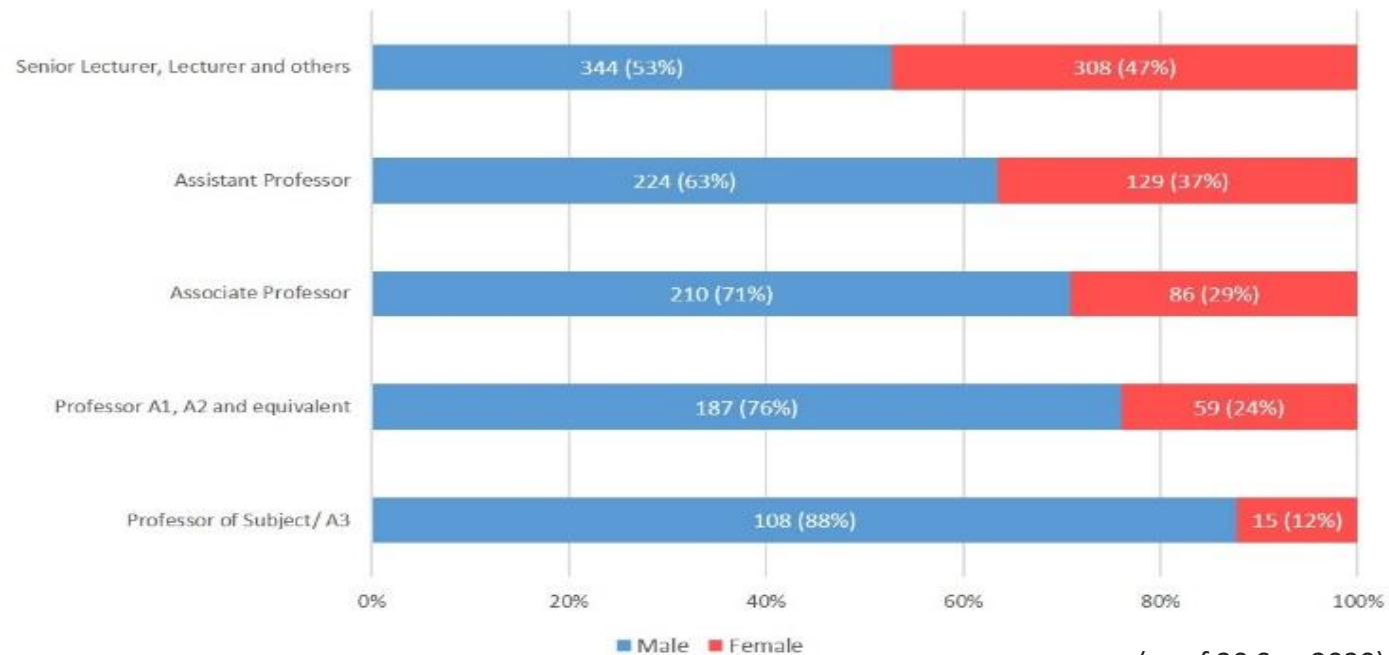
(as of 30 Sep 2020)

# Scene in CUHK

## Female Distribution by Rank

Rank	HK	CUHK
Overall female academics	40.3%	35.7%
Junior female academics	33.7%	40.2% (CUHK Rank – Assoc./Assist. Professors and Lecturers)
Senior female academics	18.8%	20.1% (CUHK Rank – Full Professors)

