

Memo



ST. JOHN'S
UNIVERSITY

Date: August 25, 2023

To: All Deans*

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SUBJECT: 2023-2024 Academic Year Priorities for Faculty Members

Welcome to the 2023-2024 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 the major initiatives of the individual 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, faculty members will be able to emphasize their contribution to the University's priorities and your specific goals in their annual activity report (AFAR). Please send a copy of the goals you will be sharing with your faculty members to me by September 5, 2023.

As we start this academic year, we have much to be excited about. We welcome a strong first-year undergraduate class and also new faculty members with exceptional scholarly achievements and a strong commitment to our students and mission. The University Strategic Plan is also entering its second year and Pillar 2: Academic Distinction, Excellence in Teaching, Learning, and Research, promises to strategically elevate our academic programs, faculty and research activities as we position St. John's University for the future. Furthermore, our new and revitalized University Core Curriculum will start this fall semester and as we walk across campus there is no escaping the immense progress on the construction of the St. Vincent Health Sciences Center.

As we continue to move forward in a data-informed manner, the academic priorities aligned with the University Strategic Plan are as follows:

Enrollment

The enrollment landscape remains highly competitive and we continue to optimize student search approaches, identify new sources of student search, modify financial aid leveraging, and create personalized and customized communications to prospective students and their families. We are also continuing to strategically expand and solidify immersive partnerships with select high schools, establishing student pathways to St. John's.

Because of the “demographic cliff” affecting the top end of the enrollment funnel, we have had a clear focus on initiatives that increase yield and reduce summer melt. From May through August these initiatives included: faculty outreach to ~2,000 admitted students, *Parent and Family University* where more than 1,400 family members attended more than 20 virtual information sessions, and *Explore and More* through which deposited students had the opportunity to engage with members of the St. John’s community and attend a number of exciting events on and off campus.

For the upcoming year, we are continuing to optimize our undergraduate student recruitment and yield efforts, but we will also reallocate additional resources to support several graduate enrollment initiatives. The interdepartmental collaborations between the Office of the Provost, Marketing and Communications, Enrollment Management, Colleges/Schools, and individual graduate programs continue, and we will invest in these collaborations to best position our graduate programs in a competitive marketplace.

To successfully enroll a first-year class of our magnitude with the headwinds that we are facing, requires all of us to work collaboratively. I would like to express my sincere thank you to all faculty, administrators, and staff who have partnered with us and to encourage you to continue working with us on student recruitment efforts for the Fall 2024 cycle.

Strategic Program Positioning

As you are aware, Strategic Program Positioning (SP2) has been ongoing with the support of all stakeholders. More than 220 program reports have been completed and are being analyzed as part of our institutional assessment effort. This extends our efforts to bring transparent data exchange, program analysis, and a continuous quality improvement model together. The SP2 process not only serves our accreditation activities, but more importantly, brings us together across the University into a data-based dialogue on how our programs can remain competitive and meet the needs of our students while fulfilling our strategic vision. Indeed, SP2 represents an integral part of Pillar 2 in the University Strategic Plan, and I ask that you continue to support these efforts as we move forward.

Reaccreditation: Middle States Commission on Higher Education

Earlier this year, we completed our Self-Study Preparation Visit and the associated Self-Study Design report which has been approved by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE). This report is public and can be found on our dedicated MSCHE Accreditation [webpage](https://www.msche.org/). Please visit <https://www.msche.org/> for additional information regarding MSCHE.

The MSCHE Steering Committee continues its diligent work related to each MSCHE standard, updating the University community along the way, both via internal communication, as well as with frequent updates to the dedicated website. This year, the working groups will conduct their research with the involvement of the University community and provide progress reports to the Steering Committee. In turn, this progress will be communicated to the University community via internal communication and the website. We expect the working groups to finalize their reports in the spring of 2024 and there will be Town Hall meetings to discuss the documents.

We invite your continued participation in our self-study process. Representation of all stakeholders across the University is imperative to its continued success as an accredited institution of higher education. Please visit our dedicated MSCHE Accreditation [webpage](https://www.msche.org/) for more information on the process and how you and your faculty members can be involved.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging

We will continue to build upon our achievements in the DEI area by intensifying our efforts around faculty recruitment and retention. As you know, our faculty recruitment efforts are crucial to the overall success of our University and in helping our students reach their goals. Moreover, we recognize that student success can be positively impacted by having faculty members in the classroom that more closely mirror our diverse student population. Prioritizing the importance of diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging in faculty recruitment and retention also directly supports Pillars 1 and 2 of the University Strategic Plan. We will continue to seek ways to develop the strongest and most diverse pool of candidates for faculty positions. Faculty members should be encouraged to share faculty openings with their network of colleagues, and we will be asking you to advertise openings to our own Ph.D students when applicable. Also, over the past several months, the Office of the Provost has worked with academic and administrative units including the Academic Center for Equity and Inclusion (ACEI), Office of Equity and Inclusion (OEI) and the Office of Human Resources (HR) to revise the faculty hiring process and update the Equity Advocate training that will be required of **all** faculty serving on hiring committees.

University-wide Faculty Mentorship Initiative

The benefits of faculty mentoring include enhancing research productivity and teaching effectiveness, as well as increasing faculty retention, recruitment and satisfaction. Under the auspices of the Office of the Provost, a new University-wide faculty mentoring initiative will be implemented over the 2023-2024 academic year. In its initial phases, it will expand upon mentoring activities at the departmental level, centering on new and early career faculty members. Later phases will include both mid-level and senior faculty members. This requires a close collaboration with Deans, Chairpersons and Faculty members across the University. Together we will establish programmatic goals, guidance and outcomes for the mentors and mentees and focus on multiple domains of career development, including: a) development of independent scholarship and research; b) development of internal and external professional networks; c) teaching skills; d) development as a clinical or applied practitioner; e) strategies for success and advancement within the university, college/school and department/division; f) requirements for academic advancement; g) overall career planning, including short-, mid-, and long-term goals; and h) management of career challenges of particular relevance to women and underrepresented faculty.

Our faculty members are the drivers of student success, and we need to make sure that every faculty feels a sense of belonging and that they have the opportunity to grow and develop at St. John's in a meaningful way.

Strategic Partnerships

Pillar 2 of the University Strategic Plan includes the development of new transformative academic partnerships. Recently, you were asked to submit information to our office relative to existing partnerships and shortly, you will be asked to turn your attention to new partnership development. It is expected that each academic unit will develop 3-5 new partnerships over the next four years that provide additional revenue and/or enhance the educational experiences and job opportunities for our students. To support this effort, you should be identifying an individual(s) in your respective areas who will be responsible for working in concert with our office, to research, identify and take action to create new and meaningful partnerships. We must be creative in generating new student opportunities and alternative revenue streams through partnerships and we are going to need your help.

I very much look forward to working with you during the 2023-2024 academic year.

* Dean Teresa Delgado	Dean Maciek Nowak
Dean Caroline Fuchs	Dean Michael Simons
Dean Luca Iandoli	Dean James Wolfinger
Dean Anne Lin	