

# Memo



# ST. JOHN'S UNIVERSITY

Date: August 3, 2022

To: All Deans\*

cc: Joseph E. Oliva, Esq.  
Linda Shannon, J.D.

**Simon G. Møller, Ph.D.**

Provost and Vice President for  
Academic Affairs  
University Distinguished Professor  
and Provost Endowed Chair

Tel (718) 990-6308

Fax (718) 990-3516

mollers@stjohns.edu

---

## SUBJECT: 2022-2023 Academic Year Priorities for Faculty Members

---

I trust you all had a wonderful summer, and I am delighted to welcome you to the 2022-2023 academic year.

Today I write to remind you to finalize and distribute your goals for the upcoming year to your faculty members. Section 14.03 of the *Collective Bargaining Agreement* states, “the Dean’s goals will be aligned to the University’s Strategic Priorities; in particular, to major initiatives of the schools/colleges.” The academic priorities for the upcoming year are outlined below. As Dean, please use them to design goals specific to your school or college. Next May, when faculty submit their annual activity report (AFAR), the goals will be considered as we grant the Faculty Recognition Awards. Please send a copy of the goals you will be sharing with your faculty members to me by August 29, 2022.

We have much to be excited about as we start this new academic year. We will welcome a strong entering freshman class and we will be joined by new faculty colleagues with outstanding scholarly achievements and a commitment to our students. The construction of the new Health Sciences Center is also well underway, a new University Strategic Plan is forthcoming, and aligned with this plan we will develop an Academic Strategic Plan that will have a focus on enrollment, the student experience, retention/persistence, academic distinction and value proposition. We will be using data to drive initiatives and make decisions, providing transparent data dashboards for stakeholders. Within this framework, the academic priorities for the upcoming academic year are as follows:

### ***Enrollment, retention and persistence through a partnership model:***

Last spring, we initiated an ambitious undergraduate student recruitment strategy including optimized search approaches, modified financial aid leveraging, personalized and targeted communications, and programmatic campaigns to students and parents. Knowing the reality of the national decline in overall student prospects, we also placed significant focus on strategies to increase yield (*accepted students who deposit*) and to reduce summer melt (*deposited students who do not ultimately attend*). From May through August these initiatives included: **faculty outreach** to more than 4,000 admitted students, **Parent and Family University** for families to select from more than 60 virtual orientation events and **Summer at St. John’s: Explore and More** where deposited students can engage with St. John’s during the summer by participating in one or several of the 80+ events on and off campus.

Although we are currently collecting and analyzing data from all these initiatives to further optimize for next year, we can already see that our partnership approach is working. As compared to approximately 75% of all selective, private institutions in the Northeast, who are significantly down in deposited students, we are currently 8% ahead of last year in net deposits. Our collective success so far is attributed to these new enrollment strategies which included tremendous efforts by faculty, administrators and staff across campus who have embraced this new partnership model for recruiting students. I ask that you pass along my message and sincerely thank your faculty, administrators and staff members who have partnered with our office and the enrollment management team to make this happen and encourage them to continue working with us on student recruitment efforts for the Fall 2023 cycle.

For the upcoming year we will expand our partnership model into student retention and persistence initiatives. As an institution we cannot be content with the fact that approximately 17% of our enrolled students leave St. John's after their freshmen year, and that approximately 36% of our students do not graduate after six years. Student success is our main priority, and we must do better. We will start developing improved predictive models to not only identify students that are at risk but identify risk factors for different student subpopulations which will allow for pro-active and tailored intervention strategies. For example, our strategies will differ for a student that is finding freshman year a challenge as compared to a student that is seeking additional extracurricular activities. As we move these initiatives forward, we will need your help and the help of your faculty, administrators and staff.

### ***Academic Distinction through Academic Program Positioning and The St. John's Signature Experience:***

One crucial component of our upcoming Academic Strategic Plan is academic distinction. We must improve how we strategically position ourselves in the marketplace and define and highlight our uniqueness and value proposition which will ultimately translate to the success of our students. This will be an ongoing process that will evolve over time, but faculty involvement will be essential if we are to succeed.