## Gender Distribution of Teaching Staff (by Rank)



F: 597  
M: 1,073  
Total: 1,670

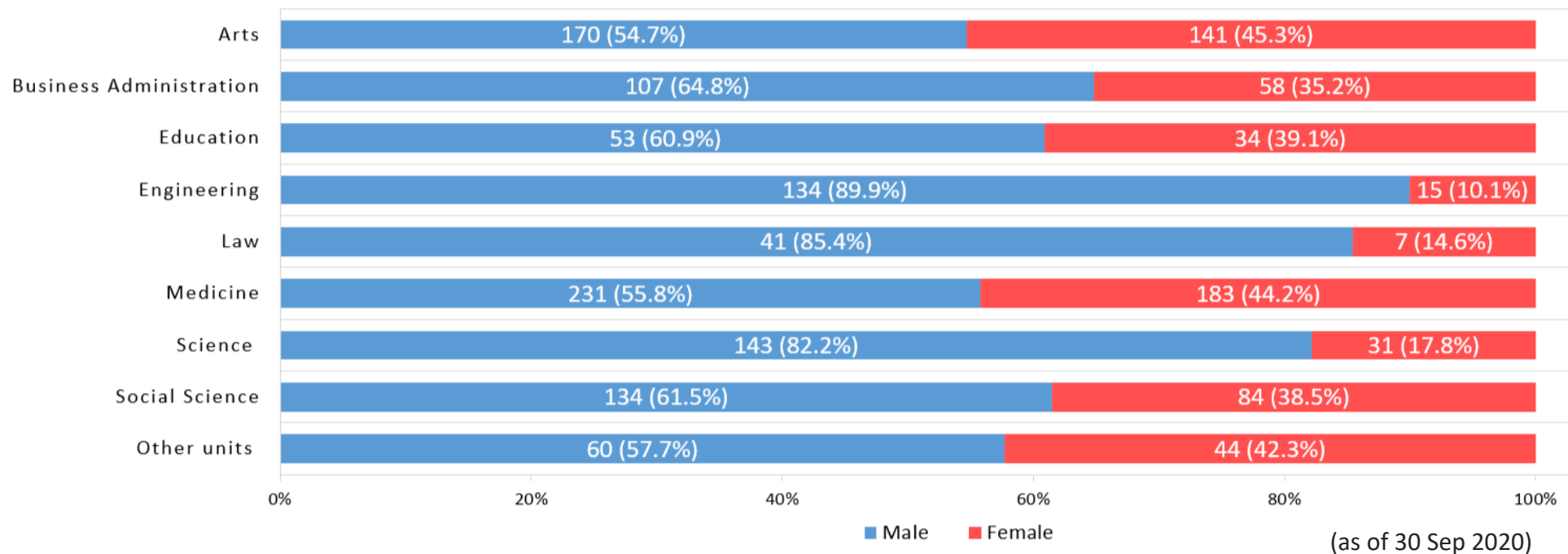
(as of 30 Sep 2020)

# Scene in CUHK

## Female Distribution by Faculty

- Women ratio more balanced: **Arts** (45.3%) & **Medicine** (44.2%)
- Women **underrepresented**: **Engineering** (10.1%), **Law** (14.6%) & **Science** (17.8%)

Gender Distribution of Academic and Teaching Staff (by Faculty)



# CUHK's Support Measures

## Female Academic Staff Support Network

- **Mentorship programme** by Task Force on Women & Family-Friendly Policies
- Assist female faculty to pursue their goals through advice from senior female professors
- Approx. 60 advisors & advisees currently
- Cover work-life integration, career development & soft skills advancement





# CUHK's Support Measures

## Deferral of Substantiation Review

- Allow for **deferral request for 1 year** if candidate's research is adversely affected by pandemic
- Ease pressure on women academics who shoulder more family responsibilities during Covid-19

## Employee Assistance Programme

- Provide **professional personal counselling & consultation** to staff members
- Women academics can seek professional help if they feel distressed / experience anxiety with Covid-19



# Impact of Covid-19 on CUHK Female Academics

## Mini survey - Impact of Covid-19 on Female Academics at CUHK

- Distribution: 57 advisors & advisees (all females) of CUHK Female Professorial Staff Support Network
- Response rate: 46%

