

JOHN CARROLL UNIVERSITY

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

William P. Donnelly '83
Chair of the Board

September 17, 2020

Dear Faculty Council, Faculty Handbook Committee, and JCU Faculty:

In my letter dated September 11, 2020, I notified the JCU Faculty that the University's Board of Directors has initiated a Faculty Handbook review process and would be proposing three amendments to the Handbook at this time. The purpose of this communication is to share the three (3) proposed amendments and reasoning behind each, as well as provide updates on the next steps of the process.

The University's Board of Directors has proposed amendments related to fringe benefits, the process for amendments, and the addition of a new section to the Faculty Handbook to address budgetary hardship. The three proposed amendments, and comparison documents, are attached to this letter. They also will be available at a webpage that will be available soon for review and input from the University community. In summary, the three proposed amendments include:

- **Fringe Benefits:** This proposed amendment would establish a process for involving faculty and other members of the JCU community in a Benefits Committee. The Benefits Committee would review proposed changes to fringe benefits offerings, which then would be approved by the Board of Directors. This amendment would result in a benefits process that is more consistent with best practices in higher education institutions. Further, the amendment would permit the University to adopt common benefits plans for all employees of the University, including as needed to address extenuating circumstances that may include budgetary hardship and/or changes in legal requirements.
- **Budgetary Hardship:** This proposed amendment would add a provision to the Handbook to permit the Board of Directors to make a budgetary hardship designation and then involve the faculty in a process to recommend actions necessary to address such a hardship. The provision would permit the Board, upon recommendation by University leaders, to consider among all options available faculty personnel actions such as reducing the number or size of departments or programs or other restructuring. The Board believes the current tools for leadership and faculty to address financial challenges are outdated, blunt and ultimately ineffective. JCU needs better tools to ensure its financial sustainability.

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- Handbook Amendment Process: This proposed amendment would continue to involve faculty in the review and input on Faculty Handbook amendments, but streamline the complex and lengthy amendment process. The Board believes having a more efficient and timely process is necessary for JCU to effectively navigate in an increasingly changing and competitive environment.

In the coming weeks, the Board and its Faculty Handbook Task Force will follow the Faculty Handbook's stated process to seek input from Faculty and the JCU community on these proposed amendments. In addition to holding discussions with Faculty as provided in the Handbook process, we hope to meet with Faculty Council leaders, the Faculty Handbook Committee, and other key campus constituencies to discuss the proposed amendments and seek their input. As provided for in the Handbook amendment procedures, I invite you to join me and University leaders for an All Faculty and Staff Zoom meeting on September 30, 2020 at 2 p.m. In advance of this meeting, I ask that you please submit any questions via the form that will be available on the amendment process webpage. The log-in details for this Zoom meeting will be shared by September 29. During the 30-day review period under the Handbook, I also invite Faculty and Staff to submit comments and feedback via this amendment process webpage. The comment period will be open until October 19, 2020. Following this 30-day period, the Board plans to continue the amendment review process as specified in the Faculty Handbook.

The Board intends to utilize this review phase of the amendment process to listen carefully to the input and suggestions from faculty and other members of the campus community.

JCU is an institution we all love and want to flourish. Our goal with these amendments is to provide improved tools which can help to position JCU for future and sustained success. We recognize that they are only small steps forward, and we are confident JCU leadership and faculty can develop in collaboration a plan to fully address today's significant challenges. We stand by to assist in any way we can and thank you for your sincere consideration.

Sincerely,



Bill Donnelly
Chair, John Carroll University Board of Directors