#### ***Strategic Program Positioning***

We are excited about the Strategic Program Positioning initiative as it will allow you, together with your chairpersons, coordinators and directors, to critically assess your academic programs in a data-driven manner and strategically plan how to position them for the future. The objective of this initiative is to (i) Connect all academic programs to academic distinction, (ii) Codify the uniqueness of each academic program and use competing external academic programs as comparators, (iii) Review the cost of the program and net tuition revenue (ROI), the cost to the student, and credits required, and (iv) Set enrollment targets and student success metrics moving forward. The first step has already been initiated and in late May, your chairpersons, coordinators and directors received an Academic Program Positioning self-study template. At our Chairpersons Retreat in October we will be detailing next steps in the process and expectations. It is very important that all your chairpersons attend this meeting and take part in this exercise.

#### ***The St. John's Signature Experience***

Last year, my message introduced the concept of creating The St. John's Signature Experience for our students. This will be an online tool to support prospective, incoming and current students to easily visualize their full four-year undergraduate journey with us, using a dynamic interface that responds not only to their choice of major, but also their interests. By conveying the relevance, interconnectedness and excitement of the different academic and extracurricular elements that a St. John's education provides, we believe that this platform will positively impact our efforts towards enrollment, retention, persistence, graduation and ultimately employment. Outreach to your offices

and faculty will begin shortly. For the platform to have maximum impact, input from the academic units is critical and we look forward to your collaboration.

***Continuance of our anti-racism efforts:***

As a part of our mission and Vincentian tradition, the Institute for Critical Race and Ethnic Studies (CRES) was inaugurated last fall. The Institute actively engages in programming that supports the needs of our internal and external diverse communities including the development of a racially inclusive, social justice-based curriculum in the form of the CRES major and minor. Both programs are housed in St. John's College and the minor is recognized in the College of Pharmacy and Health Sciences. I encourage the other schools and colleges to provide curricular space that will allow their students to minor in CRES by creating courses to be included in the CRES curriculum. Students with this academic background, which provides them with social and community management skills (among others), are in demand in the labor markets. For example, the Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that the employment of Social and Community Service Managers will grow 27.6% in New York through 2028, as compared to regional employment (19.2%) and the national trend (17%).

This July, we welcomed Rachel Pereira, Esq., Ed.D. as Vice President for Equity and Inclusion. Dr. Pereira reports directly to Fr. Shanley and serves as a member of the senior leadership team. In her role, she will have a range of leadership responsibilities, and oversee new initiatives and executive projects that advance, coordinate, and enhance institutional efforts to promote strategic priorities and advance policies and practices that promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and antiracism. It will be imperative for each college and department to work closely with Dr. Pereira in fulfilling our mission to promote antiracism efforts at St. John's.

***Middle States reaccreditation:***

In preparation for our 2025 reaccreditation visit, a Middle States pre-steering committee was formed in January 2022 with representation from all areas of the University. That committee will recommend a process to the Steering Committee which is currently being formed. The goal is to have a complete draft of our self-study ready by summer 2024. During the Fall of 2024 there will be public reviews of the draft to ensure that we are representing all stakeholders. This will lead to the Final Self Study Submission and Site Visit during Spring 2025. With seven Standards of Accreditation, fifteen Requirements of Affiliation, Documentation Roadmaps and a compliance review needed, there will be ample opportunity for faculty members to serve on one of the many subcommittees.

***Revised University Core Curriculum:***

As you know the Board of Trustees approved the new and revised 39-credit University Core Curriculum at its meeting on March 7, 2022. This has been a long process and we should all thank the University Core Curriculum Council (UCCC) for their amazing work. As the Core Curriculum represents the cornerstone for all undergraduate students at St. John's, we believe that it should be continually assessed and evolve over time together with the student body, society and the world we live in. I know that all colleges and schools are currently working on the various College Core Curriculums, which are due to the registrar by January 1, 2023, and I thank you for your partnership as we have moved through this process. My hope is that all students and faculty will embrace and celebrate the new revised Core Curriculum. The Core Curriculum is not simply an "add-on" to a major, it is highly relevant and interconnected to all majors and our collective charge is to ensure that our students see and experience the true value of the Core Curriculum at St. John's.

I look forward to working with you during the 2022-2023 academic year.

- \* Interim Dean John Conry
- Dean Teresa Delgado
- Dean Caroline Fuchs
- Interim Dean André McKenzie
- Dean Noreen Sharpe
- Dean Michael Simons
- Dean James Wolfinger