

# JOHN CARROLL UNIVERSITY

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

*William P. Donnelly '83*  
*Chair of the Board*

September 11, 2020

Dear Faculty:

I am writing to you on behalf of the JCU Board of Directors. The Board of Directors acknowledges the challenging times facing our country, higher education, and JCU. We appreciate the Faculty's outstanding service and diligence in teaching and advising our students, and carrying out our Jesuit mission in fulfillment of the University's academic learning goals.

The purpose of this communication is to share with you that the Board of Directors has initiated a Faculty Handbook review process. The goal is to provide tools that will enable the University to adjust to changing market conditions in a timely way. It is an extremely important step toward ensuring that John Carroll and its various elements can reach financial sustainability and maintain that in the future. The process includes presenting Faculty with several proposed amendments, consistent with the amendment process outlined in the Faculty Handbook. The Board believes the proposed amendments are critical to sustain the University for the future and to ensure we are acting in the best interests of our students and the University as a whole.

The current Faculty Handbook limits the ability of John Carroll's Board of Directors and University leaders to act effectively and promptly in the best interests of the institution, and is not in line with best practices. The Board is committed to ensuring the long-term viability of John Carroll University and believes there are opportunities to streamline processes in the current Handbook to enable the institution to act with greater agility and speed, consistent with student needs and strategic initiatives. In particular, it is critical that the institution and its leaders have the tools necessary to address financial challenges in a timely and thoughtful manner. The tools currently available to the institution are insufficient under certain provisions and threaten the long-term viability of the University. The recent COVID-19 pandemic have amplified the challenges in a way that demands action now. However, the focus of our efforts is not on the short term. The impacts of the pandemic will recede, but John Carroll has more fundamental challenges that go beyond the current crisis. We see these amendments as an important step toward putting the University on more solid footing and securing its future.

In particular, the Board is proposing amendments related to fringe benefits, the process for amendments, and the addition of a new section to address budgetary hardship. Related to each of these, the Board's objective is to update processes while allowing appropriate Faculty representation and input. The Board welcomes ideas and comments related to these or other potential amendments to the Handbook. Our desire is to work collaboratively with the Faculty.

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The process we are following complies with the Faculty Handbook and will include the required notices and discussions with the Faculty. In working through this process, the Board and University leaders, including myself, will prioritize clear communication and active listening to feedback from faculty.

The current plan is to share a draft proposal with the Faculty Handbook Committee and the Faculty, via Faculty Council, during the week of September 21, 2020. A broader discussion with Faculty and Staff to review the proposed amendments will take place the week of September 28, 2020. The Board intends to coordinate with Faculty Council to schedule this discussion. Details about this discussion, including date, time, and a Zoom link, will be shared ahead of time.

I welcome your input and cooperation throughout this process. At its conclusion, I anticipate that John Carroll will have the tools to become a stronger institution that is better situated in the future to carry out its mission for our students and the community.

Sincerely,



Bill Donnelly  
Chair, John Carroll University Board of Directors