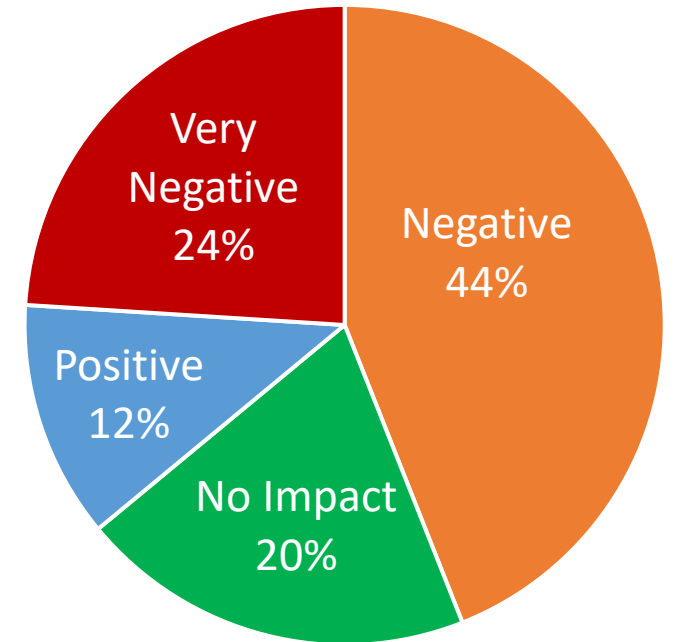


# Impact of Covid-19 on CUHK Female Academics

## Research

- Research has negatively affected:
  - Overall productivity of research (68%)
  - Field work / data collection (76%)
  - Preparation of publications & funding proposals (60%)
- Half of respondents: No impact on availability of funding

Overall productivity of research

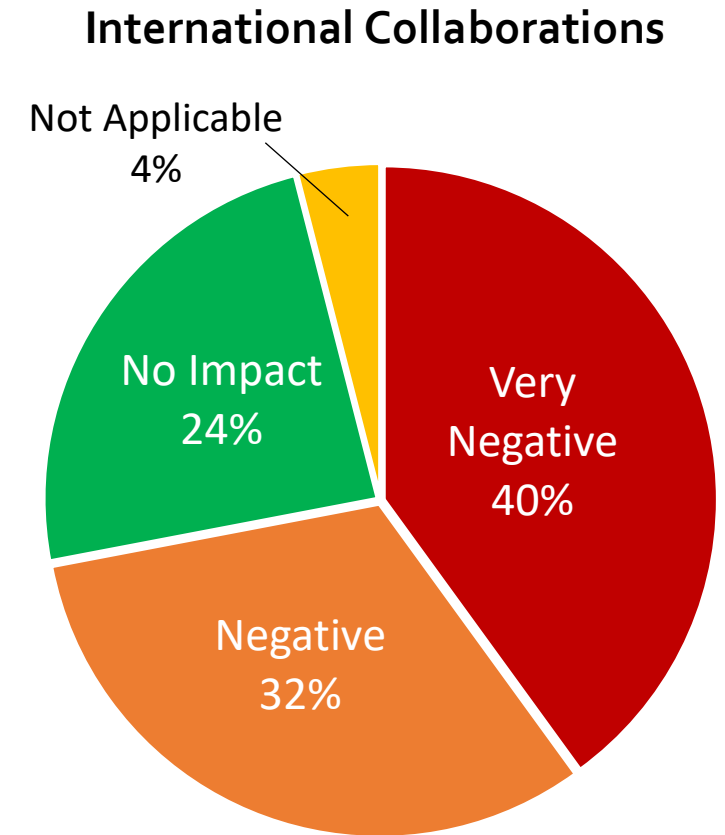


Note: % in blanket refers to % of respondents who rated very negative & negative for area concerned

# Impact of Covid-19 on CUHK Female Academics

## International Collaboration

- Adversely affected by pandemic:
  - International collaborations (72%)
  - Ability to join international conferences (92%)
  - Ability to undertake fellowship & visitorship programs (76%)



Note: % in blanket refers to % of respondents who rated very negative & negative for area concerned

