

Staff Council Position Statement on University Finance and Operational Excellence

March 24, 2017

Difficult decisions merit thoughtful responses. We thank the Senior Leadership Team for beginning these discussions in an open and honest manner. We believe in order for the University to move forward in this difficult time, this spirit of openness and honesty should continue. Every decision impacts our service to our students as well as a person's livelihood and their sense of worth. To remain true to our Jesuit identity, it is our hope and expectation that all staff members affected will be treated with dignity, respect, and compassion.

As such, we, the Staff Council of John Carroll University, respectfully submit the following recommendations to the Senior Leadership Team regarding University Finance and Operational Excellence. These recommendations come directly from the John Carroll University staff based on feedback solicited via an online form and at the March 22, 2017 Staff Council meeting.

1. We recommend that all entities of John Carroll University, including the Board of Directors, the Senior Leadership Team, and all campus departments, demonstrate a heightened awareness of our community's fragile financial position and act with **improved financial stewardship**. This may include **more prudent spending** on events such as conferences, travel, University celebrations, summer Staff Picnic, Alumni weekends, and Board of Directors' events, until the budget benchmarks are met. The Staff Council pledges to help staff members understand that these cuts are for the good of the University. We request **improved transparency of University expenditures**, especially large ones like the aforementioned events.
2. In keeping with our mission of being men and women for and with others, we implore the University to take **all possible measures to avoid involuntary elimination of staff positions**. The Staff Council has received extensive feedback from staff members that the following measures would be preferred across the board over the involuntary elimination of even one staff position.
 - a. Specifically, we support the implementation of a **voluntary or university-wide furlough program**. We understand there are many factors that may affect such a decision. In cases of a voluntary furlough program, we suggest the employee and their department work out details with the support and encouragement of Human Resources as well as the Senior Leadership Team. That is to say, staff members interested in the voluntary furlough program should be encouraged to do so rather than having their requests declined by their departments.
 - b. We also encourage the exploration of 10 or 11 month positions for staff who are currently 12-month employees.
 - c. Additionally, we support the implementation of a **voluntary staff retirement package**. We ask that it be comparable to what is being offered to tenured faculty. We ask that information on this package be presented to the staff as soon as possible.
 - d. If, after attempting the aforementioned measures, the involuntary elimination of staff positions is unavoidable, we urge the University to preserve morale and protect our most vulnerable staff by first offering a **severance package** to staff members who may **elect to voluntarily separate** from the University.
 - e. To the extent possible, a laid-off person should be given **priority for being rehired** if there is a new or open position.

3. We implore the Senior Leadership Team to consider how staff members are affected by employee benefits.
 - a. We urge the University to **retain all benefits**, including vacation time, for any staff members who choose to take advantage of furlough or any other type of reduction in pay. For example, vacation time should not be reduced if an employee chooses to help the University and participate in the voluntary furlough program. We also suggest that once the budget benchmarks are met, individuals may opt to return to their previous schedules and pay rates.
 - b. We strongly recommend **equity between faculty and staff benefits**.
 - c. We request clarification of the statements made regarding the **grandfathering of tuition benefits**. These are one of the greatest benefits for staff members who are degree seekers themselves, or whose spouses and/or children are in school. We urge the University to consider the continuation of these benefits if these staff members are affected by involuntary or voluntary staff eliminations and suggest a four-year vesting timeline (i.e. a staff member with a student currently in high school who is let go would have access to tuition remission for that student throughout their four years in college).
4. We encourage the **Senior Leadership Team** to make a public demonstration of shared sacrifice in terms of their **personal compensation**, especially when considering raises and bonuses in the near future. We additionally recommend that the Senior Leadership Team consider the sacrifice of explicit salary reductions themselves in line with how other staff members may opt to do so through voluntary furlough as outlined above.
5. We appreciate and hold the **expectation of transparency** throughout this process to the entire University community. We request that **information is disseminated equitably and in a timely manner** across divisions so all staff may be informed of decisions throughout this process in a consistent and respectful way.
6. Further, if anything is to be done involuntarily - pay reductions, furloughs, early retirement, or outright elimination of staff positions, we request that both staff members and their departments are **given appropriate notice** to make arrangements, personally and professionally. We suggest that the University **immediately adopt and publicize a standardized notice period** before any such changes are implemented.

Finally, as is stated in the Staff Council constitution, we expect that the Staff Council is **regarded as a consultative body** and be consulted directly for situations that significantly affect the staff. As a body that is highly representative of and well-regarded by the staff constituency, which has an important role to play at our University, we continue to welcome opportunities to provide our input on what is best for the staff and how to disseminate information in respectful ways.

We anticipate engaging further with you on these issues and welcome consultation as these conversations continue.