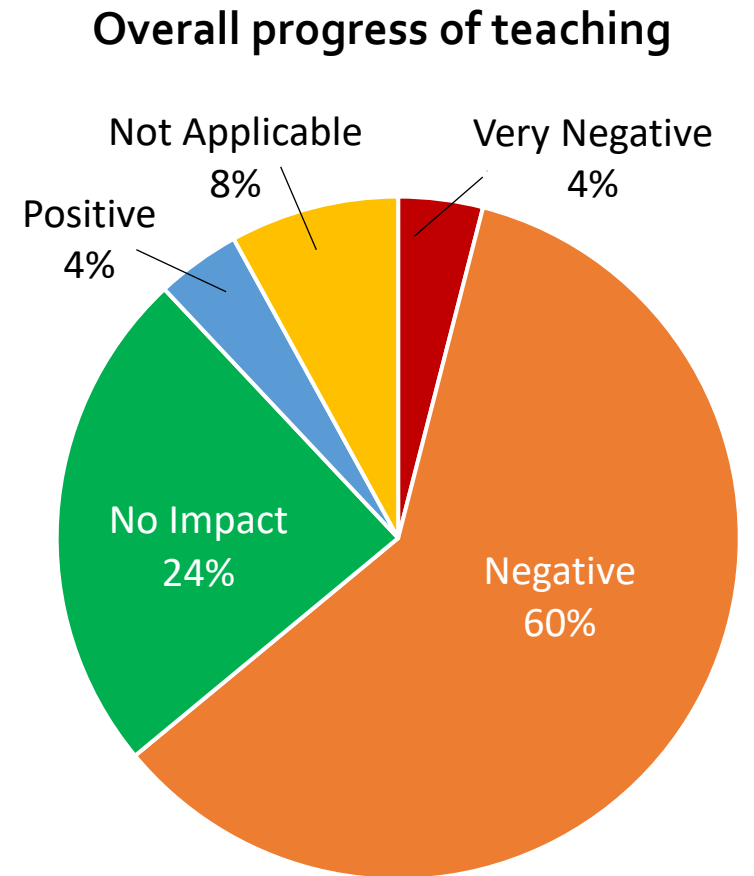
# Impact of Covid-19 on CUHK Female Academics

## Teaching

- Almost all classes conducted online at CUHK, bringing challenges to teachers.

Pandemic impacted:

- Overall progress of teaching (64%)
- Supervision, student assessment & mentoring (72%)



Note: % in blanket refers to % of respondents who rated very negative & negative for area concerned

# Impact of Covid-19 on CUHK Female Academics

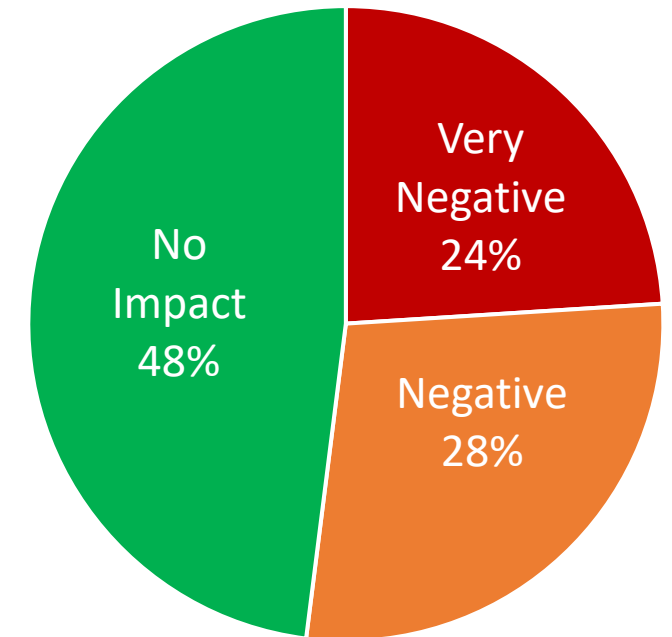
## Personal Well-being

- Not as badly affected as professional career

Pandemic impacted:

- Family commitment (48%)
- Work-life balance (52%)
- Mental health (48%)
- Half of respondents: Pandemic has no effect on these aspects

Work-life Balance



Note: % in blanket refers to % of respondents who rated very negative & negative for area concerned

# Recommendations

- Set up support group for female academics across different faculties
- Adjustment/flexibility to annual review system
- Reach out to funding agencies to secure automatic extension of funding, reports & deadlines
- Provide additional teaching support
- Support to graduate students are equally important

**Thank you**